

**BLOOD MOUNTAIN**  
**a play in two parts**

**by Edward Mast**

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## **CHARACTERS in order of appearance**

**Hooded Man**  
**Alex, a college professor**  
**Teresa, a college student**  
**Mother, her mother**  
**Matthias, a college professor**  
**Lucas, a leader of the resistance**  
**Ethan, a leader of the resistance**  
**Natalie, Matthias' sister**  
**Leith, Teresa's cousin**  
**Bill, a settler**  
**Rachel, Bill's wife**  
**Robin, their son**  
**Maya, Natalie's friend**  
**a Baker**  
**Clerk of the tribunal**  
**two Officers**  
**residents of Saldu/Okwalnu**

**Can be doubled by as few as nine actors.**  
**All will double as masked stagehands.**

## **SETTING AND COSTUMES**

**Neutral stage with setpieces that will come on and off.**

**PART ONE**  
**SCENE ONE**

(Upstage, a line of performers face us, all wearing neutral white masks.

All the masked performers hold slender sticks, two apiece. These sticks are clacked together as noisemakers. They can be used throughout Part One.

On the bare stage in front of them, one seat.

A man on the seat wearing an eyeless black hood covering his face. Hands held behind as if bound.)

**MASKS**

Part One.  
White Noise.

(Two in white masks step forward, stand behind the hooded man.)

**MASKS**

Prologue.

(All masked actors clack the sticks together to make an irregular pattern of tapping. The hooded man contorts as if being hurt.)

**HOODED MAN**

It doesn't belong to me.

(Silence. More tapping of sticks, more pain.)

**HOODED MAN**

No. I can't. It doesn't belong to me.

(Silence. More tapping, more pain.)

**HOODED MAN**

I can't. It's not mine. It was never mine.  
I don't know. Nobody. Everybody.

(More pain.)

**HOODED MAN**

Stop. Please. It doesn't belong to me.

(More pain.)

HOODED MAN

Alright. Give me the pen.

(One of the white-masked stagehands holds out an inkpen. The hooded man lifts a hand and takes it.)

HOODED MAN

Where?

(The hooded man holds the pen as if to write on something. Doesn't move. Starts to tremble. As the pattern of tapping grows louder, he shifts his grip on the pen, holds it as a dagger; stabs it into his own arm, drawing a line of red blood; drops the pen, holds up the wounded arm with a fist.)

HOODED MAN

Unangwalnu! Unwanwa haht!

Bat alnu! Antsalnu!

It doesn't belong to me!

It doesn't belong to me!

(He contorts and cries out as he is hurt yet more.

The white-masked performers circle around and surround him, blocking him from view.

The tapping slows to an occasional punctuation.

The hooded man disappears - that is, he removes hood, puts on white mask, joins the line of masked actors.)

**SCENE TWO**

(When the line of actors opens, there are two chairs. A young woman sits in one chair looking at a book. She does not turn pages. Her name is Teresa.  
The white masks line up some distance behind her, looking at her.  
One actor in white mask - Alex - steps forward. Gazes at her silently. Then speaks softly.)

ALEX

You shouldn't be looking at that book. You will come in time to your doom.

TERESA

(startled, closes book)

What?

ALEX

I came here looking for that book. Will you be done anytime soon?

(They turn to us and speak in unison.)

TOGETHER

Blood Mountain. A love story.

(They continue the scene.  
She stares at him.)

ALEX

I don't mean to rush you.  
There's only one copy, so.  
Sorry. Take your time. I'll come back.

TERESA

Uh.

(Alex has turned to go; stops.)

TERESA

Not many people come looking for this.

ALEX

That's true. The librarian giggled. She said nobody's asked for it in years and now there are two of us.

TERESA  
Now there are two of us.

ALEX.  
Do you uh . . . .

TERESA  
Sorry?

ALEX  
Do you understand them? The pictures on those stones?

TERESA  
These? No. No one does. Not even this author.

ALEX  
He thought he did.

TERESA  
But then he forgot.

ALEX  
By the time he wrote them down.

TERESA  
Apparently.

ALEX  
Does that seem possible?

TERESA  
I don't know. Could be. Some things are hard to remember.

ALEX  
Hm. Are you from there?

TERESA  
Where?

ALEX  
Where they make those stone pictures.

TERESA  
Why would you ask that?

ALEX  
Just wondering. You were here yesterday.

TERESA  
Was I?

ALEX  
I had to wait till you were done. You were here quite a while.

TERESA

I like to look at them.

ALEX

Oh.

TERESA

They're pretty.

ALEX

Pleasing to the eye.

TERESA

Yes.

ALEX

So I wondered if you're from there.

TERESA

Nobody's from there. Those people are extinct. You must like these pictures too. You came back.

ALEX

I did. I'm in linguistics. Those stone glyphs might be a language. Have I seen you in the department?

TERESA

No.

ALEX

I didn't think so.

TERESA

How did you hear about this?

ALEX

Another professor.

TERESA

Matthias?

ALEX

You know Matthias?

TERESA

Ever ask him where he's from?

(They turn to us, speak in unison.)

ALEX & TERESA

Part One: No Such Place.

ALEX

Okwalnu, it says in there. I've never heard of a place called Okwalnu. I can't find any other reference.

TERESA

Look it up under Saldu, you'll find something.

ALEX

Saldu the copper mine?

TERESA

No copper anymore.

ALEX

You know about this?

TERESA

Some.

ALEX

But you're not from there.

TERESA

Nobody is.

ALEX

Why don't you turn the pages?

TERESA

Sorry?

ALEX

When you look at that book, you don't turn the pages.

(Pause. Teresa stands.)

TERESA

One more question now, your life will come to an end.

ALEX

Sorry?

TERESA

No more questions now. Maybe I'll see you again.

ALEX & TERESA

(to us)

Part One. The Summons of the Blood.

(Other masked actors step forward. Some lead the two actors away, another takes the book and holds it up, another recites from it.)

MASKED ACTOR/SCHOLAR

I understood the primitive images with a simple clarity that left no reason to write the meanings down. By the time I reached my home in the city, all that clarity had vanished. I can only conclude that it was some dream of the mountain air. I record these designs with no confidence that they are anything other than idle decorations,



however evocative they may be. I remember none of the illusory meanings, though I do remember the sharp sensation that all those delusions evaporated with a touch of my familiar surroundings: my well-used desk with its stacks of notes. My lamp. The sweater I hang on my chair. My shelves of books. My calendar.

(He goes.)

**SCENE THREE**

(Two chairs. Alex, still wearing mask, and an older woman without mask: Mother. Players in white mask lined upstage watching.)

MOTHER

Our parents were made to line us up outside in the early morning. If they did not, men in uniform came into our houses and dragged us out. They put us on trucks. We couldn't bring hardly anything. They said they'd give us clothes and so forth. That promise they kept. The trucks were old style cattle trucks, with wooden rails.

ALEX

Do they still do that?

MOTHER

It's different now. Buses and such. For us, it was trucks. It was summer, it was not bad. We were driven away from Saldu to the boarding school in Ashcroft. They cut our hair and gave us cots and sheets and uniforms. The only thing I took with me was my tematu. You won't know what that is.

ALEX

No.

MOTHER

A sort of wreath that women and girls traditionally wore.

ALEX

Does it cover the face?

MOTHER

It does not. I wore my tematu to the first meeting they called class. I wanted to look proper for this teacher person. But he made me take it off. He said words I didn't know. I understand now he was telling us how the tematu meant subjugation of women. He made me stand in front of the class without it and told me to stand up straight and proud in my new uniform. Of course all I felt was naked.

ALEX

Did they let you speak your own language?

MOTHER

Never. Only yours. If we spoke our language by accident, we were punished.

ALEX

How?

MOTHER

That was left to the teacher.

ALEX

When you went back home, did you still remember your own language?

MOTHER

What for? By then I was sixteen years old. Not much use for the foolish old talk. Everybody home spoke your language too. When time came for my child to be taken away, me and Marcus decided to come along. Move to Ashcroft and live here, close. So my child would have a chance. More than I did.

ALEX

Your husband passed away . . . .

MOTHER

Four years ago.

ALEX

Have you been back to Saldu?

MOTHER

We don't go there.

ALEX

Why not?

MOTHER

Why would we go there? They don't want us.

ALEX

What do you mean?

MOTHER

We left. Mister . . . ?

ALEX

Call me Alex please.

MOTHER

What is your interest in this?

ALEX

Language mainly.

MOTHER

Indigenous speech. For a publication.

ALEX

Maybe.

MOTHER

I'm sure it will do very well for you. I'm sorry I can't tell you more.

ALEX

You've been a great help. Thanks for taking the time.

MOTHER

Mm. You want to see me in native dress or anything?

ALEX

Uh. No. Won't need that. Thanks.

MOTHER

If you need anything else, I'm the one to call.

ALEX

I appreciate that.

MOTHER

Not my daughter.  
I hope you won't be needing her anymore.

(Pause.)

ALEX

I'm not sure I understand you.

MOTHER

Let me be plainer then. I don't like telling these stories. I don't approve of Teresa's attention to them or that old language. I come to say them to you in return for you leaving my daughter alone. I'm your informant now.

ALEX

Your daughter attends the university where I work.

MOTHER

That's fine. Let there be nothing more than that between you. Is that plain enough? You won't understand altogether, but I was not born here. Neither was she. You find that funny?

ALEX

I'm sorry. As it happens, I was born across the border myself. My parents were on vacation and I came early.

MOTHER

Your parents could afford vacations, then.

ALEX

I guess so.

MOTHER

Did this country own the country you were born in?

ALEX

No.

MOTHER

Well then.

ALEX

Teresa says you won't teach her the Saldu language.

MOTHER

I don't want her to become attached to the old life.

ALEX

What about attachments to the new life?

MOTHER

So it is of concern to you?

ALEX

Just curious.

MOTHER

Stay curious then please. I understand you and Teresa might have workplace interactions. Can you limit to that?

ALEX

Teresa and I are nothing but colleagues.

MOTHER

Teacher and student. Workplace associates. Please keep it at that. Anything else you need for your project, call me not her please.

(She rises, leaves.  
The masked scholar steps forward while  
others change the scene.)

SCHOLAR

And yet I must say, though not for publication, that this has not left my mind. Never for long. It is almost as if . . .

**SCENE FOUR**

(Scholar moves off as Matthias enters, unmasked, carrying two boxes of papers which he slams down on a chair. Alex, still masked, sits in the other chair while Matthias rummages through the boxes looking for something while they talk.)

ALEX

Why do they always assume the worst?

MATTHIAS

Or the best.

ALEX

Two sets of genitalia in a room can only have one possible agenda? We can't just be working, we have to be mating?

MATTHIAS

But you're not.

ALEX

No! And even if we were, so what?

MATTHIAS

But you're not.

ALEX

Even you! We're working on a project about those glyphs.

MATTHIAS

Glyphs. Terrific.

ALEX

They might mean something.

MATTHIAS

They don't mean anything! I told you. If they do then nobody knows. Up on the mountain sometimes you feel like you know, but it's bullshit. You come back to town and forget. Even the people who live there. They used to have rituals, beat themselves up with rocks till they thought they could read hidden words.

ALEX

Do they still do that?

MATTHIAS

Only the ones who can walk through razorwire.

ALEX

What razorwire?

MATTHIAS

No one's allowed on the mountains these days. Why is Teresa reading this stuff?

ALEX

It's just a book.

MATTHIAS

Bad habit. You wanna read about places that don't exist, read a novel.

ALEX

What do you mean don't exist? You sent me to that book.

MATTHIAS

Sure, as I would to Egyptian hieroglyphs or any other dead thing. I'm gonna have to talk to her. What've you got in mind for her anyway?

ALEX

I don't have anything in mind --

MATTHIAS

Whatever, go ahead, see if I care. Just don't expect to come out with all your limbs.

ALEX

We're working on a translation project.

MATTHIAS

Course you are. She's a student, remember.

ALEX

We're not doing anything.

MATTHIAS

Course you're not. You saw the mom. Don't take it personally, but be warned.

ALEX

I'm not --

MATTHIAS

Course not. The stakes get high for the ones who leave. I've heard all the arguments. "I didn't sacrifice so you could end up with some barnu."

ALEX

What's "barnu"?

MATTHIAS

It means "white ghost". When I married Carla, my dad went crazy.

ALEX

Because she was barnu.

MATTHIAS

That's right.

ALEX

What did everyone else think?

MATTHIAS

They thought what my dad thought or else they shut up. He was head of the Council.

ALEX

Is that like mayor?

MATTHIAS

More like mascot. Council does what the barnu tell them. When the barnu got tired of pushing us around, they set up a Council so we could push around ourselves.

ALEX

Your dad still run it?

MATTHIAS

He did. Passed on last spring.

ALEX

I'm sorry.

MATTHIAS

It's okay.

ALEX

So you left Okwalnu because you married a barnu.

MATTHIAS

Yeah that. And I was sick of the place. My dad was head puppet and everyone thought I was puppet in training. I got tired of everyone whining and complaining instead of taking some action.

ALEX

Is it still like that?

MATTHIAS

Probably. The Council doesn't have a new leader yet, and there's trouble in the mountains. Some group called Fullbloods and someone called Commander Zero.

ALEX

Do you know who he is?

MATTHIAS

No. We may have people in common, though. Not a big place.

ALEX

Do you ever go back?

MATTHIAS

Not if I can help it. I may have to though. Here it is.

(finds a manuscript, hands it to Alex)

Want to know all about Saldu, read that.



ALEX

What is it?

MATTHIAS

The whole story. Conquest, copper mines, pipeline for water and your barnu settlers, the Assimilation Act, peace treaties . . . .

ALEX

What's the Assimilation Act?

MATTHIAS

Fifty years ago. Declared that the people who live there aren't really a people. Then ten years ago the Enclosure Act took all their common land and privatized it so the computer companies could buy it up for the water. How many treaties you think your People's Government made with us?

ALEX

I give up.

MATTHIAS

Seventeen. How many did they keep?

ALEX

None?

MATTHIAS

See? You're not so dumb. What else you wanna know?

ALEX

Is this a new manuscript?

MATTHIAS

No. It's old.

ALEX

Have you published it?

MATTHIAS

You crazy?

ALEX

Why not?

MATTHIAS

I live here a long time, I learn a few things.

ALEX

You mean they told you not to publish this?

MATTHIAS

Not out loud. You're from Saldu, you learn what to say and not to say.

ALEX

But you wrote it.

MATTHIAS

And I keep it in a box.

ALEX

Why do you call it Saldu?

MATTHIAS

That's what it's called in the books.

ALEX

But in here you call it Okwalnu.

MATTHIAS

Saldu means sold. Or betrayed. We never called it that back there.

ALEX

Does Okwalnu mean something?

MATTHIAS

Blood Mountain. Red sand, red water. From the copper your grandfathers conquered us for.

ALEX

Okwalnu's the real name.

MATTHIAS

Was, anyway. Hey let me pull off the title page.  
(tears the top page off the manuscript)

ALEX

Why?

MATTHIAS

It has my name on it.

ALEX

What kind of country do you think we're in?

MATTHIAS

This one.

ALEX

Matthias, how come you never told me about any of this?

MATTHIAS

You never asked. Suddenly you care. Guess I had the wrong genitalia.  
(picks up boxes)  
But you and Teresa are just associates, right?

(Matthias carries boxes off. Masked actors  
change scene.)

**SCENE FIVE**

(Alex's mask has been removed and he has a yardstick or long pointer.  
Teresa is with him. Indoors.  
He holds out the stick to her.)

ALEX  
Go ahead.

(She hesitates. Takes the stick. Holds it.)

TERESA  
It doesn't mean anything.

ALEX  
Try it.

(She hesitates. Then traces an invisible figure  
on the ground. Then another. Another.)

ALEX  
What is it?

TERESA  
I don't know. I remember the shapes but not what they mean. They're scratches on  
rock. They make sense. But I've never seen the rocks. I'm making them up.

ALEX  
No you're not.

TERESA  
They're from nowhere. I make them up, then I find them in a book. Am I making  
up the book, or is it making fun of me?

ALEX  
Neither.

TERESA  
Then you come along. Am I making you up too?

ALEX  
No.

TERESA  
(traces another figure)  
Here. I'm making this up. But it will be in the book. Look it up. It comes like a  
gift. Then it turns its back without saying what it means. It leaves me sad.

ALEX

You sat every day looking at them. You didn't turn the pages.

TERESA

Because they feel like family. But they don't talk to me. I wish you didn't see them too. Before it was only me and a book that nobody knew existed. But now it's too late. Now they're a test that I fail every time. Like a gift I don't deserve that gets taken away. Like a sister that hates me. Like a punishment. My mother's right. It's easier without this. I don't want these to be real.

ALEX

Why not?

TERESA

If these are real, they come from someplace I should know about but don't. It hurts to remember. It hurts to want to remember.

ALEX

But you do remember. You can't help it.

TERESA

You don't believe me, do you. That it hurts. When I see grass on the ground here, I see something green that sits there and is grass. When I remember there, the dry grass in summer that would poke me, or the red dust. Or a lake with a mountain behind it. It's not just grass or dust or water. The dust says Look at me. The dry stalks say Look at me. I'm the universe. No *I'm* the universe. No *I'm* the universe. Nothing sits still. It's like bugs crawling over my head.

(She scratches more figures.)

ALEX

Those memories stay with you.

TERESA

They come and they go. There's a word they have.

ALEX

You do know some words.

TERESA

I know about five words. My mom won't teach me, Matthias won't teach me. I learn by accident around edges. This word "gelitu".

ALEX

Means what?

TERESA

Coming. And staying. And ending. Always arriving, always passing.

ALEX

Forever passing away.

TERESA

Forever passing away.

ALEX

You remember other things about it?

TERESA

No.

ALEX

Why not?

TERESA

It doesn't exist.

ALEX

And you're not from there. Why do you keep saying that?

TERESA

Because I'm not.

ALEX

You were born there.

TERESA

Doesn't make me from there.

ALEX

You have family there.

TERESA

I have aunt and uncles who are nothing but names. Some of them are dead and shouldn't be. I don't even know if I'm a name to them anymore. I was three. I gave up before I was born almost. So they gave me up.

ALEX

You don't know that.

TERESA

I do. If I go there now, I'd look like them, a little bit, like an imitation or a joke. They'd see through it fast, and the first thing I said wrong or did wrong would prove them right. And then there'd be nothing left. Just one more place I don't belong. I wish it didn't exist.

ALEX

It does though. You know it, like I could never know it.

TERESA

You mean my spooky indigenous way of knowing? I'm telling you that's not me. You're just using me to invent a faraway place that you like. Why did you go back to look at that book?

ALEX

They make me remember too.

TERESA

Remember what?

ALEX

Dreams I used to have.

TERESA

At night?

ALEX

No, mind reader. I had what are called episodes.

TERESA

And you saw these?

ALEX

I don't know what I saw. But it felt the way these make me feel.

TERESA

Happy?

ALEX

Uncomfortable. Scared. Eager. Are you scared when I talk about this?

TERESA

No.

ALEX

I took pills for a while. I'm better now.

TERESA

Good.

ALEX

I can still wonder though. Maybe I'm inventing you.

TERESA

I'm real. Touch me and see.

ALEX

Doesn't prove a thing.

TERESA

I'm no hallucination. I'm not unusual enough.

ALEX

Are you kidding? You're like some beautiful exotic bird from another continent.

TERESA

More like one of those grafted trees.

ALEX

You're beautiful and you're from a beautiful place.

TERESA

I was born in a very sad very wasted place which I haven't seen since I was three. Saldu was a playground for me.

ALEX

It's called Okwalnu and it's one kind of home that belongs to you.

TERESA

You don't understand. It doesn't belong to me.

ALEX

Yes it does.

TERESA

Alex, please.

ALEX

What?

TERESA

Be careful. This is not just a research project for me.

(She puts down the stick.)

ALEX

Of course not. I'm sorry. I get carried away.

TERESA

I know. Me too.

ALEX

Sorry.

TERESA

No. It's kind of a gift. You're a doorway. You make it seem I could step out of the little room and be I don't know what.

ALEX

Home?

TERESA

Alex.

ALEX

Step through, Terry.

TERESA

I have fifteen cousins. I used to remember their faces, all fifteen. Now I can close my eyes, and concentrate, and remember, maybe, five faces. One by one they blur. And you. I could step through and you'd be there.

ALEX

Yes.

TERESA

I could come to you like a moth, and nothing would happen, nobody notice. But all those tiny lights would go out.

ALEX

And your mom would tear me limb from limb.

TERESA

I'd be happier if I listened to her.

ALEX

Happier?

TERESA

No. I'm happy here with you. I'd be better off.

ALEX

If you walked away right now?

TERESA

Yes. That would be simpler. That's what I *should* do.

ALEX

Yes of course.

TERESA

Yes of course.

ALEX

You should. You should. You should. You should.

(As he speaks, they move closer together.)

TERESA

Yeah.

ALEX

You should stay here forever.

TERESA

Okay.

ALEX

Good. Can I get that in writing?

TERESA

No. Don't trust me.

ALEX

You keep saying that.

TERESA

I mean it.

ALEX

Okay I believe you I shouldn't believe you. But I can't help it. I look at you and I see a true thing. The rest of the world's a cartoon. I look over everyone's head and there you are.



TERESA

Looking at you.

ALEX

Looking at me. Terry. What's in the world to believe if not you?

(Behind them enter the masked scholar.  
They do not see or hear him as they gaze at  
each other.

SCHOLAR

Sometimes an image would enter my mind. Nothing but fancy, I'm sure, but would  
come forth with the vigor of something true. Not an imagination, but a memory.

(The scholar lifts Alex's hand and Teresa's  
hand, moves them together. Alex draws his  
finger lightly across Teresa's palm.)

SCHOLAR

And then.

(Teresa suddenly pulls her hand away.)

TERESA

What did you just do?

ALEX

I don't know. Wait.

(Gently he reaches for her hand. She lets him  
take it. He opens her palm, draws his finger  
across it again.)

ALEX

Terry. What about this one?

(The scholar steps away - is he watching the  
scene?)

ALEX

You remember this one?

TERESA

Yes.

ALEX

Do you see what it means?

TERESA

No. I never do.

ALEX

But look at it.

(He traces a glyph on her palm. She stares.)

TERESA  
It's an eyelid.

ALEX  
An eyelid. And this one.

(Draws another. She looks.)

TERESA  
Water.

ALEX  
Water.

TERESA  
But I don't know that. It's just an guess.

ALEX  
It's a guess we're making together. Here.  
(draws another)  
We'll say it together. One, two, three:

TERESA & ALEX  
Fire.

ALEX  
This one?

(Draws another.)

TERESA & ALEX  
Wing.

(Draws another.)

TERESA & ALEX  
Hand.

TERESA  
How are you doing this?

ALEX  
I'm not. We are. Terry. This one.

TERESA  
Sky.

ALEX  
Yes.

(He gently traces a pattern on her cheek.)

TERESA  
You.

(Alex nods, traces another.)

Me. TERESA

(Alex nods, traces another. She won't speak.)

Say it. ALEX

Home. TERESA

(She pulls her hand away.)

I have to go. TERESA

What? ALEX

I'm sorry. TERESA  
(going)

What's wrong? ALEX

Don't make me talk. TERESA

Wait. Don't walk away like that. ALEX

We can't do this. TERESA

Terry, we're doing it. ALEX

Alex. Alex. TERESA

Water VOICES  
Fire  
Ground  
Wing  
Tongue  
Blood  
Eyelid  
Fire  
Fire  
Fire

TERESA

Goodbye.

(Teresa goes, and the voices stop.)

SCHOLAR

But the fancy would pass. What stayed with me were my desk and my lamp. My sweater. My shelves of books. My calendar. My clock. The hands moving slowly across the face of my waking day.

ALEX

Scene Six: Remember To Forget.

(Scholar leaves as masked actors rearrange the stage.)

**SCENE SIX**

(Alex stands. Still unmasked. Mathias enters, hands him an envelope. The envelope has been opened. We can't see what's in it.)

ALEX

Do you know the place she's talking about?

MATTHIAS

Yeah. Little grove of trees. Looks old, but they just landscaped it two years ago.

ALEX

Hm.

MATTHIAS

You don't have to go. Might be easier.

(Silence.)

MATTHIAS

Anyway, not the end of the world, huh? You're just colleagues.

ALEX

Right. You warned me, after all.

MATTHIAS

I did.

ALEX

I'd have to be pretty stupid.

MATTHIAS

You would.

(Silence.)

MATTHIAS

You know it's not just Teresa. Things have gotten worse. I was supposed to speak at Perle Hall next week.

ALEX

What happened?

MATTHIAS

Cancelled.

ALEX  
Why?

MATTHIAS  
Because of the incident.

ALEX  
What incident?

MATTHIAS  
In Saldu.

ALEX  
Okwalnu.

MATTHIAS  
Whatever. One of the barnu settlers killed thirteen of us residents, then got killed himself. The Council police and some Federals put the residents under curfew.

ALEX  
Why the residents?

MATTHIAS  
To protect the barnu from reprisals. That's what they always do. Barnu settlers kill somebody, police move in to protect the barnu. It's usual.

ALEX  
What's that have to do with a lecture?

MATTHIAS  
I'm from Saldu. They thought I might use the word "massacre". The official word for it is "incident". They want to be careful not to inflame passions. They'll schedule someone on poetry instead.

ALEX  
That's ridiculous.

MATTHIAS  
It's usual. Did you read the manuscript?

ALEX  
Yes.

MATTHIAS  
Good. I need it back.

ALEX  
In a hurry?

MATTHIAS  
Yes. I can't have it floating around.

ALEX  
Your name's not even on it.

MATTHIAS

They'll figure it out.

ALEX

Did you lose anybody?

MATTHIAS

Not this time. I have to go home for a funeral though.

ALEX

Who?

MATTHIAS

Sister's husband.

ALEX

I'm sorry. What happened?

MATTHIAS

Officially? He got drunk and fell down stairs.

ALEX

Did he drink?

MATTHIAS

Never.

ALEX

Then what happened?

MATTHIAS

He wouldn't sell land to the pipeline.

ALEX

You can, what, fall down stairs for that?

MATTHIAS

All the time.

ALEX

Who does it?

MATTHIAS

You're asking me? Barnu, of course.

ALEX

People like me.

MATTHIAS

Not you. Your volunteer staff. Paramilitaries. Barnu settlers.

ALEX

Do they get away with it?

MATTHIAS

The police are barnu too. If you complain, they can arrest you and keep you in jail forever. They can cover your head with a bag soaked in piss and beat you with sticks till you die or pass out or find yourself hovering like a bird looking down at your own body as if it were a turd somebody was stepping in.

ALEX

Did that happen to you?

(Matthias doesn't answer.)

ALEX

How do you recover from that?

MATTHIAS

You don't. Some people go on Blood Mountain, pretend they understand scratches in the rocks. Some people leave Okwalnu. Forever. So it's not just Teresa.

ALEX

Matthias.

MATTHIAS

Hm?

ALEX

Those barnu. I'm not one of them.

MATTHIAS

No. Of course not.

(As they stand facing each other, one of the white masks is placed on Alex's face. Matthias turns and leaves.)



**SCENE SEVEN**

(Outside.

A simple long bench is brought on. Alex sits, still masked, still holding the envelope. He is given a long stick or branch to hold in his hand.

The masked performers watch from a line upstage as Alex sits.

Teresa enters. Stands.  
Silence.)

ALEX

Thanks for the message.

TERESA

Thanks for coming.

ALEX

(holds up envelope)

What would you like me to do with this?

TERESA

It's yours now.

(He holds up the envelope, opens it, pours the contents to the ground: dusty ashes. The two of them turn to address the audience.)

TOGETHER

Scene Seven: Envelope of Ashes.

TERESA

It was a message to myself, not you.

ALEX

You sent it to me. You had Matthias hand it to me. You put my name on it. Why?

TERESA

I needed you to know that I mean it.

ALEX

All the translations we did. That's what this is. Right?

TERESA

I needed to be free of this. I needed to get my heart back.

ALEX

I wasn't holding you prisoner, Terry.

TERESA

You've never been a prisoner, so you won't understand. There are things more important than what I want.

ALEX

Or what your mother wants.

TERESA

We're done.

ALEX

She says no because I'm a white ghost. Isn't that right? A barnu?

TERESA

She does say that. But that is not what this is about.

ALEX

What then?

TERESA

Me, Alex. I have razorwire in my dreams that I've never seen. I have tiny frightened memories that are waiting for me to turn my back so they can disappear.

ALEX

Go back there then.

TERESA

To Saldu?

ALEX

Okwalnu. Yes.

TERESA

They have a word for what I am.

ALEX

That's another word you know.

TERESA

Wahayta.

ALEX

Which means?

TERESA

Deserter.

ALEX

You're young. You didn't do it. Your parents did.

TERESA

Yes, they gave up everything so I'd have a chance. Should I throw it away? There, do you hear the way I talk? In Saldu they'd smell the barnu on me.

ALEX

Then leave it behind. Let go of Okwalnu.

TERESA

And live in limbo. Live asleep on tiptoe. Without ever touching the ground.

ALEX

I'm not the obstacle, Terry.

TERESA

You don't have to take it like that.

ALEX

The obstacle is that faraway place. You think you have to choose between us. You don't. You can have us both. It's just a place. You'll see that when we go there.

TERESA

We?

ALEX

Yes. Together.

TERESA

You're crazy.

ALEX

Clinically so on occasion. But not in this case.

TERESA

You couldn't even stay with people there. It's against the law.

ALEX

I'm allowed to stay with barnu settlers. I researched it.

TERESA

We couldn't travel together.

ALEX

We can meet there together.

TERESA

You don't understand. The air is different.

ALEX

I'll enjoy the change.

TERESA

You think it's so easy. Maybe it would be, for you.

ALEX

You think they'll turn you away.

TERESA

Not in a way that shows.

ALEX

I'll be there to protect you.

TERESA

Stop talking like that. You can't protect me.

ALEX

If you don't like it, we'll come back.

TERESA

What if I do like it?

ALEX

Then I'll like it too.

TERESA

Course you will. You probably didn't hear about the incident.

ALEX

The massacre. Yes I did. I'm sorry.

TERESA

I believe you. I believe you're sorry. If you had been there, you'd be sorry and alive. If I'd been there I'd be dead.

(she sits on the bench, not right next to him)

Here is the truth.

I used you on purpose for an experiment. I needed to see if my heart still works. I needed to feel it function again. I had a moment when I could choose. I felt what was coming. I could have said no and walked away, because I knew we'd come to this. But I said yes and stepped off the cliff. I'm sorry. I told you not to believe me. I warned you. When I close my eyes, I see a future, with me kneeling and asking your forgiveness. I don't want that. That's why I wanted to talk. You deserve the truth.

(Pause.)

ALEX

Does your heart still work?

TERESA

Yes. Thank you for that. I'm sorry. Truly truly I'm sorry. But I need my heart back now. Alex. I need my heart back.

(He gazes at her. Then takes his stick and traces several symbols on the ground.)

ALEX

You can read that.

TERESA

I don't want to do this.

ALEX

And you know why. After you left I tried to read them. I went back to look at the book and tried. I couldn't. They only make sense when I'm with you. Because you change me. Not your magic indigenous whatever, just you. That author who copied them down was probably in some special place. When he left that place he forgot. That's how they work. When you and I are together, we can read them. You and I are that special place. You can read this right now. Can't you.

(She won't answer.)

ALEX

And you know this other thing too. This symbol does not just mean fire. It means something else. Fire: the love that consumes. The love that takes.

(He draws another symbol.)

ALEX

Water. The love that gives. The love that rejoices.

(He draws another symbol.)

ALEX

Wing. The love that takes flight. Tell me I'm wrong, Terry. Tell me you don't understand.

(No answer.)

ALEX

Can you see what this means?

(No answer.)

ALEX

Say it.

TERESA

Before.

(He draws another.)

ALEX

Say it Terry.

TERESA

Before time.

(He draws another.)

TERESA

Before things.

(He draws another.)

TERESA  
(tight-lipped)

There was.  
In my heart.  
You.

(She translates each word as he draws it.)

TERESA

my memory  
no more  
place  
that is  
not  
you

burning star  
heart of all things  
you  
always you

all  
my telling  
before  
born  
building  
town  
and town  
in my heart  
to come  
to you

all  
time  
past  
future  
i have  
for you

ALEX  
(has been moving about making symbols)

the love that consumes  
the love that rejoices  
the love that lifts  
the love that makes grow

no time  
past  
present  
future  
without  
love  
you

you

give birth  
my heart

thank you  
give you  
home  
home two  
home three

(stops, steps back)

Three words for home. We only have one.

(He sits, rests.  
She stares at them. Turns, walks away as if  
to leave.)

ALEX

Terry. Terry. Terry.

(She stops. Silent.  
Other actors step forward, remove Alex's  
mask; step away.  
Teresa turns back; takes the stick from Alex.  
Draws a symbol on the ground.  
Draws another.  
Draws another.)

ALEX

me too  
me too  
my heart  
large so much  
large hurt  
a bird  
frightened  
feeling  
don't know  
things happen  
heart  
full  
of you  
future  
full of you  
things happen  
the world  
my heart  
larger  
okwalnu  
things happen  
i run  
from  
my heart  
i run  
to  
my heart  
so much

full of you  
 fear  
 my heart  
 fear  
 you  
 fear  
 home  
 how  
 how  
 how

(She stops, bends over, in pain.)

ALEX  
 Terry. Are you alright?

TERESA  
 Alex.

ALEX  
 What?

TERESA  
 Can this happen? Can actually happen?

ALEX  
 Yes. Terry. Yes yes yes.

TERESA  
 It's too much. It hurts.

ALEX  
 Good hurt?

TERESA  
 Good hurt.

(She reaches out, still overwhelmed in her heart. They touch, trace on each other.)

TERESA  
 you

ALEX  
 you

TERESA  
 your heart

ALEX  
 your heart

TERESA  
 sky



earth ALEX

fire TERESA

home ALEX  
heart

home TERESA  
heart  
okwalnu

(They pause; then turn to us.)

Scene Eight. TOGETHER  
Things happen.

(A noise like a fluttering birdsound or a flute. Other animal noises all around them as they stand looking at each other. Masked performers step forward making the noises with backs to us, lining up to block Alex and Teresa.)

## SCENE EIGHT

(Animal noises cease as the line of stagehands turn toward us to show their white masks and say:)

### CHORUS

(one at a time)

THANK YOU SIR ENJOY YOUR STAY  
 THANK YOU SIR ENJOY YOUR STAY  
 THANK YOU SIR ENJOY YOUR STAY  
 PLEASE WAIT RIGHT HERE MAAM SOMEONE WILL BE WITH YOU  
 SHORTLY

(unison)

THANK YOU SIR ENJOY YOUR STAY

(Breaking through the line, enter Commander Zero, a man wearing a face-covering ski mask. The other performers go offstage. Alex and Teresa are gone. )

### COMMANDER ZERO

Gunpowder one way, sha. Dynamite sha, make your point. Done it myself. But what're we struggling to win, brothers n sisters? We risk our lives an our sacreal bodies for power to buy those cigarets rolt by our poorest of brothers in Barney's cities an sold to us for profit? Power to drink their soooda that's only our own water betrayed by sugar an syntheocratic orange an sold to us for profit? Power to swallow that stlatha wheat powder they sell to us for profit?

On Blood Mountain, on Odol Okwalnu, we drink the walni bildu, the water which is the mountain's own milk. We grind the leehumin grain which grows of its own sweet self, wild as air, too full of flesh to be lawful in townships. We pick the lorall of the wiseberry plant an dry them to rooooll an smoke, when we smoke.

You don have to come to the mountains for this. The sweet leehumin has grown on our platssa an valleys for time an time an time before Barney an John arrive to saldu it. The wiseberry grows all orran. Water to drink there plenty an sweet, what's left when they pipe their gallons to hose transistor chips in their tchaaaarnimah! computer mills.

Do we sklahv at their jobs for crumbits of money to earn their soda an cigarets? Tomorrow, third day third month, we call you: purchase none more. Sup walni bildu instead, eat the wealth of our country instead. Let Barney an John an their bandoween drink down their petroleum soda themselves, an eat their savorless cigarets rather than force them on us. We are the roots of our land an this land will upnourish without us kneeling to commodities of cardboard an paint.

(He disappears.  
 Somewhere on stage is a suggestion of

razorwire - a set piece, or a section held by two actors. It is far in the background now, but will move to different positions on stage during the rest of Part One.  
 Several men have already entered and begun playing a game that involves throwing stones on the ground like dice.)

ONE  
 Wachu plain forr?

TWO  
 Dno. Coobee a car.

THREE  
 Wha kine?

TWO  
 Enthn gemme oudda thus place.

ONE  
 You sait.

THREE  
 You sait.

ONE  
 Throw.

TWO  
 (tosses stones; curses)  
 Tshaaart!

THREE  
 Presti. You go.

ONE  
 Tshar ni ma.

THREE  
 Thshar NI ma. Go.

(One takes up the stones; looks at them; starts a little hop dance. Others clap in time.)

TWO & THREE  
 yah yah yah yah

(One reaches peak of dance, tosses stones.)

ONE  
 Tshaaaa!

TWO  
 No carr fyu.

ONE  
Faaaaanh. You nup. Wachu plain forr?

THREE  
House.

TWO  
Nax gichoudda heer witha house.

THREE  
Neho gedoudda heer. Misewell hava nice house.

ONE  
Kay throw.

THREE  
(throws; no good)  
Faaaanishaaa!

TWO  
HOLca, HOLca.

THREE  
Neho win this ever?

TWO  
(takes up stones)  
Neho.  
Kay presti.

ONE  
Go go.

(Two starts a sort of exaggerated strut.  
Others clap, then punctuate the strut with  
macho grunts. Two picks moment, tosses.)

TWO  
Tsha.

ONE  
Kay presti.

THREE  
Wachu plain forr?

ONE  
You know.

TWO  
Yah we know.

THREE  
Same as alls. Ever get it?

ONE  
(nods)  
Hart, lortu!

TWO  
Then wachu plain forr?

ONE  
Future!

(Shakes the stones in his hands.)

TWO  
Kay Misser Hoozle, kay Jon Kwazi, kay Willyam Humbumbum . . . .

(One throws.)

ONE  
(triumphant)  
Ta!

THREE  
Nah.

ONE  
(points at stones)  
Ta! Soh!

THREE  
Nah nah nah.

ONE  
Wastu nah? Soh heer.

TWO  
Ta?

THREE  
Nah nah. Soh heer pit pit pit.

(They all look close.)

ONE  
Stu?

TWO  
Bin va tri.

ONE  
Tshaaafaaachaaa!

TWO  
Go again.

ONE  
Sha sha. Neho ever win thus?

THREE  
(shakes head)  
Neho. Sekulak.

ONE  
(shakes stones)  
Bwee bwee bwee bwee bwee BWEE BWEE --

(A kid runs on.)

KID  
Yahey!

ONE  
Ohhh presti. Godda go.

TWO  
Wha? Godda do thus.

ONE  
(holds out stones)  
Zu go.

TWO  
Tsha! Zu hold, zu tuva.  
(makes throwing gesture)

ONE  
(points at kid)  
Sheeki bo heer.

TWO & THREE  
Ooooooooooh, tuvatsu! (mock crying) Waahahahahaaaaa!

ONE  
Presti, presti, presti.

(One picks up kid, starts swinging the kid around in circles, gently at first, wider and wider, finally spinning and swinging kid high up and low down round and round. Kid terrified with delight. Others punctuate with swooping hollers.)

ONE  
wooooooooooOOOOOOooooooooOOooOOooooOOOOooooooooOOOOO!

KID  
yiiiiiIIIIIIIIIIIOooooooooooooooooobaaaaaaabaaaaaaayaaaabaaaaayaaaaaaaa!

(A few other men and women have entered by now. They stand or sit or wander,

aimlessly. One sets down Kid, holds hand and starts to strut with some rhythm while others clap. Some others might join in.)

ONE

Zu. Sheeki bo. Zu pik pik close. Thissus wun geldo game, wun tonto game, wun buruhandi zozo joko. Neho evereverever win thus game. Only tsukuwum play thus joko. Only tu-uni kwavi tsukuwim tonto nuff siddarown play thus. Ri?

KID

Sha sha sha sha

ONE

Cuz salduwuni gah nuthna loooooz. Nothna plafer. Plafer nothn. Ri?

KID

plafer nothn plafer nothn

ONE

Salduwuni gah nuthn. Cuz why?

KID

cuz why cuz why cuz why

ONE

Cuz salduwuni not Barnuween.

KID

salduwuni not barnuween

ONE

Barnu gah plenny a plafer. When we gah plenny, we stop this zozo game. Ri?

KID

plenny a plafer plenny a plafer

(One stops; all stop clapping. To kid:)

ONE

N how we get r plenny a plafer? Hah? Hah?

KID

(has to think; then:)

Taka from Barnu!

ONE

Taka from Barnu! Presti! Ondu, sheeki, ondu, ondu, taka from Barnuween!

ALL

(clapping hands as One and kid strut again)

Taka from Barnu, taka from Barnu, taka from Barnuween!

(The men exchange a victory salute slapping hands in the air.)

ONE  
Presti, presti, ondu, sheeki. Zu remember this good. Zu remember this ondu. Sha?

KID  
Sha.

ONE  
(calls offstage)  
Ya! Dendraaaaaani! Whey zu done?

BAKER  
(offstage)  
Laster, laster.

ONE  
Nuwus go!

BAKER  
(offstage)  
Laster!

WOMAN  
(entering opposite the voice)  
He passi yet?

TWO  
Nah. Laster laster laster.

WOMAN  
Nuwus go!

THREE  
Sha sha sha.

WOMAN  
Nothn morr tdo than geldo Barnu stuff?

ONE  
Zu throw?

WOMAN  
Got grownup stuff ado.

TWO  
Mon, throw.

(She considers, then takes stones.)

THREE  
Wachu plain forr?

WOMAN  
Forr somthn worth thmuscle uv all these strong boys.



Yoo sait. TWO

Yoo sait. ONE

(Suddenly all stop. Look offstage, tense and silent.)

How many? TWO

Two trucks. WOMAN

Doin wha? ONE

Nothn yet. WOMAN

(Sound effect: clanking and grinding; made my masked actors, also with clacking sticks. The noise moves, subsides. All relax a little.)

Wassat? KID

Nothn. Yoo stay rest. ONE

Zu. Tuva. TWO  
(to Woman)

Soh? Neho win thus. Sekulako.' WOMAN  
(considers, throws)

Sekulako. THREE  
(nods)

(Enter Matthias and Alex.)

MATTHIAS  
They destroyed the village ovens some time back. We rebuilt some. It's a tradition: hang around for the bread to come out.

Men too? ALEX

MATTHIAS  
No jobs, so men too. Bread is not just for custom now. And there's a law against other gatherings.

(The Woman, whose name is Natalie, leaves the game and comes to them. The men keep playing.)

NATALIE  
You the professor?

ALEX  
I guess Matthias told you.

NATALIE  
Didn't have to.

MATTHIAS  
Word travels fast here.

ALEX  
You're Natalie.

NATALIE  
Mm-hm. What brings you to our little spot, Professor?

ALEX  
Call me Alex.

NATALIE  
Alex.

ALEX  
Research. Language and culture.

NATALIE  
Mm. You want me to put on some native dress? Do a dance maybe?

(Pause.)

ALEX  
I was sorry to hear about your husband.

NATALIE  
Sorry about his life or his death?

ALEX  
He was an important man, from what Matthias tells me.

NATALIE  
To some, I suppose. Ruined his family.

ALEX  
How?

NATALIE  
Can't support a family from karkat.

MATTHIAS

Jail.

NATALIE

Jail. Or out of jail when you work for illegal organizations that don't pay money.

ALEX

That's difficult. You do some of that too, though.

NATALIE

Used to. Wake up one day, go hey! I have children! You?

ALEX

No. How many do you have?

NATALIE

Two girls and a boy.

MATTHIAS

Won't see that boy here.

ALEX

Why not?

MATTHIAS

Busy playing army.

NATALIE

Matthias likes to poke.

MATTHIAS

It's true.

NATALIE

My son's with the watch patrol. They circle at night and look out for settler trouble.

ALEX

They carry weapons?

NATALIE

No.

MATTHIAS

Thankfully. They're kids. Look for trouble, you'll find it.

NATALIE

Plenty think it's for good use --

(Enter Teresa and a man: Leith.)

LEITH

Matthias, as I live and breathe.

MATTHIAS

Hello Leith.

LEITH

And this is your professor. I think you know my cousin Teresa?

ALEX

Yes of course. Hello Teresa.

TERESA

Nice to see you here.

LEITH

Where are you staying, Professor?

ALEX

With a family of uh . . . .

LEITH

Settlers, as we say, yes. A propaganda visit then.

ALEX

I would rather have accepted one of your invitations --

LEITH

But the law determines where you may stay. We understand of course. When I was at university, I could not always choose my roommates. How is your wife, Matthias?

MATTHIAS

She's well, though you have no history of caring.

LEITH

Nah nah past past past. No one treated her badly.

MATTHIAS

Not as badly as Lizundu, I suppose. But then, if things had been different and I had been the woman --

NATALIE

Nah nah nah nah, sheeki boys. No time for old trouble. Come throw a little, relax.

(She takes Leith and Matthias by the arms,  
and they let her take them to join the game.)

LEITH

Presti, kay kay kay. Hak tuva?

(Alex and Teresa are left together. They  
stand politely side by side.)

TERESA

She doesn't look like Matthias.

ALEX

There's a family resemblance. What's Lizundu?

TERESA

Stupid old story. Woman runs off with a demon, no one forgives her, she jumps off a cliff or something.

ALEX

Oh.

TERESA

How was your journey?

ALEX

Uneventful and pleasant, thanks for asking. Are we being bugged or something?

TERESA

The soil has ears.

ALEX

I see. And your journey, Miss, how did you find it?

TERESA

Fine thanks. How do you like it here?

ALEX

Fine thanks.

TERESA

What do you smell?

ALEX

Bread.

TERESA

Other than that.

ALEX

The bread smell is strong. What else?

TERESA

This place. Okwalnu. Like lentils. Or clay.

ALEX

I thought it was just the bread. Are there always mosquitos at night?

TERESA

They don't bother me.

ALEX

Lucky. So. This is as close as we get, I suppose.

TERESA

Stop it.

ALEX

Right. Soil, ears. This is not too alone even here?

TERESA

No no. We're friends from University, right? Anyway, you're so old.

ALEX

Oh good.

TERESA

I have news.

ALEX

What?

TERESA

The resistance has noticed me.

ALEX

Is that good or bad?

TERESA

Commander Zero sent me a message.

ALEX

How?

TERESA

Matthias got it from Natalie. She seems to know Commander Zero.

ALEX

Did you ask her?

TERESA

I gave a hint but she didn't take it.

ALEX

What was the message?

TERESA

They want me to translate some of the Commanders's communiques. They're trying to build support overseas and they heard I speak French and Spanish.

ALEX

Excellent. Did you meet him?

TERESA

Not yet.

ALEX

(moves closer)

Can I come?

TERESA

No! Stop it.

ALEX

Will I know who you are with one of those black masks on?

TERESA

I hope not.

ALEX

How did they hear about you?

TERESA

Through Matthias, I think, but he won't say.

ALEX

You have wasted not a moment since you got here, I can see. Are you excited?

TERESA

I can hardly sleep. I did the work in one night, and I sent them back with another article I had written. Was that too much?

ALEX

No! I would've sent two. What next?

TERESA

Wait to see if they want any more.

ALEX

Well I guess that answers my question of how you are. How was your trip really?

TERESA

Did they stop you at the checkpoint?

ALEX

Not for long. You?

TERESA

Maybe a little, but I had all my papers so they let me through.

ALEX

Not like the others.

TERESA

No. Some of them took hours.

ALEX

How's your great aunt?

TERESA

Regal as ever.

ALEX

When do I meet her?

TERESA

Sometime.

ALEX

Tonight? This is just a drop-by, right? We could drop by there.

Not tonight.                   TERESA

When?                         ALEX

Not soon.                   TERESA

Why not?                   ALEX  
(takes a beat)

It's hard. They talk to my mother sometimes.                   TERESA

And they might put one and one together?                   ALEX

They might.                   TERESA

Soooo, I never meet them?                   ALEX

I didn't say that.                   TERESA

What did you say?                   ALEX

You just got here. Give me time.                   TERESA

Time is yours. But this can't go on forever. Can it?                   ALEX

We'll see. You know about the march next week?                   TERESA

No. When?                   ALEX

Monday. Walker Square. I'll be marching with them. Will you come?                   TERESA

Of course. Should I march?                   ALEX

Maybe not. It's for us.                   TERESA

I'll watch. What time?                   ALEX



(Another woman comes on, talks to the game players. Everyone stops, listens.)

ALEX  
What's wrong?

NATALIE  
Trucks.

MATTHIAS  
Soldiers.

ALEX  
Doing what?

MATTHIAS  
Arrests.

ALEX  
For what?

NATALIE  
They don't need reason.

(Sound effect: clanking and grinding.)

ALEX  
Can we do something?

(Natalie shakes her head.)

ALEX  
What if I go over there? I'm a citizen. I'll show my passport.

NATALIE  
Please don't.

ALEX  
If someone from outside is watching, they'll stop. Isn't that so?

NATALIE  
Sometimes.

ALEX  
Then I should go

NATALIE  
Go ahead. And then will you stay here forever, and be here when they come with reprisals?

ALEX  
I'd like to do something. They shouldn't just get away with that . . . .

LEITH

(steps to him, takes his arm)

You're a guest here, professor. Let them pass, please.

(No words. The noise passes, subsides.)

ALL

Scene Eight: Welcome to Saldu.

(The Baker steps out, wearing an apron.)

BAKER

Done!

(He steps back offstage. All form a line, with Alex watching. The Baker enters and starts passing simple loaves of bread to the line. Each person takes a loaf or loaves, moves away, holding the bread up overhead for a moment. No words. All take this quite seriously, and they leave with their loaves. Alex and Teresa exchange a look and a polite public nod as they leave separately. Natalie is last. The Baker hands her the last loaf.)

BAKER

Get enough?

NATALIE

Got more?

(Baker shakes head. They stare at each other. Natalie steps to the Baker, gives a friendly sad hug. She leaves, and the Baker goes off toward the oven.)

**SCENE NINE**

(A square carpet of bright green grass.  
Upstage, suggestions of back door to a  
house.  
Actor squats at one side to make sprinkler  
noises.)

**SPRINKLER**

Ksht. Ksht. Ksht. Ksht.

(Rachel comes through the door to the back  
yard of her house. Alex follows her. Rachel  
wears a white mask throughout.)

**RACHEL**

Hope that's okay.

**ALEX**

It'll be great. Thanks so much.

**RACHEL**

We live pretty simply out here.

**ALEX**

Good enough for me.

**RACHEL**

(points off)

Up there.

**ALEX**

What?

**RACHEL**

Where the house used to be.

**ALEX**

Where you were born?

**RACHEL**

Yes.

**ALEX**

I don't see a house. Is it too far?

RACHEL

No, it's long gone. When the copper mine shut down they shut down that whole little town.

ALEX

What was it called?

RACHEL

Hillside. I guess they named it in a hurry.

ALEX

Did you like living there?

RACHEL

It was quieter. But it was quieter everywhere then.

(Enter Bill with some bottles of bright orange soda. Hands one to Alex. Bill wears a white mask throughout.)

BILL

Room okay?

ALEX

It's great.

BILL

Looking at Hillside?

ALEX

Such as it is.

BILL

Such as it is, that's right. It was a nice little place.

ALEX

Did you work in the mines?

BILL

For a while. Swwhy I came out here, and then they folded right up. Some luck, huh?

ALEX

That's a shame. But I guess you stayed.

BILL

(of Rachel)

Oh I had some other luck that was worth staying for. Then the pipeline started up and there was good work, so here we are. Rachel never wanted to leave anyway, huh?

(She shakes her head, agreeing.)

ALEX

Do you work for the government? Who runs the pipeline?

BILL

No no, Max Systems runs it. I work for them. Water's for them anyway, so the Federal government contracts it out. Everybody wins. Have you seen the pipeline?

ALEX

No.

BILL

It's quite a piece of work. All above ground. People complain, but someday their grandchildren will look at it the way we look at Roman aqueducts.

ALEX

Who complains?

BILL

Oh, people, you know. Same ones didn't like the mines. Make trouble. I don't know why. The mines made life better for everybody, and now the pipeline's making it better still. Don't understand all the fuss. It sure used to be quieter.

ALEX

Before there was trouble?

RACHEL

There was always trouble. We just didn't know it.

BILL

Maybe there was trouble, but they used to be good neighbors.

RACHEL

They're still good neighbors.

BILL

All I know is, we could all be friends, with a little effort. We're people, they're people. So you're out here studying . . . ?

ALEX

A project on languages.

BILL

Local ones? Gathering samples and such?

ALEX

Yeah.

BILL

That pretty interesting?

ALEX

To me at least. I learn a lot along the way.

BILL

Learn anything today?

ALEX  
(a beat)

I wasn't mainly researching today.

BILL

No?

ALEX

Just visiting some friends. Of friends.

BILL

Yeah? Who?

ALEX

Oh, sister of a friend from the University. Some others.

(Bill waits for more. Doesn't get it.)

BILL  
(cheerfully)

So you didn't take your notepad this time, huh?

ALEX

No. Might write down something later, who knows.

BILL

You're a note-taking kind of a guy, I can see that. Hey maybe you'd like to see some of the stone carvings.

ALEX

Are they close?

BILL

Sure. We'll take you out there. How about getting up dawn tomorrow?

ALEX

On purpose?

BILL

Friend of mine and I are going to the river to catch some cutterfin. Wanna come along? Rock carvings are on the way, and the fishing's good this time of year.

ALEX

I uh . . . . sure. Why not. What time?

BILL

Not bad. Six?

ALEX

Okay. I'll drag myself up.

BILL

Or I'll drag you up. Bright and early.

ALEX

Early anyway.

(A teenage boy enters. He wears a white mask.)

BILL

Hey buddy. Robin, this is Alex. Alex is our lodger, as the saying goes.

(The boy -- Robin -- stands uncertainly.)

RACHEL

You can greet our guest, if you like.

(Robin limply reaches out a hand, shaking Alex's.)

ALEX

Hi Robin. Nice to meet you.

(Silence.)

RACHEL

(smiles)

He does speak sometimes.

ALEX

I hope I won't be in your way too much, Robin.

ROBIN

(has a hesitant manner of speaking)

You won't.

(Robin stands there; then turns to go, walks into house.)

SPRINKLER

Ksht. Ksht. Ksht. Ksht. Ksht.

(All leave, becoming white-masked stagehands.)

**SCENE TEN**

(Razorwire is moved close.  
Two men in face-covering ski masks.  
One black mask, one brown.  
Teresa blindfolded. One other behind, also  
wearing face-covering dark mask.)

ALL:  
Scene Ten. Moonlight on the wire.

BROWN MASK  
This is her then.

BLACK MASK  
She lived with them.

BROWN  
Her parents do.

BLACK  
Still. She probably forgets.  
You.

TERESA  
Me?

BLACK  
Do you know where you are?

TERESA  
Blood Mountain.

BLACK  
Are you bleeding?

TERESA  
No.

BLACK  
Then you're not on Blood Mountain.

BROWN  
It is easier for us to come to you. Partway. You are inches away though.

TERESA  
From what?

(Brown takes her hand, leads her to razorwire,  
lifts her hand to touch; she jerks away.)



BROWN

The fence. Razorwire all around the mountain. If we try to bring you through, you get sliced to pieces.

TERESA

But you come through?

BROWN

When it's important. You tell a living person about this meeting?

TERESA

No.

BROWN

No one?

TERESA

No.

BLACK

No cousin, no aunty you stay with, no one at the baccus.

TERESA

No one.

BLACK

Hm.

(Silence.)

BLACK

You live with barnu. Many years.

TERESA

My parents took me.

BLACK

The barnu where you live. How do you describe them?

TERESA

I don't often.

BLACK

Hm. What do they like?

TERESA

(pause)

Clocks. They love clocks. Possessions generally, but mainly clocks. They are sad.

BROWN

Now now. Don't try too hard.

BLACK

They are like us, I think. We would love clocks if with them we ruled the world. Do you think you can live with them without becoming one of them?

TERESA

I don't know. Maybe not. Maybe I shouldn't have come back here.

BLACK

Not many come back who go away.

TERESA

I didn't go. I was taken.

BLACK

And come back why?

TERESA

To see if it's true that I can never live here again.

BROWN

Do not be downhearted by my pava's style of question. He does not trust easily. We all do not.

BLACK

We lose the habit. Sometimes we are correct not to trust. Perhaps we have shown her too much already. (turns head to the third) You warned us so.

(Third man nods head.  
Black mask steps to her.)

BLACK

Hold up your palm please.

(She does.)

BLACK

I am going to touch it.

(He draws something on it.)

BLACK

What do I write?

(Alex appears, though he's not really there.  
He wears a white mask. No one notices him.)

ALEX

Fire and water.

TERESA  
(hesitates)

Blood.

(Alex disappears.)

BROWN

How about that?

BLACK

She could guess as much.

BROWN

Yes. Though she would be lucky.

BLACK

How do you guess that?

TERESA

I don't know. Fire and water. Does that mean blood?

BLACK

Fire over water. Yes. Very lucky indeed.

(pause)

Do you know who we are?

TERESA

You work with Commander Zero.

(They laugh.)

BROWN

You can say that.

TERESA

What do you mean?

BROWN

We are Commander Zero.

TERESA

Which one?

BROWN

Him.

BLACK

And him.

TERESA

Both of you?

BROWN

He's the original Commander Zero, but over time we find it useful to have more than one.

TERESA

There are two Commander Zeros?

BROWN

A loophole in the patent laws, I'm afraid. Be honored, please. Not so many alive know this. Your cousin for example does not, and better she stays ignorant.

TERESA  
Why? Is she...?

BROWN  
No no. She's fine. But she doesn't need to know, and she's safer not knowing.

TERESA  
But I need to know?

BROWN  
You *get* to know. We must think you are somewhat special. Do we not?

BLACK  
Somewhat.

BROWN  
We like your work. Our other translators approve.

TERESA  
I didn't know you had others.

BROWN  
Till now you don't need to know. Indulge our small test. You're not insulted.

TERESA  
No. I'm impressed. It's just what I would have done.

BROWN  
Presti ondu. Your article too.

TERESA  
And?

BROWN  
(to the other)  
Do we like it?

BLACK  
It's alright.

BROWN  
My double is an idiot, even if he is my elder. Your article is excellent. Will you write more for us?

TERESA  
Of course.

BROWN  
And translate more.

TERESA  
Yes.

BROWN  
Good then.

(puts paper in her hand)  
Here is a start. Be precise with this: it's delicate.

TERESA  
I will.

BROWN  
Presti magnificent. We could send this through others of course, but Natalie mentions her brother's high opinion of you, so we come to take our own look. Hope we don't upset your evening. Bye now.

(Signals to the third.)

TERESA  
Wait.

BROWN  
Hm?

TERESA  
How can I . . . .

BROWN  
What?

TERESA  
I want to come to Blood Mountain and join you.

BROWN  
Hm.

BLACK  
Hm.

BROWN  
You don't want to get to know us a little before we move in together? What do you think, Brother Zero?

BLACK  
Living in the mountains is hell.

BROWN  
You love the mountains.

BLACK  
I love *walking* in the mountains. Living in them is hell.

BROWN  
Don't mind him. We like your work. Bye.

TERESA  
How can I reach you?

BROWN  
We reach *you*.

BLACK

Wait.

BROWN

Now what?

BLACK  
(to Teresa)

Now is not the time for you to come onto Okwalnu. But I think these masks create a relationship which is unequal. People admire too much the mask.

BROWN

What are you talking about, Pava?

BLACK

Masks do not keep secrets. Tahu does. Do you know what tahu is?

TERESA

No.

BLACK

It lives in the blood, we say. Tahu speaks the voice of Blood Mountain, which you can read, apparently, at least sometimes. Fire and water make blood, and they are part of tahu as well. Do you have tahu?

TERESA  
(pauses)

That's for you to say.

BLACK

Hm. I think maybe you do.

(Black pulls off her blindfold.)

BROWN

What are you doing?

BLACK/LUCAS  
(pulls mask off his face)

My name is Lucas. Ethan?

BROWN/ETHAN

Slow down, pava.

LUCAS

Now please.

(Ethan removes his mask. Lucas looks at third man.)

LUCAS

Keep yours, if you like. (to Teresa)  
This is Ethan. My brother in everything but parents.

ETHAN

My pava Lucas is prone to sudden turnaround.

LUCAS

I'm the one who says slow down, who is this woman who lives with barnu. In fact I think I am not cautious, I am jealous.

ETHAN

You may learn to overlook his odd way of talking.

LUCAS

Because you have education. You speak languages. You come from college. I have no chance for all that. My parents choose not to send me to school in Ashcroft. I grow up on the side of Blood Mountain instead. But now I read your work and see your face and hear your voice. I ask forgiveness for my spite.

TERESA

Nothing to forgive.

LUCAS

Vigilance is our custom. On Blood Mountain we do a ceremony with blood and stone. To harden our hearts for struggle. We do it often. Occasionally we discover it's time to open our hearts, not close them. I open now. I see tahu in yours. Here.  
(pulls out a small knife)

Make a fist, hard as you can..

(They uncover arms, hold them up.)

ETHAN & LUCAS

One blood. True blood.  
Blood fill the heart with strength.  
Heart of blood. Heart of stone.

(They hold up arms, cut them. Each takes a smear of blood from his arm, paints it on his partner's arm. They clasp arms, then unclasp, turn to Teresa.)

LUCAS

We need the world to hear us. Will you help?

TERESA

One blood. True blood.

(Lucas makes a tiny cut on her arm. The three of them share blood and clasp arms.)

ETHAN

You will grow accustomed to my brother's sudden inspirations as well, I hope. Now truly we go. Bye.

(The three men go.)

**SCENE ELEVEN**

(Four chairs: a car. Bill driving, Alex in the seat beside him, another man -- Joshua -- in the back seat. Bill wears a white mask. Alex does not. Joshua does not.)

BILL  
Pretty country, huh?

ALEX  
Yeah.

(They drive.)

BILL  
Nice morning. Fish'll be jumping.

ALEX  
Good.

(They drive.)

ALEX  
So which one's Blood Mountain?

BILL  
They all are.

ALEX  
You mean they're the Blood Mountains?

BILL  
You'd think so, but they call them Blood Mountain.

ALEX  
The whole range.

BILL  
Yeah. Go figure.

(They drive. Alex looks around behind him.)

ALEX  
You work at the pipeline too?

JOSHUA  
Yeah.

(They drive.)



BILL  
Josh and me are old pipers. Built it, signed on when it opened, hey Josh?

JOSH  
Mm-hm.

(They drive.)

BILL  
Been tough for Josh these days.

ALEX  
(to Josh)  
Why's that?

BILL  
His mom was one of us. Now they got these Fullbloods running around, suddenly Josh is some kind of squealer or collaborator or something. Never did a thing to deserve it, hey Josh?

JOSH  
Nope.

BILL  
Call him a halfblood. How'd you like someone calling you that?

ALEX  
Hm. (to Josh) You were born here, though, huh?

(Josh nods.)

ALEX  
Grew up here?

JOSH  
All my life.

BILL  
Shame, huh?

ALEX  
They bother you at work?

JOSH  
Not so much.

ALEX  
But outside.

JOSH  
Some.

(They drive.)

BILL

Could all be fine if they'd just, you know.

ALEX

Mm.

BILL

Some of them getting fat off the pipeline too. More money'n they know how to spend around here.

ALEX

Huh. I've mainly seen people waiting in line for bread. Haven't seen many rich ones.

BILL

(chuckles)

Look harder.

(They drive. Bill starts to pull over.)

BILL

Up here then. Some of the small carvings close by. Bigger ones up in the mountains, of course.

ALEX

Do you go there?

BILL

Not these days, I'll tell ya. Used to, though. Love the history. They got to make their mark, now we get to make ours. Yknow?

(Bill rises to go. Alex notices that Joshua hasn't moved.)

ALEX

You coming?

JOSH

I've seen em.

(Pause. Alex nods, turns to follow Bill off.)

**SCENE TWELVE**

(A deep steady drumbeat offstage  
A street in a town. A march is taking place  
offstage.  
Alex and Matthias watch.)

ALEX  
You gonna march with them or not?

MATTHIAS  
I suppose I should.

ALEX  
You don't want to?

MATTHIAS  
Anh, marching, chanting. What's it accomplish?

ALEX  
Gets attention.

MATTHIAS  
Whose attention?

ALEX  
Makes them feel good.

MATTHIAS  
That's it, you got it. It makes them feel good about themselves. Whoopee. What about you?

ALEX  
Teresa says I shouldn't.

MATTHIAS  
Why not?

ALEX  
It's not my march.

MATTHIAS  
Hm. Skin color or genitalia? Anh. I suppose I have to.

ALEX  
Why?

MATTHIAS  
I don't want to be taken for one of the wealthy ones that refuse to join in.

ALEX  
Their are rich people here?

MATTHIAS  
Nooo no no. We're a noble oppressed people We don't have collaborators or informers or traitors. We don't have a people who've made big profits from pipelines and mines or who'd sell their neighbors for good cable access, or abuse the privilege of their ancient names to hoard money and supplies. Not us. We're Okwalni. See ya.

(Matthias goes. Some chanting offstage.  
Bill comes up to Alex. Bill wears a white mask.)

BILL  
Hi.

ALEX  
Hi Bill.

BILL  
How ya doing?

ALEX  
Good. You off work today?

BILL  
Sorta. Whatcha doing?

ALEX  
Watching the march. You?

BILL  
Why?

ALEX  
Just interested.

BILL  
Oh. That your friend?

ALEX  
Matthias?

BILL  
Matthias. Hm.

(They watch.)

ALEX  
How many you suppose they are?

BILL  
Not many. Listen. Alex.

ALEX  
Yeah?

BILL  
You might want to uh.

ALEX  
What?

BILL  
Might wanna watch from somewhere else.

ALEX  
Why?

BILL  
Don't know. Temperature might go up around here. It happens. You know?

ALEX  
What do you mean?

BILL  
This might not be a good day to watch a march.

ALEX  
Why not?

BILL  
Take my word for it, huh?

ALEX  
Bill, what are you talking about?

BILL  
Just take my word for it. Will you do that?

(Alex stares; Bill stares back, then turns and leaves. Alex stares after him. Looks toward the chanting again. Two policemen walk by, wearing white masks. Alex goes to them.)

ALEX  
Excuse me. Officers? Excuse me.

OFFICER  
Yessir?

ALEX  
I uh. I don't know if I should. I think there might be trouble.

OFFICER  
What kind of trouble sir?

ALEX  
I don't know. Somebody warned me to stay away.

OFFICER

Who?

ALEX

Uh. Look, can you just radio some more men or something? How many of you are here?

OFFICER

Did somebody say something to you sir?

ALEX

Yes, a friend of mine said something. I'm not sure about it, but it might mean somebody's planning some trouble.

OFFICER

I see. Come with us sir.

ALEX

Okay.

(The two officers lead Alex to a car -- three chairs. They get in, officers in front, Alex in back. They drive off. Noise of march subsides to nothing. They drive.)

ALEX

Where are we going?

OFFICER

The station sir.

ALEX

Can't you report it from here?

(They drive.)

ALEX

Are you going to call anybody?

(They drive.)

ALEX

Why are we going to the station?

OFFICER

Your own protection sir.

ALEX

What protection? I don't need protection. I'm sorry, you've misunderstood me.

OFFICER

We understand sir.

ALEX

Nobody threatened me. I don't need protection.

OFFICER

Yes sir, we understand that.

ALEX

We don't need to go to the station.

(A snapping sound. Another. Several actors clack sticks together, one at a time, then several closer together, then many at once, a rapid spatter of cracks.)

ALEX

What's that?

(No answer. The noises continue.)

ALEX

Are those gunshots?

(No answer. The noises continue.)

ALEX

There's shooting back there. Are you gonna call someone?

OFFICER

You'll be fine sir.

ALEX

We need to go back. That's gunfire.

OFFICER

Please stay calm sir.

ALEX

Stop the car then. Let me out.

OFFICE

We can't do that sir.

ALEX

What do you mean you can't do that?

OFFICER

Sorry sir.

ALEX

What, am I under arrest?

OFFICER

No sir.

ALEX

Then stop the car and let me out. I don't need your help any more.

(No answer. Gunshots continue.)

ALEX  
Did you hear what I said?

OFFICER  
Yes sir.

ALEX  
Are you gonna let me out?

OFFICER  
No sir.

ALEX  
Why not?

OFFICER  
Your own safety sir.

ALEX  
I'm safe! Let me out, I don't need your safety!

OFFICER  
Please stay in your seat sir.

ALEX  
I am asking you to stop the car and let me out.

OFFICER  
Yes sir.

ALEX  
I am not under arrest.

OFFICER  
No sir.

ALEX  
Then stop!

OFFICER  
Can't do that sir.

(Alex looks at the backs of their heads. Suddenly he jumps up, grabs the driver around the neck and jerks him back. They are all thrown sideways as the car swerves and comes to a sudden stop. They scuffle. Alex manages clumsily to get out and run off. Officers chase him.)



**SCENE THIRTEEN**

(Alex, Matthias, Natalie. Outside somewhere.  
Natalie dabs a cloth on Alex's wounds.)

NATALIE  
Scene Thirteen: Still alive.

ALEX  
Did anybody count?

MATTHIAS  
Forty seven.

ALEX  
Dead?

MATTHIAS  
More wounded.

ALEX  
Is Teresa okay?

NATALIE  
Your friend is fine.

ALEX  
Where is she?

NATALIE  
Stay still.

ALEX  
(pauses)  
They didn't hurt you?

NATALIE  
No. I wasn't in this stupid march.

ALEX  
Who were they?

NATALIE  
Night Riders they call themselves.

MATTHIAS  
Militia.

ALEX

Why don't the police help?

NATALIE

Police and Night Riders. Fingers and thumbs.

MATTHIAS

It will go in the papers as a gunbattle. They'll say the dead were caught in the line of fire. Of course no one on the other side was hurt.

NATALIE

Why were you with the police?

ALEX

I told them there'd be trouble. They took me away. Bill told me. My host family. How did Bill know?

MATTHIAS

Bill Robertson?

ALEX

He told me it wasn't a good day to watch a march. I think he knew.

NATALIE

Bill knows lots. We know lots about Bill. Here. Don't jerk.

(She helps him off.)

**SCENE FOURTEEN**

(Rachel and Bill's house. Alex comes in to Rachel. He is bandaged and ragged.)

ALEX

Hey.

RACHEL

Hi Alex. Are you alright? What happened?

ALEX

I was at the march.

RACHEL

Oh no. You weren't marching, were you?

ALEX

No. The police saved me from that.

RACHEL

They saved you? How?

ALEX

Actually Bill saved me. He gave me a warning. Saved my life, probably.

RACHEL

Are you alright?

ALEX

Not really. So Bill. Your husband. You know what he does at night?

(Rachel stares at him.)

ALEX

You know what a Night Rider is?

RACHEL

I do.

ALEX

You know your husband is one of them?

(She is silent.)

ALEX

I have a friend named Natalie. Do you know her?

RACHEL

Yes.

ALEX

She knows you and she knows Bill. She was just sort of picking me up off the ground and I learned some things. Natalie's husband died this year. Maybe you knew that.

RACHEL

I did.

ALEX

Turns out he was tortured to death. Seems all the land in Saldu was turned private and given to individuals just a few years back, and now Max Systems wants to buy it all for the pipeline, and there's been a string of unexplained deaths of people who wouldn't sell. Natalie's husband was one. And your husband Bill was one of the Night Riders who work for Max Systems persuading them.

(Rachel is silent.)

ALEX

I can't read your face. I can't read your silence. Did you know all this, or am I surprising you, or don't you believe me? Do you hear what I'm saying? Natalie tells me your husband killed her husband. Do you understand that? Your husband carried an automatic rifle to that march today and helped his squad kill forty-seven people. Am I talking another language? I'd just like to know if you know all this. Or if he's managed to keep it a secret, this whole night career of his. Which is it? Will you tell me?

RACHEL

You'd better go.

ALEX

Of course I'll go. Will you answer me first?

RACHEL

You can pack your things now or I'll pack them for you and send them.

ALEX

I know I'm angry and I'm not being careful, but I really would like to understand. I would like to see how this works, if you live with this or if it's some place no one goes. How does it work here?

RACHEL

Bill is my husband. I love him. He is the father of my son.

ALEX

Does Robin know?

RACHEL

You need to go. Get your things and go now.

ALEX

What does that mean? Will it not be true if I'm not here? Is this who you are? I can't believe it. Am I wrong? You could tell me I'm wrong. Will you tell me it's all a lie? I'd love to hear that. Will you tell me that?

RACHEL

Go please. Now.

(Bill comes in.)

BILL

Oh this is smart. You're a smart boy, aren't you. They'll never look for you here, oh no not in a hundred years.

ALEX

Hi Bill. How was your day? Do anything interesting on your lunchbreak?

BILL

That's nice, you're a funnyman too. Do you know who's looking for you?

ALEX

Couple of stupid cops, maybe?

BILL

Couple of federal investigators, wiseman.

ALEX

How do you know that?

BILL

I have lots of friends. You're one, so I'm giving you a warning.

ALEX

About what?

BILL

You were born out of the country, weren't you?

ALEX

How did you know that?

BILL

It's in the warrant for your arrest. Your passport's been revoked and they're looking to put you away.

ALEX

What do you mean my passport?

BILL

Try it, wiseman. You could have just ridden the car to the station and walked away, you know. Do you understand me? You're not a federal citizen any more. You're a foreign national as far as they're concerned, and that makes you a foreign soldier out of uniform.

ALEX

You're crazy.

BILL

This is not a game or a thesis experiment. You're a pal, so I'm giving you a chance. Second time today. You gonna blow it again?

ALEX

Chance for what?

BILL

Am I talking too fast? They have special places in prison for non-citizens.

ALEX

I haven't done anything.

BILL

You didn't hit a cop? How many syllables do you need? You. Go. Now. Hide. There's a nice reward I'm turning down, but if they find you here I'll take it and spend it happily. You gonna stand there and say it can't be true, or are you gonna go while you can?

ALEX

This is ridiculous.

BILL

It is that. You could have had a nice time in our little territory.

(A knock on a door. Another knock, louder.)

BILL

Your choice. They don't think you know yet, so they won't have the house surrounded.

ALEX

(glares at him; to Rachel)

Will you be alright?

BILL

She'll be fine. Get the fuck out.

(Another knock.)

BILL

Don't tell me where you're going.

(Another loud knock. Alex looks; turns, goes off. Another knock. Another.)

BILL

We should answer that.

RACHEL

Alright.

(As they leave, enter white-masked stagehands who line up facing us.)

CHORUS

(individually)

YOUR CARD HAS BEEN REVOKED

YOUR CARD HAS BEEN REVOKED  
PLEASE WAIT RIGHT HERE SIR  
SOMEONE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY  
PLEASE WAIT RIGHT HERE SIR  
SOMEONE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY  
(unison)  
PLEASE WAIT RIGHT HERE SIR  
SOMEONE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY

(As they speak, Teresa and Alex enter. One stagehand takes red paint and makes several red scratchmarks on Alex.)

**SCENE FIFTEEN**

(Razorwire splits the stage in half. Alex is on one side and Teresa is on the other. They sit on the ground.)

TERESA

Did the police do that?

ALEX

No. Matthias and Natalie said getting through this razorwire is easy, if you know how. Apparently I don't know how.

TERESA

I don't either.

ALEX

You're okay? You didn't get hurt?

TERESA

No. I fell down and somebody pulled me away. I don't know who. They might be dead now. I don't know all the names.  
Do you remember Leith?

ALEX

Your cousin? I didn't know he was there.

TERESA

He's dead. Two different bullets.

(pause)

I was just getting to know him again. He was a brat when we were little.

(pause)

Are you alright here?

ALEX

I'm okay. For a man who doesn't exist. They cancelled my passport. I can't even use my phone number. Matthias is checking, but I'm probably on a wanted list somewhere. For what? I don't get it.

TERESA

For seeing what no one should see. They should put me there too.

(she rubs her eyes)

You were uh.

ALEX

What?

TERESA

You were in that police car.



ALEX

That's right. Fuckers wouldn't let me out.

TERESA

You got away just in time.

ALEX

I guess. They would have beaten the shit out of me . . . .

TERESA

No. I mean you got away from the march just in time.

ALEX

(pause)

What's that mean?

TERESA

Nothing. Just, when the shooting started, you were gone.

ALEX

I wish I'd been there to help you.

TERESA

Do you?

ALEX

(a beat)

Terry, what are you getting at?

TERESA

Call me Teresa please.

ALEX

Teresa. Fine. I went to get help and the cops took me to their car. I thought we were calling more police.

TERESA

And they took you out of danger.

ALEX

That's what they said they were doing, but they wouldn't let me out. Am I getting this straight? Are you wondering if I knew what was coming and arranged to get out of the way?

TERESA

I don't know.

ALEX

I *did* know what was coming. Bill practically told me. I'm a stupid barnu, I went to call the police.

TERESA

And you got out while forty seven people were shot.

ALEX  
(pause)

Is that what you think?

TERESA

I don't know. No. No. I don't think any such thing. You just . . . can't imagine. What it was like. People splatter. They drop like sacks.

ALEX

Yes.

TERESA

And you were gone.

ALEX

Yes. You understand why.

TERESA

Yes of course. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's this place. I've learned a new phrase in Okwalni.

ALEX

What?

TERESA

Zu maitenyo. It means You are my dear one. You are my beloved. Zu maitenyo.  
(she stands)

I'm coming through.

ALEX

No! No. You'll just get cut to stripes like me.

(They look at each other. She lifts a hand, tries to reach through the razorwire. He tries as well. It's wide, but they manage to touch fingers. They stand touching for a moment. Then relax grip.)

ALEX

You remember this one?

(He draws a glyph on the ground. She nods, smiles a little.)

TERESA

What will you do here?

ALEX

I'll be okay. There's a dry cave where it's warm. Matthias and Natalie say they can show me how to grow mushrooms and rock barley. They can bring me stuff. They say I'm safe here. Nobody comes to Blood Mountain but them.

TERESA

And me.

ALEX

And you.

TERESA

I have to go. They'll miss me and I'm such a bad liar. All it would take is one person following me.

ALEX

They might follow Matthias or Natalie too.

TERESA

They're old hands at this. I'm a foundling. Alex, remember there's somebody thinking about you every day. Every minute.

ALEX

I love you. When can you come back?

TERESA

I don't know. Soon.

(She steps away, still looking at Alex. She turns, goes.  
Noise like a fluttering birdsound or a flute.  
Animal noises all around.  
The Scholar enters, crouches beside Alex, who doesn't appear to notice him.)

CHORUS

please wait right here sir

SCHOLAR

The air on the mountain.

CHORUS

please wait right here sir

SCHOLAR

Even in the cool without wind.

CHORUS

please wait right here sir

SCHOLAR

I swear you would say it wobbles.

CHORUS

wait here sir

SCHOLAR

The stones wobble. The scratches wobble and make you imagine.

CHORUS

wait here  
wait  
border

water  
fire  
water  
fire

(Stagehands in white mask have surrounded Alex, moved him to another place. The scholar leaves, the stagehands leave, the noises stop.)

**SCENE SIXTEEN**

(Matthias and Alex are on the same side of the razorwire. Alex is drawing on the ground. Matthias stands.)

**MATTHIAS**

I don't get it either. Your account's been frozen. Driver's license number terminated. I couldn't even get on your email - password denied. No such customer. Phone disconnected, no longer in service. I called Chris at the University. He wouldn't answer my questions. All he would say is "He was born in a foreign country, right?" Are you listening?

**ALEX**

Yes yes. How can they do it so fast?

**MATTHIAS**

Anti-Terrorist Act. They can do anything. I've never seen it like this though. Nobody wants to know you existed.

**ALEX**

I guess my apartment has caution tape across the door.

**MATTHIAS**

I wouldn't suggest going there to find out, even if you could. They're scared. There was an election and people say it was rigged. There was trouble and some generals tried to take over the government.

**ALEX**

Did it work?

**MATTHIAS**

No, but everything's up in the air. Rutland and Nampa are trying to secede and the government's sending in troops.

**ALEX**

Jesus.

**MATTHIAS**

There's trouble here too. Federal troops gone, the Council police are laying low. There's been some bad stuff.

**ALEX**

By who?

**MATTHIAS**

Some settlers got beat up, and worse. Your friend Bill.

**ALEX**

He's not my friend.

MATTHIAS

Your host then.

ALEX

Something happen to him?

MATTHIAS

It's bad. He was stabbed twelve times. Left with his arms folded over his chest.

ALEX

(shakes head)

Any others?

MATTHIAS

Two others.

ALEX

That's no good. That's no good. Do they know who did it?

MATTHIAS

I can guess. But I don't ask right now.

ALEX

How's Rachel?

MATTHIAS

Who?

ALEX

Bill's wife?

MATTHIAS

Oh. Don't know. She wasn't hurt and she's still there. They have a kid?

ALEX

Robin. A son.

MATTHIAS

He's okay too.

ALEX

I hope they're okay. I should go talk to them.

MATTHIAS

I wouldn't do that right now.

ALEX

No. I guess not. Fuck! I almost had something.

MATTHIAS

What?

ALEX

Fire and water. Ground and edges. I have it a minute then it's gone. Dammit.

MATTHIAS

Are you still on that? I keep telling you, you're on the Mountain. It always feels like you almost get it. Then you forget.

ALEX

If Terry were here I'd get it. Look. Look at this. Anything?

MATTHIAS

No.

ALEX

Would you look at least?

MATTHIAS

I'm looking. There's nothing.

ALEX

Look harder.

(Matthias looks at the ground where Alex was drawing. Pause, then:)

MATTHIAS

Maybe.

ALEX

There, you see?

MATTHIAS

So I fall for it too up here. Then I'll forget. That's why I don't come here.

ALEX

Dammit. Do you see Terry?

MATTHIAS

Not often.

ALEX

Well if you do, tell her to find a way to get out here, will you?

MATTHIAS

Sure.

ALEX

It's been a month.

MATTHIAS

It *feels* like a month. It's been maybe a week.

ALEX

I wish she'd come.

MATTHIAS

Listen, I left you two flashlights. You get a notion and go any deeper into that cave, you carry both of them. Okay?

ALEX

Got it.

MATTHIAS

You got enough to eat?

ALEX

Yeah I'm fine. Thanks. Thanks.

MATTHIAS

See you.

(He goes.  
Masked actors gather behind Alex.)

CHORUS

Fire. That consumes.  
Water. That gives.

ALEX

Fire and water.

CHORUS

Fire and water.  
Fire and water.  
Ground.  
Sky.

(They surround him and all disappear.)



**SCENE SEVENTEEN**

(Two men in black suits. They wear the white masks. They stand on either side of Rachel, who sits in a chair. She sits with lowered head, does not look at them.)

SUIT 1  
No idea?

(Silence.)

SUIT 2  
Anyone angry at him?

(Silence.)

SUIT 1  
Anyone?

(Silence.)

SUIT 1  
Hadda be somebody. Your husband was active in local affairs.

(Silence.)

SUIT 2  
You had this visitor living with you. Alexander Richardson. Is that right?

(Silence.)

SUIT 2  
Simple question. Don't know why you won't answer that one.

SUIT 1  
How were relations with this houseguest?

(Silence.)

SUIT 1  
This Alexander Richardson have any reason to be angry at your husband?

RACHEL  
(without looking at him)  
No. They were friends.

SUIT 1  
Everyone was his friend, I guess, huh?

(Silence.)

SUIT 2

Mrs. Linden, I donno why you're not helping us.

SUIT 1

We have a very high record of conviction in these cases.

RACHEL

(raises head to look at them)

Yes. I know you do.

(Silence.)

**SCENE EIGHTEEN**

(Night. Matthias and Natalie, gotten out of bed. Three others with ski masks.)

NATALIE

Alright, gentlemen. What is so urgent to ruin a night's sleep?

MASK ONE (LUCAS)

The kids asleep?

NATALIE

Safely so, yes yes, what?

MASK ONE  
(to others)

Okay?

MASK TWO (ETHAN)

Okay.

(They remove masks: Lucas, Ethan, and Teresa.)

LUCAS

Fuck I hate that mask.

ETHAN

You like it sometimes.

LUCAS

When it's cold out I like it.

NATALIE  
(to Teresa)

Since when have you taken up this fashion?

TERESA

We had to move through the streets to get here.

ETHAN

Teresa graciously adopts our native dress for the moment.

LUCAS

Matthias, you know Ethan?

MATTHIAS

I hear your name.

ETHAN

Me too yours.

MATTHIAS

And hear you talk, I guess. When you're not him.

ETHAN

That's right.

NATALIE

Introductions complete. New business. I repeat: what so urgent?

TERESA

We have a proposal.

ETHAN

*They* have a proposal. I have doubt.

LUCAS

Thanks for your support, brother Zero.

MATTHIAS

What proposal?

LUCAS

It may sound hoonak.

TERESA

But we think it's time.

NATALIE

For what?

LUCAS

The Federal government's chasing its own tail. National election stolen, Minister of Defense jailed for trying a takeover . . . .

LUCAS

Troops overseas, now more to Nampa and Lewiston and Torrance.

ETHAN

Rutland seceded, now other places too.

TERESA

Money's gone worthless.

LUCAS

Out of petroleum.

ETHAN

Water riots.

TERESA

Debts called in.

LUCAS  
Coup overthrown.

ALL  
(turn to audience:)  
PICK ONE.

TERESA  
So this might be time.

LUCAS  
Splitting apart, they're busy. In Okwalnu we're a fish that's too small.

ETHAN  
This much is true. The next part, mmmmmm . . . .

MATTHIAS  
What's your plan?

TERESA  
The election for Native Council chairman. To replace your father.

MATTHIAS  
Yes?

TERESA  
A write-in campaign.

NATALIE  
For who?

TERESA  
Commander Zero.

MATTHIAS  
Are you kidding?

ETHAN  
I warned you. Hoonak.

TERESA  
Not a public campaign.

LUCAS  
Not even written communiques. Just word by mouth and word by mouth.

TERESA  
It will be like abstaining. All we say is: write in a zero.

LUCAS  
Just a zero.

TERESA  
That's all.

MATTHIAS

You think they'll actually elect Commander Zero to the Council?

TERESA

They might. Who else? Old vice-chairman Randall? No one wants him.

NATALIE

His buddies do.

TERESA

So he gets some votes.

MATTHIAS

Is this a joke?

TERESA

No.

LUCAS

But it sounds like it, right?

MATTHIAS

Yes.

NATALIE

Yes.

LUCAS  
(to Ethan)

See?

MATTHIAS

What?

LUCAS

It sounds like a joke, because what? Because . . . .

NATALIE

They can stop the election whenever they want.

TERESA

And they will if they think it's a threat. But:

LUCAS

If they think it's a joke:

TERESA

They won't.

MATTHIAS

Ah.

LUCAS

Hee hee!

(He is so tickled, he does a little dance.)

LUCAS

No matter how many decide to do it, they won't believe it can happen.

TERESA

No posters, no speeches, no leaflets, no fliers. Just word by mouth, starting now.

LUCAS

We have done that before.

ETHAN

We have.

MATTHIAS

Randall will run unopposed. What if they don't even hold the election?

LUCAS

That's where we need you.

MATTHIAS

For what?

TERESA

You run too.

MATTHIAS

Me?

TERESA

You put your name in. You're his son, you're a threat, but not a big one. Just enough though that they have to have voting.

LUCAS

And with voting we bring in foreign observers.

TERESA

Which they don't resist since they think there's no threat.

LUCAS

Their chance to prove they're legitimate. Then:

TERESA

The votes are counted. The zeros win. Commander Zero steps forward, unmask, and claims the election is his.

NATALIE

And then?

MATTHIAS

They declare the election illegal.

LUCAS

Let them.

TERESA

The people have voted.

LUCAS

We're ready to gather a show of strength.

TERESA

Peaceful.

LUCAS

A peaceful show. At Council Headquarters. People, just people, but lots.

TERESA

Call for Commander Zero.

LUCAS

This was the hardest for Ethan to take.

NATALIE

The peaceful part?

ETHAN

We've seen what they do to peaceful crowds.

TERESA

The election observers are still observing.

LUCAS

They'd be overturning a popular vote.

ETHAN

And the fact is they know we're ready to meet them. If they pull out their weapons, we're there.

MATTHIAS

You think this will actually work?

LUCAS

It can.

NATALIE

I think it's a lot of word by mouth.

LUCAS

You're suddenly daunted by word of mouth? Matthias: are you in?

MATTHIAS  
(to Natalie)

Are they crazy?

NATALIE

Of course. Our mountains turn brains to red sand.

MATTHIAS

It won't work.



NATALIE

I don't know it won't. Don't know it will.

LUCAS

If it doesn't, what do we lose?

TERESA

But time.

LUCAS

Are you in?

MATTHIAS

Run for office? I don't even like it here.

LUCAS

Natalie, we need you too. It won't work without you both.

MATTHIAS

(to Ethan)

What do you think?

ETHAN

It's not my plan, but my brotherman Lucas the Zero does impossible things.

(Matthias looks at Natalie. Then:)

MATTHIAS

Nakwa.

NATALIE

Nakwa

LUCAS

Ondu! (to Ethan) See, sheeki bo? Hee hee!

(Lucas and Teresa do a little dance.)

ETHAN

Alright, nakwa too. Presti then:

(All pull out small knives, uncover arms.)

ETHAN & LUCAS

One blood. True blood.  
Blood fill the heart with strength.

(They hold up arms, cut them. Each takes a smear of blood from his arm, paints it on his partner's arm. They clasp arms.)

ALL

Heart of blood. Heart of stone.

(They step apart.)

MATTHIAS  
So what's our next step?

LUCAS  
I would say, go back to sleep.

ETHAN  
And we'll talk.

MATTHIAS  
When?

ETHAN  
Soon. Aren't you sleepy? We'll get in touch.

LUCAS  
(holds up mask)  
What do you say: shall I throw this away and never wear it again?

ETHAN  
Easy, easy. Few months to go.

LUCAS  
(disappointed)  
Kwita. Presti.

(The three of them pull on masks, start to go.)

LUCAS  
(shaking Matthias' hand)  
Askwali.

(They hug Natalie quickly, go.  
Matthias and Natalie take a breath.)

MATTHIAS  
What do you think?

NATALIE  
Stupider plans work sometimes. That young Teresa and Lucas.

MATTHIAS  
Mm?

NATALIE  
They finish each other's sentences.

MATTHIAS  
Yes.

NATALIE  
What does the professor think about that?

MATTHIAS

Don't know. The Mountain's fogging his brain anyway. Do you ever go up there?

NATALIE

Some.

MATTHIAS

You see things up there? Strange things?

NATALIE

(looks at him, takes a beat)

I never stay long enough.

MATTHIAS

Hm. Good. Are you going to sleep?

NATALIE

Am I going to sleep? You may stay up all night with these implications if you wish. For me, I have a long day tomorrow of word by mouth.

(They go.)

**SCENE NINETEEN**

(Teresa with Maya, another woman.)

TERESA  
Does anyone say no?

MAYA  
No.

TERESA  
Who have you talked to?

MAYA  
Everyone in my assignment. Everyone agrees: write zero.

TERESA  
Do you have a list?

MAYA  
List is a thing that can be found. We don't use them for this.

TERESA  
Of course not.

MAYA  
In fact I hope you don't write my name on that.

TERESA  
I did but I see my mistake. This now gets destroyed. Sorry. I still have lots to learn.

MAYA  
You learn quickly. People ask about you.

TERESA  
Who?

MAYA  
People. They hear about you. Wonder where you come from.

TERESA  
I was born here.

MAYA  
Of course. Still wonder where you're from.

TERESA

Yes. Me too. Hard to trust someone from outside.

MAYA

Commander Zero gives you tahu, so Natalie does, so I do. No problem with that. Just curious. Some go away, they stay away. You come back. Get barnu education, use it to help us. We thank your parents. But we don't see them. Where are they?

TERESA

They couldn't come this time.

MAYA

Hm. Too bad.  
But lots we have to learn too, I suppose.  
More tomorrow. Bye.

TERESA

Thanks.

MAYA

Glad you're here. We see them next time. Right?

TERESA

Definitely.

(Maya goes.  
Drumbeat - wide deep drum.)

TERESA

Scene Nineteen: Remember me.

(A man in black mask enters. Sings a wordless song. Teresa does not apparently see the man. Is she listening to the song? Teresa starts humming the song. She begins to dance, by herself.  
Another man in black mask enters, listening to the song, watching Teresa.  
The song ends. The singer leaves.  
Stagehand removes the black mask from the other man. It is Alex.)

ALEX

Hey.

TERESA  
(startled)

Hi.

ALEX

You alone?

TERESA

Course. What are you doing out of hiding? Did anyone see you?

ALEX

No. Where have you been?

TERESA

Right here.

ALEX

You haven't had time to come out.

TERESA

No, I'm sorry, it's been crazy. You know what's happening?

ALEX

I have an idea. Matthias filled me in. On a number of things. So you've been busy?

TERESA

I'm sorry, I know it's awful out there.

ALEX

It's not so bad.

TERESA

Alex, it's not safe for you here.

ALEX

I know. I just had to uh. I'll go.

TERESA

I'll come out soon.

ALEX

Alright. You will?

TERESA

Yes.

ALEX

I know you're busy.

TERESA

I'll come. I'm worried if you stay.

ALEX

Okay. I'll see you. After this all is over, I'll see you. I'll take your word that it's all okay. I'll wait. You're uh. You're my lifeline, Terry. I trust you. I have to. Let me know when the smoke clears, will you?

TERESA

Alex . . . .

ALEX

It's okay. You're worried. I'll go. Bye.

(Starts to go. Not too fast. She stops him.)

Alex.                   TERESA

Hm?                   ALEX

Things have changed.                   TERESA

How?                   ALEX

I've changed. I'm not the person you knew.                   TERESA

How's that?                   ALEX

I don't know. This place. This air.                   TERESA

And the people here, huh?                   ALEX

Everything. I didn't expect it to hit me like this. That other town, that college, that time. It's so far away. Like another life.                   TERESA

Terry. You do what you have to do. I can accept it. I can wait. I'll be there. Forever. Remember that symbol on the ground. I love you. I trust you. I'll wait for you.                   ALEX

Alex. Don't wait.                   TERESA

I can.                   ALEX

Please don't.                   TERESA

Why not?                   ALEX

Because.                   TERESA

What?                   ALEX

I'm in love.                   TERESA

ALEX

Yes me too.

TERESA

With Lucas. Commander Zero, his name his Lucas.

ALEX

Yes I know. Matthias told me his name. Do you mean you love us both? Or do you mean you don't love me anymore?

TERESA

Did we ever use that word?

ALEX

I did. I suppose you did not. I suppose that little subject and predicate you withheld from me, and I only inferred. What else did you withhold?

TERESA

Alex, I know what happened. With us. But there were limits. There were deep places I didn't allow myself into. This, with him, there are no barriers. It's as though it always existed, just waiting to be found. It pulls on parts of my heart I didn't know. I'm sorry, but it's true.

ALEX

What about our language project?

TERESA

Maybe we need to put that on hold. For a while.

ALEX

Gelitu, huh?

TERESA

What?

ALEX

Forever passing away. So your mother finally wins.

TERESA

Please don't say that.

ALEX

You found somebody who looks like you. Are you a handsome couple? Are you ethnically homogenous enough?

TERESA

That is not what this is about.

ALEX

Is it not.

TERESA

No. You don't know him.



ALEX

I know you. I know your mother, I know this place and its devotion to blood. I'm sure he's a good person, I'm sure he's great, he's perfect, he's wonderful, I mean it, I actually believe he must be special. And I'm also sure he's the right skin color.

TERESA

I can never choose this without it being my mother's idea?

ALEX

Can you tell me it's not? Can you tell me with all your heart and mind that blood and skin play no part in this?

TERESA

This conversation is over.

ALEX

Is it? Is it? Maybe I'll have a conversation with him. How full blood are you, I wonder? Does he know about me?

TERESA

Don't be petty.

ALEX

No? You haven't told him?

TERESA

It's in the past.

ALEX

It's harmless then, right? Why not tell him? I think he should know. I'll be happy to tell him. I've heard their speeches, fullblood halfblood no blood traitor. Is that why you haven't told him? I'll do it if you want.

TERESA

Are you threatening me?

ALEX

With the truth, that's all.

TERESA

It's still a threat. If that's what you mean, I'll take it seriously.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I don't mean to threaten. Why shouldn't he know?

TERESA

He has no reason to yet. We're not at that stage.

ALEX

You're not? What stage are you?

TERESA

Don't press me.

ALEX

Does he love you?

TERESA

I think so.

ALEX

You *think* so? This is about what you *think*?

TERESA

Alex please. Please. I need you to be my friend. I don't know if I'm dreaming. I don't know if I can have this, I don't know if I deserve it. You can destroy it if you want. You can take it away. Or you can be my friend. You can be my help when I need you. I don't know how to beg you more. Don't take this away. This is home. This is home I thought I could never have. I am begging you with all that is in my heart, please please don't take this away from me.

ALEX

Terry. I'm the boy that would give his life for you. Remember me?

TERESA

Yes I remember you. I remember everything about you.

ALEX

I could no more steal your happiness than kill my own heart. Of course I'm your friend. I'll be your friend, of course, Terry, of course.

TERESA

Thank you. Thank you. I know it's awful. I just need you to understand.

ALEX

I do.

TERESA

Thank you. I do love you. Not like that, maybe. But like this.

(They move toward some kind of gentle embrace, but don't quite make it, because:)

ALEX

I do understand. I do. Just . . .

TERESA  
(gently)

What?

ALEX

Just. Don't. Leave me, Terry.

TERESA

Alex . . . .

ALEX

Don't go. I can't close off this artery, Terry, you're my work, you're my breath, you're all I have left on the planet . . . .

(He's actually bent over in some pain.)

ALEX

Terry . . . I've found out some things . . . I can show you . . . Will you come outside for a minute . . .

TERESA

I don't think that would be a good idea.

ALEX

Please. It won't take long.

TERESA

I don't think so.

ALEX

Why not?

TERESA

I don't think you can handle this.

ALEX

I can't what? I can't handle it? What's that mean?

TERESA

I hoped we could be friends but I don't think that's a good idea now. I'm sorry. It's awful. But there's nothing else to say.

ALEX

Oh there is. I am watching your heart turn hard in front of me. I am watching your eyes turn stone. Are you dying? Is the ground taking over your body? Terry --

(Tapping of white sticks, and now a sharp clack of wood: Alex freezes into an angular dance-like pose; he shouts, with other voices shouting with him.)

ALEX

CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING! ARE YOU BLIND! ARE YOU ROCK! ARE YOU DEAD WOOD STONE!

(A demon mask is held up over his face.)

ALEX

CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

(Teresa stands in horror; turns, runs out.)

ALEX

The love that gives. The love that tears  
tears

TEARS

TEARS

(He dances about, clacking wood punctuating his motions. The mask disappears. Large paper and large pen are held up, float in the air around his dance. He speaks, other voices whispering with him.)

ALEX

dear sir  
dear zero  
i think you should know  
oh yes you should know  
you should not go through life not knowing  
when you touch her know  
when she touches you know  
when you feel yourself in her please know  
when you lounge in your pure love for her  
when you build your eternal planet with her  
please know that you are just mud and fire  
but others have circled the stars

**SCENE TWENTY**

(Lucas and Ethan unmasked.)

ETHAN  
(to audience)

Scene Twenty. Hoonak!

LUCAS  
You always think I'm hoonak.

ETHAN  
This time I'm right.

LUCAS  
It's too important.

ETHAN  
Then give it time.

LUCAS  
How much time? If any of this works it's because they are all of them with us, and if that's so we need to start out clean. Every day we wait someone else dies or gets hurt. Three people beat kwita just today.

ETHAN  
So a few fangatu settlers are saved from bruises, maybe, or maybe all this work for nothing.

LUCAS  
If we take the office and people keep dying, then all this for nothing.

ETHAN  
You're going to do this?

LUCAS  
The minute we're in place. The first announcement I make.

ETHAN  
You're hoonak.

LUCAS  
You'd miss it if I wasn't. The sound system ready?

ETHAN  
Ready to set. Guards all trained.

LUCAS  
No trouble?

ETHAN

Nope. Who else on the platform?

(Teresa enters with paper.)

TERESA

Alright, three versions: one for print, one for translating -- and that's the one that will go in the history books -- and one for you. We should go over pronunciations.

(Lucas and Ethan have exchanged a look, and Lucas give him a little nod.)

ETHAN

You go ahead. I'm uh.

(Ethan goes. Teresa looks after him. Then at Lucas.)

TERESA

What's wrong with him?

LUCAS

Nothing. He's uh.

(Pause.)

TERESA

He's uh what?

LUCAS

Got things to do.

TERESA

Is something wrong?

(Lucas looks at her, then pulls a piece of paper from a pocket; unfolds it, hands it to her. She reads it quickly.)

TERESA

I see.

LUCAS

I don't know what to make of this. You know this man?

TERESA

Yes. He's a friend. From Ashcroft.

LUCAS

This comes to Ethan. Addressed to Commander Zero, he comes past, gets it first. How well you know this friend?

TERESA

We worked on a language project at the university.

LUCAS

And you come to Okwalnu with him?

TERESA

No. I saw him here.

LUCAS

Mm. (pause) He seems to know how to get this letter to me. Or to Ethan.

TERESA

That's not a challenge. He could have left it on the ground and it would find its way. He knows Matthias.

LUCAS

Yah. I think that's how. Not through you.

(Pause.)

LUCAS

He mean trouble?

TERESA

I don't know.

(pause)

The last time I saw him. He acted. Unbalanced.

LUCAS

Mm.

(Pause.)

TERESA

Do you have something to say to me about this?

LUCAS

Like what?

TERESA

How does it make you feel?

LUCAS

Not my business to feel about it.

TERESA

Ah. Of course. Just put up a wall of glass.

LUCAS

This is not about me. Ethan and others. People have strict ideas about this sort of thing.

TERESA

Oh not about you. It's perfectly okay with you.

LUCAS

Not my place to judge.

TERESA

Not judge. Not judge. Just cast into outer darkness.

LUCAS

Nah nah nah, you're still with us, you still work with us. We don't forget all the writing you do.

TERESA

Still work with you, I see. Buried in a lake of ice, but still visible. Are you saying you have no personal stake in this matter?

LUCAS

Personal feelings are not the issue.

TERESA

I see.

LUCAS

Why do you keep asking that?

TERESA

Because. I. Had. Flattered myself that some . . . I don't know. That I was not just one of many. That perhaps the work was not all that was being shared. Between us.

LUCAS

I flatter myself also. Why are *you* acting *hurt*?

TERESA

Because you have not even bothered to ask if the statements in this letter are TRUE or not. Some crazy man scribbles about what he thought might have happened and you hesitate no second, no instant of time to believe it.

LUCAS

Is he lying?

TERESA

I don't know what he thinks is true. I don't know what he imagined. Were you going to ask me? Were you ever going to ask me?

(Lucas looks at her, then rises and calls.)

LUCAS

Ethan!

(to her)

I have failed to trust you again. After I take tuwuva I would never never again. You who are most precious to me in the world. Do you know why I come to fail?

TERESA

Why?

LUCAS

Because that letter put my heart in two pieces. Now it's one piece again. Ethan!



(Kisses her as Ethan comes in.)

ETHAN  
What, what? What are you doing?

LUCAS  
She says it's not true.

ETHAN  
Why's he do it?

LUCAS  
We don't know. Maybe he falls for Teresa. It happens.

ETHAN  
Yes I see that. (to her) How well you know him?

TERESA  
He was a friend. A professor at the university.

ETHAN  
How well though?

TERESA  
What do you mean?

ETHAN  
I mean all sorts of ways and people can be used to make trouble. You know him before you came here?

TERESA  
Yes.

ETHAN  
Before you decide to come?

TERESA  
Yes. He's not some kind of spy, if that's what you mean.

ETHAN  
Are you sure?

TERESA  
Yes.

ETHAN  
Are you certain? You close enough to this man that you know for sure?

(Pause.)

TERESA  
No.

TERESA & OTHER VOICES  
(unseen voices support her voice)

No.

(Pause.)

LUCAS  
We don't know either. He's the guy in hiding for hitting a cop?

ETHAN  
I think so.

LUCAS  
Lotta trouble just for a cover.

ETHAN  
Maybe. (points at letter) Good way to open up holes between us.

LUCAS  
It fails. We got bigger fish, don't we?

ETHAN  
(pauses, takes letter)  
Could be.  
(looks at the letter)  
He says you should meet him tonight at the turnaround.

LUCAS  
Should I?

TERESA  
No.

LUCAS  
I think I should.

ETHAN  
I think you should not. We don't know he's not some kind of agent.

LUCAS  
Maybe he just needs talk.

ETHAN  
Let it go. You might lose your temper. I would.

LUCAS  
Okay, okay.

ETHAN  
Let him steam. He better lay low if he knows what's good for him.

LUCAS  
Be nice. He's a friend of a friend.

ETHAN

Yes yes, we'll put out a warrant. We can do that now.

LUCAS

(turns to Teresa, takes her hands)

It's alright now. It's good. Yes?

(She nods.)

LUCAS

(to Ethan)

Big changes. You know Teresa here wants to set up a wire servees, so everyone learns to read and write to each other in public.

ETHAN

Good idea.

LUCAS

(to her)

We use the tools they force on us. But from now, we write our own history. This where you want to be right now?

TERESA

Noplace else in the world.

(They go.)

## SCENE TWENTY-ONE

(Fast drumbeat. Cheers. Enter many people, all wearing black face-covering masks. They carry the white masks and hang them on the razorwire, covering the fence with white masks that shine at us. As they hang the masks, Commander Zero's amplified voice from upstage, along with amplified crowd noises, which the onstage listeners join.)

## COMMANDER ZERO

Are you strong?

(crowd cheer)

Are you stronger than anything now?

(crowd cheer)

Did we need to lift a hand in violence?

(crowd: No!)

They melt like hot butter. We win without lies. We win without corruption. We show our hongvi. We show our commakht. I am Commander Zero!

(crowd cheer)

My name is Lucas. I spend my life in the woods of Blood Mountain, but now no more!

(crowd cheer)

I cover my face in sivu and fear, but no more!

(crowd cheer)

No more checkpoints!

(cheer! as one of the white masks is smashed.)

No more curfew!

(cheer! as a white mask is smashed.)

No more border police!

(cheer! as a white mask is smashed.)

No more stealing our copper, our water, our lives!

(cheer! as a white mask is smashed.)

(Cheer! as a white mask is smashed.  
In a separate pool of light, enter Teresa, by herself.)

## TERESA

Let me come to him pure.

In my heart he is my first and only love.

(a white mask is smashed)

Burn my heart.

Burn him into my heart.

(a white mask is smashed)  
 Whatever is not him in my heart, burn away.  
 (a white mask is smashed)  
 Whatever is not him in my heart, drop away.  
 (a white mask is smashed)  
 Let all the gates of my heart open to him.  
 Only to him. Let all the gates shut to all else.  
 Only open to Lucas.

(Cheer! as a white mask is smashed.  
 A loud sustained high-pitched cheering  
 sound as Teresa walks to the razorwire. Still  
 in a private space, she steps close, reaches up,  
 clenches it in her fists. The high-pitched  
 cheer reaches a climax.)

#### COMMANDER ZERO

No more tanks, no more old Council, no more pipes bleeding our water!

(Cheer! as several masks are smashed.)

#### TERESA

One blood. True blood.  
 (a white mask is smashed)  
 Blood fill the heart with strength.  
 (a white mask is smashed)  
 Heart of blood. Heart of stone.  
 (a white mask is smashed)  
 Hard as stone. True as blood.  
 This is my home. This my strength.

(She lifts her hands away from the razorwire.  
 She holds up her bloody hands.)

#### TERESA

Okwalnu is my home.  
 My name is Teresa and Okwalnu is my home.

(Cheer! as several white masks are smashed.  
 Teresa goes.)

#### COMMANDER ZERO

Have the Okwalni elected Commander Zero?

(huge crowd cheer)

But I do not take office tomorrow.

(crowd disapproves)

I do not take office tomorrow . . . unless. Unless. I do not take office if people die  
 for it now. I do not take office in vengeance. I do not take office unless no fangatu  
 barnu are harmed. No beating, no death, no vengeance. We are the power now. I  
 do not take office unless this happens. Do I take office tomorrow?

(crowd cheer)

Are we strong?

(crowd cheer, extended)

Is our country Saldu, or is it Okwalnu?

## CROWD

Okwalnu! Okwalnu! Okwalnu! Okwalnu!

(Extended cheer as the crowd leaves.

Alex has entered. Listening. When crowd leaves, he sits, brooding.  
Another crowd cheer offstage.  
Enter Joshua. Looks at Alex.)

## JOSHUA

Hey.

(No answer.)

## JOSHUA

Hey. You Bill's friend?

(Alex looks up at him.)

## JOSHUA

Alex. That your name?

(Alex just looks at him.)

## ALEX

Joshua. We went fishing.

## JOSHUA

Yeah.

## ALEX

Bill's dead.

## JOSHUA

Yeah he is. What are you doin out here?

## ALEX

Waiting for somebody. Not gonna come, I don't think.

## JOSHUA

You better get inside.

## ALEX

You mean us barneys?

## JOSHUA

I'm mean I'm going home myself and keeping the door closed.

## ALEX

Didn't you hear? Commander Zero says no violence.

## JOSHUA

He can say whatever he wants. Come on, I'll give you a hand.

(Tries to help Alex up; Alex shrugs him off.)

ALEX

Lemme alone. You think a barney's safer with a halfblood?

JOSHUA

(stares; then)

Don't sit out here, man.

(Joshua goes. Alex sits.  
Another crowd cheer offstage.  
Enter two men, singing. They stop, seeing  
Alex.)

FIRST

Hey. You presti?

(Alex doesn't respond.)

SECOND

Hey Barney. Hey Willy-am.

(They move toward him. Alex jumps up,  
tense.)

FIRST

Ho ho whoa whoa, relax, Jonny. We just wonder if you're okay. Okay?

(Alex doesn't respond.)

FIRST

(to other)

He okay?

SECOND

Donno.

FIRST

You still look scared, Barney. You think maybe cuz we're in charge now, you should be scared. It's okay. Our new council head says don't hurt you or any of yours.

ALEX

Your Commander Zero.

SECOND

It talks!

ALEX

Commander Zero speaks, you obey. Right?

FIRST

We listen close to Commander Zero. You look presti after all. Bye.

(They start to walk away. Alex spits on the ground. They stop, look at him.)

ALEX

That's for your King Zero.

SECOND

You got some nards, Barneyman. Mosta you home behind walls and shaking, but you're not even careful where you spit. What if that hit someone?

(Alex spits again. Second steps toward him, but First stops him.)

FIRST

Presti, man. We know what it's like. Somebody else in power. Feels like shit. Yeah. Sokay. We look past it.

(Alex spits again. First and Second look at each other, then laugh, turn to go.)

ALEX

How's it feel when we fuck your women?

(They are stopped. First turns to stare at him, puzzled.)

FIRST

You know me? We meet someplace? You got something you want from me?

ALEX

Just wonders if it bothers you. When one of your women is fucked by one of us.

SECOND

Barney, you don't know him. You don't know either of us.

ALEX

His woman, for example. King Zero. His woman. Because I fucked her. She'll never be first time pure for him. I filled her with too much spooj to be anyone's virgin bride. You can take that message to your Zero the Boss. I saw her face open like a flower. That sort of thing only happens once. And it happened for me. Not him. That part of her is mine for all time.

FIRST

That all you want to say?

ALEX

Say it to his face if he showed it.

FIRST

You fucked his woman.

ALEX

Fucked her a lot.



FIRST

(pauses; steps closer)

I'm sorry for you, my friend. You missed the good old days. Nothing to conquer anymore. That why you come here? Habit, hard to break, I know. Sorry. Your grampa, his grampa maybe. They come here, just grab someone. Call em an exotic flower. Throwem down, fuckem on the ground, walk away whistling. Or killem. Or stick a rifle up their cunt. It was fine, it was legal. Even little girls. No one to call to. You miss those days, Barney? Miss being one of those conquer guys, huh? Too bad. You missed it. Not by much though. You don't know me. You don't know things that happened to me.

(They face off, close.)

ALEX

Still pisses your dick off, doesn't it.

(First grabs Alex's shirt, will strike; instead, gives him a sharp little open-hand slap on the face, shoves him away. Turns to walk away, but Alex jumps at him and swings. First easily blocks Alex's clumsy swing. In the same instant, Second steps in and they immobilize Alex, lifting arms to strike.

They freeze.)

FIRST

Call the police? Huh? We're in public. Why can't you call the police?  
For the same reason my mother could not.

FIRST & SECOND

For the same reason my mother could not.

SEVERAL VOICES

For the same reason my mother could not.

(A cheer as stagehands cover them, smashing more white masks. All move offstage, leaving a man crumpled on the ground with face away from us, Alex standing over him holding a wide-winged white bird puppet. The man on the ground is wearing the same clothes as Alex.

Alex gives voice to the white bird.)

ALEX/BIRD

How are you, body of Alex?

ALEX & OTHER VOICES

I have blood in my mouth.  
A rib bone is broken.  
My nose is bleeding.  
I can't move my leg.  
I think I'm dying.

ALEX/BIRD

You are not dying, body of Alex.  
You have more to live through.  
It is only pain.  
You were unaccustomed to it.  
Until now.

**end part one**

**PART TWO**  
**SCENE ONE**

(White masks are gone. Actors as stagehands wear no masks now.)

Drumming. A procession in black ski-masks crosses the stage, drumming triumphally. They stop, turn to us:)

ALL

Part Two.  
 The Voice of the Mountain.

(The procession starts again, moves away. Rachel enters. She wears no mask. She, reads to us from a piece of paper.)

RACHEL

To the New Council.

My name is Rachel Linden. I am a resident of Okwalnu, which for all of my life was called Saldu. I was born here and have lived here my entire life. My husband William Linden was not born here, but our son Robin was. My husband is no longer alive. He was accused of atrocities against the native people of what was then called Saldu. As far as I know, those accusations were true. I seek no revenge for my husband's death.

I am what you are calling a settler, fangatu in your language, but since this is the place of my birth, I have no desire to live anywhere else. My son and I would like to stay. I have given away stocks in water and computer companies that were given to me and others immorally and illegally. I hereby swear allegiance to the New Council as the legitimate government of Okwalnu, and we swear to abide by its laws. I will take whatever formal or legal measures required to make this permanent.

I hope this is acceptable. I don't know what else to do.

Yours.  
 Rachel Linden.

(She goes.)

**SCENE TWO**

(Teresa in a wheeled office chair near a desk. Assistants comes in and out, bringing and taking papers. Teresa is dressed conservatively, wears a sort of wreath that covers her head: the tematu.

Ethan paces.)

ETHAN

I tell him every day. You hear me tell him.

TERESA

Over and over.

ETHAN

He doesn't listen. Send them out, problem gone.

TERESA

(without looking up from her desk work)

All of them?

ETHAN

As many as it takes.

TERESA

What if they swear allegiance?

ETHAN

They have reasons for doing that. What are you, arguing? You agree with me. You ever stop working? We've got a Council meeting.

TERESA

When the others are here, I'll meet. They're on Okwalnu time and I have things to do.

ETHAN

Your literacy campaign?

TERESA

Yes.

ETHAN

You ever read what's on that wire serves of yours?

TERESA

It's not mine.

ETHAN

I guess you're not bothered by what goes on it.

TERESA  
Journal entries and poems, mostly. So what?

ETHAN  
Some are seditious.

TERESA  
Seditious is a serious word.

ETHAN  
Your servees isn't for that.

TERESA  
We set it up to use and people use it.

ETHAN  
Lots in angleesh.

TERESA  
English is still legal.

ETHAN  
For the moment.

TERESA  
I don't even speak Okwalnu.

ETHAN  
Yet. When you do, you can speak five languages instead of four. Some of the angleesh stuff is trouble.

TERESA  
Of course some of it's trouble. Anyone can post there.

ETHAN  
That's the problem.

TERESA  
It's an open service. Do you want censorship like the old Council days?

ETHAN  
Most they can barely spell.

TERESA  
We'll teach them better.

ETHAN  
Shouldn't you at least select?

TERESA  
Select who? You?

ETHAN  
Not me, I'm no writer. You and Lucas for that. Does he post there at all?

TERESA

Ethan, the point is an open service. Anyone can write, anyone can post. People haven't been heard in a hundred years, and now they can be. It's a mess for a while, but it's harmless.

ETHAN

Harmless because nobody reads it.

TERESA

Some people do. Even if it's just friends and family, that does some good.

ETHAN

And so friends and family come on this Noman's subversion next to their kiddie's rhyme.

TERESA

Who's Noman?

ETHAN

You see? You don't even read it! This Noman started out just nonsense, but now he's trouble.

(pulls out a paper)

You see if it's not subversion. Are we these angels that turn into bugs? Are we forever passing away? Are we the light of the world gone dark?

TERESA

Forever passing away?

ETHAN

Little thing, sure, just some words. But one thing then one more and one more, and bang you have what happened today. Lucas is stoneheaded about this. He always thinks everyone's goodhearted like him. But they're not.

TERESA

No they're not. Let me see that.

ETHAN

(hands her paper)

You read, you tell me it's not some settler. Here's the thing. It comes to a vote. It has to. Settlers in or settlers out. How do you vote?

TERESA

We'll see.

ETHAN

Be good to count you in.

TERESA

We'll see.

(Enter Lucas and Matthias. Teresa sets the paper aside without having a chance to read it.)

ETHAN

And?

MATTHIAS

Philip's here. Selma and Rosalya on the way. Haven't heard back from the others.

ETHAN

What's our plan?

LUCAS

We wait for everyone to get here, then we discuss it.

ETHAN

I say we make a proposal.

LUCAS

Brotherman, take it slow please.

ETHAN

Brother yourself, we don't have time for chatter. Today is not the first. How many more villages do without plumbing because fangatu break their lines? How many more generators do we build just to let them blow up?

MATTHIAS

This man wasn't blowing up anything.

TERESA

What was he doing?

MATTHIAS

Nothing. Trying to start a riot.

ETHAN

He's a Federal agent! He confessed.

LUCAS

Yes. We need to take action.

ETHAN

We need to cut short the chatter.

LUCAS

What, you want to decide before the rest of the Council is here?

ETHAN

Just a proposal.

MATTHIAS

For what?

ETHAN

He knows.

LUCAS

Ethan would like to set up a special tribunal with emergency powers.

ETHAN  
Legal tribunal. Get the job done.

MATTHIAS  
Why emergency powers?

ETHAN  
Because we're under attack!

LUCAS  
The Federals can't attack us. Their Federal money's worthless, they're broke, they're bombing their own cities, they still think they need oil more than water, they can't bring back enough troops from Isfahan.

ETHAN  
So they need us to crumble on our own. They need people inside. And not just settlers. Some of our own think being a Federal colony is better for business.

MATTHIAS  
So arrest everyone?

ETHAN  
So they all go free?

MATTHIAS  
I don't like it.

ETHAN  
Of course you don't. You're not from here.

(Matthias starts to speak, doesn't.)

LUCAS  
He is from here, matter of fact. Cool down Ethan.

ETHAN  
I'm sorry. Crisis, I get hot in the head.

MATTHIAS  
Forget it. But this idea is hot in the head.

ETHAN  
It's a compromise. You know what I really propose.

MATTHIAS  
Everyone out.

ETHAN  
Solve the problem.

LUCAS  
Ethan. We're not expelling them. All the settlers aren't spies.



ETHAN

This one was.

LUCAS

He goes on trial.

ETHAN

And the rest go free. He's not the only one.

LUCAS

We'll look for them.

ETHAN

And meanwhile protect their rights. We need something faster, tcharnimah, Lucas, you're tying our hands. Helicopters and sabotage and troops outside the border.

LUCAS

A few troops.

ETHAN

You want me to show you the surveillance equipment they have on us? You don't hear the helicopters? You don't see the jetstreams overhead?

LUCAS

Presti, presti, there's no invasion, we're talking now, we keep talking for a while. Let's you and me go see if anyone else is here. You can map your tribunal for me.

(to Teresa, of Matthias)

You cool him off in the meanwhile.

(to Ethan)

You can rant at Philip if you want.

ETHAN

Philip is with me already.

(Lucas and Ethan off.)

MATTHIAS

Military court then.

TERESA

They have to do something. Investigation in court is a good start.

MATTHIAS

Who will they answer to, you think?

TERESA

Us.

MATTHIAS

We'll see. (beat) You in touch with anybody back in Ashcroft?

TERESA

My mom.

MATTHIAS

Mm. Guess you haven't heard from your professor. Alex.

TERESA

No.

MATTHIAS

Know where he is?

TERESA

No.

MATTHIAS

Hm. You know he thought that you and he were uh.

TERESA

Yes I know he thought that.

MATTHIAS

I guess I thought so too.

TERESA

Did you. Did I ever say so?

MATTHIAS

I suppose not.

TERESA

So maybe you only had his word on it then, is that right?

MATTHIAS

I have my own eyes too, Reesa.

TERESA

You have the word of a mentally unstable man and the evidence of your eyes. Is it possible your eyes are mistaken?

MATTHIAS

Anything's possible.

TERESA

If your eyes can see into my heart., then take a good look. You see something in my heart?

MATTHIAS

(looks at her a moment; then)

No.

TERESA

Alright then.

(Enter Lucas.)

MATTHIAS

They here?

LUCAS  
Soon. Just waiting for Selma.

MATTHIAS  
Okay.

(Matthias goes quickly.)

LUCAS  
Something wrong with him?

TERESA  
Maybe it's the helicopters and the troops on the border.

LUCAS  
Could be. There a funeral today?

TERESA  
What?

LUCAS  
You've taken to wearing the tematu.

TERESA  
Oh. Very funny.

LUCAS  
You don't have to, you know. No one wears it anymore.

TERESA  
I choose to.

LUCAS  
I see.

TERESA  
Don't you like it?

LUCAS  
Not especially.

TERESA  
Well that's unfortunate.

LUCAS  
You're looking kind of thin these days.

TERESA  
Where I come from, thin is good.

LUCAS  
You keep saying that. You're from here. You're working too hard. You need some time off this literacy campaign.

TERESA

No thanks.

LUCAS

I'm the Council Head and I say everyone should rest.

TERESA

Everyone rest. That's why Okwalnu was a colony for so long. I've got work to do. Did you and Ethan decide about this tribunal?

LUCAS

He'll propose it.

TERESA

Who does it report to?

LUCAS

It's Ethan's project.

TERESA

It's a secret service then.

LUCAS

What does that mean?

TERESA

It should report to you. What if Ethan gets out of control?

LUCAS

I trust him.

TERESA

How much?

LUCAS

Much. Don't know who else I trust like that.

TERESA

I see.

LUCAS

Maybe you don't. We're kids, you know, him and me, and we run this printing press together. I work for his parents. The Federal soldiers come to smash it up. I get away. Ethan doesn't. From those soldiers he still has the scars. You ask him. He can show you.

TERESA

That was a long time ago.

LUCAS

My scars, he has. Scars meant for me, on his body. Yes I trust him. Absolutely. That's rare. I don't give that away too easy. Hard to find that tahu. Very hard.

(Silence.)

LUCAS

These helicopters. These Federal jets flying way overhead with their cameras. That's what grinds away at him now. What do they want us for? Why are we so important to them? He wants to shove all the fangatu out. That's too much, but he's right, there are some doing sabotage, there are agents. What are we supposed to do?

TERESA

He wants to censor the wire service.

(She picks up the piece of paper Ethan gave her, reads it distractedly.)

LUCAS

No censorship. Course not. But he's right there too: they can write trouble on that service. Reesa?

(Teresa has been reading the paper. She starts breathing heavily, her body has tightened up, and her fists have clenched, apparently without her control, crumpling the paper in her hand. Lucas steps to her.)

LUCAS

You presti?

(She doesn't answer. Her eyes are closed. Lucas kneels down before her, pulls the paper out of her hand, drops it. Holds her hands.)

LUCAS

Hey. Hey. What's wrong?

TERESA

Don't know. You're right. Working too hard. All this.

(Lucas gently lifts her hands to his face, gently and repeatedly kisses the tight-clenched fists. As he does so:)

LUCAS

All this, sha, okay, hard work. But we win in the end, you know. We have the water. We make the choices. We jump over their backs and make friends with the world. Thanks to you. You're a gift to all of us. Not just for me. But especially for me. Most carefully, precisely, specially, specially for me.

(Gradually she relaxes and her hands open.)

LUCAS

If I could control you, I would make you take a day off. Rest your heart. But of course I can't. So all I can do is kneel down here and beg.

TERESA

(takes his face in her hands)

You are the gift I did nothing to earn. You are everything I love. You are everything

that moves me. You are everything that makes me believe in the world. You are the best of my heart

VOICE  
(off)

Lucas!

LUCAS  
Sha! We better go. You okay?

TERESA  
Yeah.

VOICE  
Lucas!

LUCAS  
(off)  
Coming!

(to her)  
Okay. Let's go, huh?

(Stands. They start to go off. Lucas goes off first. Teresa is almost off, but hesitates. Steps back to the chair, picks up the crumpled paper. Uncrumples it and stands looking at it.  
At the opposite edge of the stage, enter Alex. Teresa and Alex turn to us.)

TERESA & ALEX  
Part Two. Books of the Dead.

### SCENE THREE

(The white winged bird floats just overhead. A faceless actor enters as the Body of Alex, who writes, apparently, in the air; sometimes in small letters, sometimes in impossibly huge letters, always furiously. Alex narrates as he watches what the Body composes. Alex's voice is joined by the voice of the Body and the voice of the stagehand manipulating the white bird)

#### ALEX/BODY/VOICE

I float over land no longer mine  
I see myself tossing and spinning in torment  
and all the while riding great shoulders of wind  
across vast continents of sky.  
How can I sleep  
when each moment might be you  
forever passing away?

(Teresa crumples the paper and leaves. Alex moves slowly, with a slight limp. He walks toward us, gazing at us. The bird hovers over him. Alex speaks with a slight clenching of the teeth as his jaw recovers.)

#### ALEX

There was a man whose name was Alex. He lived in a cave in the pebblewood forests on the side of Blood Mountain. He walked with a slight limp. From an injury that never healed. Sometimes it hurt to laugh very hard. He didn't often laugh very hard.  
There were people that thought they were speaking to Alex.

(Matthias enters, stands speaking outward toward us.)

#### MATTHIAS

You okay?

#### ALEX

And he would answer them, saying  
Yeah. I'm good.

(He speaks out to us when he answers them.)

#### MATTHIAS

Need anything?

ALEX  
No.

(Matthias goes.)

ALEX  
Or

NATALIE  
(enters, speaking toward us)  
You sure you're alright?

ALEX  
Yeah, I'm fine  
Alex would say.

NATALIE  
You don't look alright. You eating your food or feeding it to birds?

ALEX  
Birds gotta eat. Just kidding. Course I'm eating it. Am I thin?

NATALIE  
A little.

ALEX  
I'm fine.

(Natalie goes.)

ALEX  
Alex was puzzled at the way they spoke to him, because of course they were only addressing his body, not him at all. And only his body would answer.

(The white bird flies about, and Alex walks about loosely following its path.)

ALEX  
The man named Alex spent all his time in the brush and wood and valleys of Blood Mountain. He never slept. His body ate, but he did not. All he did was make words.

(The faceless Body of Alex writes as Alex and other voices speak, including the voice of the stagehand manipulating the white bird)

ALEX/BODY/VOICE  
The days never stop, though we beg.  
Pinwheels of lilac wither in dry wind.  
I tended jasmine and barley flower  
and hoped for a thick harvest of blossoms  
but even those pleasures are choked with weeds.  
Beauty is nothing but falsehood  
and loyalty brings disaster.



## ALEX

He wrote on trees and dirt and cave walls and blades of grass and the flesh of berries.

He wrote in the light and the dark.

When he wrote he could see the future. Sometimes an ancient voice spoke through him, seeing the future. Sometimes a voice from the future spoke through him, remembering the past.

(A different actor has entered as the Body of Alex, writing in the air and speaking.)

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

when that day comes  
galaxies break apart  
epochs of ingathered globes and systems  
crack and shiver awake to find  
their furrowed grooves in space are crumbling  
Accustomed to ages of conquest  
they spread and wrench apart  
colliding and crushing the smallest  
spilling to fill infinity  
in smaller and smaller specks  
till the center of gravity flattens to zero  
and nothing exists but oblivious motes  
resting impossibly far apart  
as the closest of intimate stars

## ALEX

His stick of course had no ink, not even a point. All his writing was invisible.

(A different actor has entered as the Body of Alex, writing in the air and speaking.)

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

when that day comes  
sticks and whips will pound the earth  
and like grain they'll toss you up in the air  
if your color is rich and dark and you're full of good meat  
you'll fall to the threshing floor and be kept  
but if you're only a pallid husk  
you'll be windblown away to serve as mulch  
and be pounded again and tossed  
when that day comes  
see that your weight is sufficient  
and see that your color is right

## ALEX

Sometimes Alex would hover in the air, watching himself from above as he wrote. Then he could float down later and be surprised.

(A different actor has entered as the Body of Alex, writing in the air and speaking.)

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

A feathered arm lifts up from the dirt,

a wing unfurling its silken light  
 and a second wing and and now uprising  
 an angel with face too bright to see.  
 We have all grown wings  
 and the song of our wings brings harvest.  
 But the angel's wings grow stiff like metal.  
 The eyes divide and become many eyes.  
 The mandible jaws dilate and protrude  
 as the angel sets to consuming the harvest.  
 We drop to the dirt. Our wings are shrivelled  
 and she watches us always  
 with all her thousand eyes

ALEX

Though no one could see the writing but him, he could always go back to a spot and read aloud what he had written, impeccably, time and again.

(A different actor has entered as the Body of Alex, writing in the air and speaking.)

ALEX/BODY/VOICE

on that day a smothering cloud uprises  
 on that day a mountain breaks the sky  
 dust and blight come stepping across  
 the four directions and strip the ground  
 of its flesh

(Turns to us as the Body keeps composing.)

ALEX

Dictation from long dead prophets. Voices from future and past. His pointless stick and his legion of voices were making the landscape above and below become legible with invisible prophecies.  
 He was writing a book for no one to read. His memory was brilliant. He forgot nothing. He forgot not a thing.

**SCENE FOUR**

(Rachel stands alone. She is outside. She speaks quite loudly, for distant ears.)

RACHEL

My son was beaten in school today.

(pause)

Your lights are on.

I think some of you can hear me.

You all know who I am.

My son was beaten in school today. Four stitches. Bruises all over. A sprained arm.

(pause)

I have asked him if he wants to go back to school tomorrow.

He says yes.

I have asked him if he wants to keep living here.

He says he does.

He asked me if I want to stay.

(pause)

I haven't answered him yet.

(pause)

May my son go to school tomorrow?

(pause; louder)

May my son go to school tomorrow?

**SCENE FIVE**

(Teresa and Natalie. They stand.)

TERESA  
Do you remember who I am?

NATALIE  
Of course. And who does not know you now?

TERESA  
Is that so?

NATALIE  
The woman of legend, who returns to save us.

TERESA  
Nobody really says that, I hope.

NATALIE  
Nobody should, that's true.

(Pause.)

TERESA  
I have a question.

NATALIE  
Yes?

TERESA  
You remember a man named Alex Richardson?

NATALIE  
I do. An acquaintance of yours, if I remember.

TERESA  
Do you happen to know if he is still in Okwalnu?

NATALIE  
He is hunted for arrest. Do you assume I harbor agents?

TERESA  
You harbor many things. Opinions, attitudes, resentment. It is hard to feel safe with such things. Do you know if he is still in Okwalnu?

NATALIE  
(pause)

I'm curious why you want to know. All of a sudden.

TERESA  
Will you tell me where he is?

(Silence.)

TERESA  
There are some unfortunate things being written and posted. They sound like writing of his.

NATALIE  
You'd like someone to turn him in.

TERESA  
No. I'd like someone to give him a friendly warning.

NATALIE  
If he's alive.

TERESA  
(little pause)  
You will tell me that, I think. You will not keep that from me. You will tell me if he is alive or dead.

NATALIE  
I remain puzzled at your concern. He is alive, I do know that. Damaged some.

TERESA  
Damaged how?

NATALIE  
But he is recovering. That much I know. Beyond that, afraid I can't help you.

(Pause.)

TERESA  
I guess you can't then. I'm sorry to trouble you.

(Silence.)

TERESA  
You still have fangatu living nearby.

NATALIE  
We do.

TERESA  
You want them gone, I would guess. You would be happier with them gone. Is that right?

NATALIE  
Many say so.

TERESA

You are bothered by them. They are a spike of discomfort. You would do much to be rid of them. That is what I would guess. You would do much. You would do things to surprise even yourself if you could be free of them.

NATALIE

And you say this why?

TERESA

Just to say that you are not alone.

(Silence.

Natalie goes.

Teresa stays onstage during the beginning of the following scene.)

## SCENE SIX

(An actor as the Body of Alex hurtles on, composing in particularly acrobatic style all over the stage area. Alex enters, reading the invisible words as the white bird floats in the vicinity.)

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

on that day  
 your covering fabric will split away  
 you will stand revealed in all your flesh  
 but even that mask of skin will crack  
 your flesh will rip apart to reveal  
 your heart with all of its petty hungers  
 but even your frozen heart will be torn  
 in jagged tatters to reveal  
 the empty sky inside and that sky  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 the sun but even the face of the sun  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 the moon but even the face of the moon  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 the stars but the stars one by one  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 cold space but even invincible space  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 a fist but even that trembling fist  
 will be ripped apart to reveal inside  
 the red cloth of sorrow and that and that  
 will grip and tear at itself itself  
 and leave your turning universe bleeding  
 a song that no one can hear

(Teresa leaves quickly, invisible to Alex.)

## ALEX

Alex was content in his invisible garden, floating above his composing body.

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

on that day  
 the sun will not rise  
 and midnight will last for all time  
 we'll burn the icehard wood for warmth  
 then burn dry grass and the hair from our head  
 then learn to burn rock and metal and dirt  
 then burn the stars from the sky and then  
 we'll learn to burn air and the flesh of our bodies

and then burn our bones until we are nothing  
 but eyes in space swimming in darkness  
 watching the songs we made to remember  
 heat  
 swimming in darkness with us

ALEX

But one day he noticed a peculiar thing.

(The Body of Alex stops, staring at something. Alex joins the Body, reads aloud.)

ALEX/BODY/VOICE

before time before all things there was  
 the moonberry  
 which carried inside the pollen of the universe

ALEX

It was nice. But he didn't remember putting it there.

ALEX/BODY/VOICE

moonberry opened its petals becoming  
 pearlflower  
 and out of the pearlflower moonberry's belly  
 came world and sky and night and time  
 starpetal grassbell wingroot clusterbeak  
 and the scrape and warble and chatter of earth

ALEX

His memory was perfect, remember. He would have remembered composing an origin tale on this berry. In fact he wasn't sure he could write that small, even invisibly.

This wasn't a crisis at first. Anyone's memory can fail them once. But as it turned out, this wasn't an isolated incident. The next day:

(The Body of Alex has noticed another. Alex joins him/her.)

ALEX/BODY/VOICE

before time before all things  
 there was bird  
 who created air  
 to lift her wing

she built the pavilions of air by releasing  
 the bubbles of song in her throat  
 and the air will lift as long as the song  
 upholds it but only that long  
 so even today descendants of bird  
 must sing to make air  
 so they can fly

ALEX

In fact, each day he would find one. But only one.



## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

before time   before all things   there was  
 spider  
 who was hungry  
 and wove in a circle the web of the world  
 to catch some lunch in its invisible filaments

## ALEX

Only one each day, no matter how much or how little he wandered. He would count all his landscape of prophecies, he would tabulate them carefully, but each day it came up one more, one more than he could remember. If he ran around looking, he'd find one more. If he stayed in one place, he'd find one more, close by, which he had somehow overlooked.

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

before time   before all things   there was  
 neither light nor dark   but obsidian  
 smooth and hard with immaculate face  
 but obsidian wanted touch  
 and obsidian thus made light to touch its face  
 and leave no mark to spoil perfection

## ALEX

The man named Alex became obsessed. He began spending all his daylight searching the new spot out, counting them all, recounting, searching, which of course left no time for composing his own. Were they messages, he wondered? Did someone know his invisible language? Some voice from the past, or worse, from the present? Or was memory failing after all? You can understand why he had to know.

(Different Bodies of Alex enter to read  
 different poems.)

## ALEX/BODY/VOICE

before all things in time  
 there was bug  
 who first made sound  
 with the tremble of wing . . . .

before time   before all things   there was  
 the hornbark tree  
 that spread thick roots and crumbled them up  
 to make earth . . . .

before time   before all things   there was  
 stone  
 that wet with dew brought forth  
 moss  
 that touched by air brought forth  
 a stem  
 which drinking light brought forth  
 buds . . . .

before time   before all things   there was  
 dirt   the color of blood and sun

and dirt that wanted to form a world  
made water . . . .

before time there was thistleweed . . . .

before time there was coinfish . . . .

moonstone

redwater

ALEX

(agitated now)

He checked his familiar spots. All he'd composed were just as he left them. His memory left no blanks. What then? Where were these interlopers from? One new each day, each day, morning or noon or night, sooner or later, search and scavenge and find it, relentless, day after day after day no more no less.

(He has worn himself out.)

The answer came unexpected.

## SCENE SEVEN

(Guards enter. To audience:)

GUARDS

Scene Seven: Never Give Up.

(A bedraggled mans staggers on, kneels facing us.)

MAN

you train my hands for war  
 my fingers for battle  
 you are my rock  
 you are my fortress  
 rise up empire  
 rise up dominion  
 let your empire smile on us and we shall be safe  
 touch the mountains and make them smoke  
 shatter the yoke of the world  
 your enemies sharpen their blades  
 but the weapons they sharpen will kill themselves  
 pour out your anger on them  
 bring down the malicious  
 and set the virtuous upright  
 awake my nation  
 dominion is still my citadel  
 i am your sword  
 your enemies fall like grass before me  
 dominion mother of nations  
 your empire will last for all time

(While he speaks, Lucas, Ethan, Teresa,  
 Matthias enter. Guards now lift him and take  
 him away.)

MATTHIAS

That's who we're up against.

ETHAN

Empire cultists. They still believe the Federals are in control.

MATTHIAS

Even after that Federal bombing of Nampa?

ETHAN

They don't give up. These empire nuts are why Ninguna Parte is gone, and now they're here.

LUCAS

Does he have some kind of weapon?

MATTHIAS

No.

LUCAS

Alright then.

ETHAN

Not that we find yet.

LUCAS

Or maybe not at all.

ETHAN

They spread this word. Someone has a printing press.

LUCAS

Well we know how that's done. Brotherbrotherbrother, shall we find all the printing presses and shut them down?

ETHAN

Very funny brotherbrother. What do you propose? We wait till they have enough weapons to show us?

LUCAS

You have your tribunal. What else do you want? Some fangatu are friendly.

ETHAN

A few.

LUCAS

You don't know how many. You just know fangatu are easy to pick and easy to punish.

ETHAN

Some haven't spoken. Teresa? What do you think?

TERESA

What I think. Is. They're hungry. Like ghosts.

(Pause; all stare at her, puzzled.)

LUCAS

So, what. They're haunting us? They're devils? Is that what you mean? We drive them out, like demons, and all our problems go away?

TERESA

I didn't say that.

LUCAS

I don't know what you said then. All problems never go away. And all the fangatu don't go away. They don't have horns, they don't have fangs. Let's make this a

place where they want to live. Let's find out who wants to make real trouble. Settler and anyone else. And deal with them each person by one. While I work here that's how we do it. Are we done with this?

ETHAN

You are, looks like.

LUCAS

Okay then. I'm done. (to Teresa) You?

TERESA

I have some work.

LUCAS

Fine. (to Matthias) Come talk to me, will you?

(Lucas and Matthias leave.)

ETHAN

Time is coming soon.

TERESA

Yes.

ETHAN

You vote with us?

TERESA

I will vote.

ETHAN

Against Lucas?

TERESA

(pause)

Lucas isn't always right.

(She leaves.)

## SCENE EIGHT

(Alex enters and sits, exhausted. The Body of Alex has disappeared. The white bird hovers. He stares at a spot.)

ALEX

There came a day. When for all his looking. There was no new writing. Anywhere. He looked all morning all day all night. He counted and counted again. He wondered what he had done wrong. Alex was out of strength. He sat alone watching a pinbug spin. He sat for a long time watching. Long time.

(He does so.)

ALEX/VOICE

before time  
before things  
pinbug  
spun  
the circle of heat  
to make ground  
and struck the ground with its curved backwing  
to make plant  
and buzzed a pattern of sound on the air  
till plant made leaf  
  
and bug was hungry  
and fed

ALEX

The writing just appeared. As he stared.  
And then he understood.

(The white bird hovers quite close.)

ALEX

They were always there. All of them always. Even the ones he thought he had written, he hadn't written at all. All he had done was stare hard enough, and the landscape revealed its creation. That's why his stylus didn't need ink. It was only outlining the writing that was already there. Had always been there. Would always be there. He had never composed a single thing. Nor ever would need to. The world was already quilted with it, and he only needed to look.

OTHER VOICES

before time there was bug  
before bug there was bird  
before bird there was stone  
before stone there was wind  
before wind there was ground  
before ground there was bug

(The white bird flies off and disappears.  
Another person enters, not the Body of Alex,  
but a young man, walking uncertainly,  
bloodied and injured. It is Rachel's son  
Robin. Alex sees, leaps up to hide.)

ALEX

In the middle of this, a new human appeared in Alex's country. No humans came there. Was he wrong? Did this human do the composing? Was he . . . oh.

(Robin kneels as if by water. Scoops water to  
drink. Washes his painful cuts and bruises.  
Tries to wash injuries on his back.)

ALEX

It was Robin. The boy. Bill's son. And Rachel's. Alex knew him. The man named Alex . . . or his body at least . . . might have come out and said hello . . . but the boy was hurt. As if he had been. Hit. Hard. Many times. And the man named Alex found himself. Somehow. Unable to . . .

(Alex runs away.  
Robin washes his wounds.  
Animal noises surround him.)

**SCENE NINE**

(Rachel and Natalie in Natalie's house. They stand side by side. Natalie is polite but stiff, as she was with Teresa.)

NATALIE  
I don't know how I can help you.

RACHEL  
I don't know either.

(Pause.)

NATALIE  
Is it so important for you to stay?

RACHEL  
I was born here. I've never lived anywhere else. I've never wanted to. This is my home.

NATALIE  
What about your son? What's he want?

RACHEL  
He won't leave. I would go for his sake, but he would run away and come back.

NATALIE  
Kids will say that.

RACHEL  
He means it. He would live on Blood Mountain. He already spends all the time there he can. I think he'd fall sick without it. He needs it.

(Pause.)

RACHEL  
Thank you for letting me talk to you. That's all I can ask.

NATALIE  
Of course. Anyone can talk.

(Rachel looks at her; nods; turns to go.)

NATALIE  
The boys who hurt your son. They were punished. We don't look kindly on that sort of thing.

(pause)  
I can't promise that no such thing will happen again. No one can guarantee what children will do.



RACHEL

No.

NATALIE

It wasn't with our permission. That's all.

(Pause.)

RACHEL

Thank you for that.

(She goes.)

**SCENE TEN**

(Teresa sits.  
Somewhere behind her, the Body of Alex  
speaks.)

**BODY OF ALEX**

no longer mine  
tossing and spinning in torment  
riding great shoulders of wind  
forever passing  
vast continents of sky  
forever passing away

(Lucas enters. The Body of Alex disappears.  
Teresa does not get up.)

**TERESA**

Hello.

(He sits. Silent.)

**LUCAS**

You wish you were with him after all. Nothing I do can stop it.

**TERESA**

What?

**LUCAS**

We make this war with them after all. Nothing I do can stop it. Might as well be living in the bushes again.

**TERESA**

What happened?

**LUCAS**

The pipeline. They've taken control of the office and headquarter plant, so they can start up flow if they want. We'd have to cut the pipeline to stop it.

**TERESA**

The plant at the base of the mountain?

**LUCAS**

They call themselves the Government in Exile of Saldu and ask for support from the Federal government. So far the federals can't spare troops but they recognize them as legitimate government. Looks to be a collection of fighters. Some wearing those Max Computer private security uniforms. Some no uniforms at all.

**TERESA**

Settlers.

LUCAS

Maybe. Some look more familiar. John Truboy.

TERESA

Who?

LUCAS

Old Council police. A muscle who likes sharp toys.

TERESA

You have to respond.

LUCAS

Course we do. How?

TERESA

Get them out of that plant.

LUCAS

That's what Ethan says.

TERESA

He's right.

LUCAS

He's right a lot lately, huh?

TERESA

What does that mean?

LUCAS

What I hear from you. Ethan's right, one time after another.

TERESA

You can't let this pass.

LUCAS

Course not. We have to kill people to get what we want.

TERESA

Did they kill anyone taking over that plant?

LUCAS

Yes. So we should. Ethan's right again. Turns out he's right all along. You're censoring your wire servees now.

TERESA

There's too much to publish.

LUCAS

Ethan wants a wall. All around Okwalnu. What do you think about that?

TERESA

I don't know.

LUCAS  
(holds up a piece of paper)

And this?

TERESA

What is it?

LUCAS  
Draft of instructions for police. How to look for suspected disloyals. Including physical descriptions of types. What do you think their skin color turns out to be? Did you know about this?

TERESA

He mentioned it to me.

LUCAS

You like this? You want this?

TERESA

I don't like it. I don't want any of it.

LUCAS

But you want to settlers to go. You want the fangatu out. If it comes to a vote, you vote with him against me. Isn't that correct?

TERESA

You don't understand.

LUCAS

Understand what?

TERESA

You don't know them. You think you can win them over, you think if you're gentle enough you can make friends, but you can't. They won't stop wanting what they want, and you won't have peace as long as they want it. They think they deserve it. Why should they forget when we never did? They will never leave us alone.

LUCAS

So we live forever under their strength? Our life is nothing but not being them? When do we start our own life? When do we put them behind us and stop being nothing but what they make us? Their bad dream? Their failure, their punishment? Do they control us always and always? Don't you want us to be just us?

TERESA

More than anything.

LUCAS  
(brandishing paper)

Is this us? Is this who we are? A wall won't keep them out, just keep us in. A wall is not just a thing on the ground.

TERESA

I lived with them. When you were on the Mountain with your brothers. You don't know them.

LUCAS

I miss those days on the Mountain.

TERESA

I thought you hated it

LUCAS

Better than this. We're never at home. Rather be living in a cave.

TERESA

That time is gone. We can't keep playing crazy Mountain games. We have to move into the future. Ugly choices. What do you want? Should we give up? Let them take the pipeline, and then the city, and be back to nothing?

(Pause.)

TERESA

I don't want to lose you.

LUCAS

Why would you lose me?  
Here.

(takes her hand)

I don't remember much of the Mountain. But this one:

(Starts to draw on her hand. She pulls away.)

TERESA

Whatever that is it won't save us. Whatever you had on your mountain, we have to put that behind us and do what we have to do.

(She goes.  
Lucas sits, stares forward grimly.  
Ethan enters with Matthias.  
Lucas continues to stare forward.)

ETHAN

No question now.

MATTHIAS

Any federals with them?

ETHAN

None that we see. Doesn't mean they're not there.

MATTHIAS

We need a vote from the Council.

ETHAN

We don't have time. They barricade in, they reinforce walls and plant explosives.

MATTHIAS

We can't move without a vote.

ETHAN

We talk, they prepare. Get the council, have a vote, but we don't wait.

MATTHIAS

Who's this We making all the decisions?

ETHAN

We, we, the we that make things happen.

MATTHIAS

You, that is. Ethan.

ETHAN

The we that always live here, then. No wahayta from Ashcroft. Is that what you want me to say out loud?

LUCAS

Ethan.

ETHAN

What?

LUCAS

You remember digging that trench? Measuring the bulldozer treads so we get it just right, too wide to cross, too narrow to go down in and come back up?

ETHAN

You want us to dig a trench now?

LUCAS

I want you to be less happy about this. We stopped that bulldozer. That trench back then, that's a clever plan. This now, this is ending up stupid in the mud with them.

ETHAN

We're in the mud. We better win.

LUCAS

Anyone can kill people, get what they want. Kill and blow up and bring down calamity. What about those helicopters and troops and surveillance satellites you always wanna show me? How much excuse you think they need?

ETHAN

We don't lie down.

LUCAS

We're here cuz we use other ways. We win the election, we drive them out --

ETHAN

Cuz we back it up, pava. Even your election. No violence you say, but they know we back it up. No weapons, but they know we have them. Now we have to use them. No peaceful march now, pava. Nothing now but win or lose. Which do you want?

LUCAS

I want us clever again, not stupid like them.

ETHAN

That choice is gone. You let the settlers stay.

(Matthias shakes head and walks away.)

LUCAS

Matthias . . . .

(Matthias waves hand angrily and goes.  
Lucas turns back to Ethan.)

LUCAS

This is not about those straggler barnu.

ETHAN

Who do you think is that Government in Exile?

(Silence.)

LUCAS

If there are Federal troops inside, or even citizens, they can't be hurt.

ETHAN

(takes out another paper, sets it for Lucas to sign)

We do what we can.

LUCAS

No killing not necessary.

ETHAN

As always.

LUCAS

No Federals die, not even by accident. Right?

ETHAN

Right.

LUCAS

This is not a victory.

ETHAN

Not yet.

LUCAS

Ethan.

ETHAN

What?

LUCAS

Don't gloat.

ETHAN

I won't, little brother.

(Ethan hurries off with signed paper. Lucas sits alone.)



**SCENE ELEVEN**

(Alex deep in a large dark cave. Carries one flashlight.)

ALEX

The man whose name was Alex was afraid of the outdoors now, for a while. He chose instead to explore the regions inside the cavern that hid him from the world. He pointed his little flashlight at the walls and ceilings and floors. He watched the patterns of stone move slowly, and sometimes they looked like glyphs that he knew. They may well have been glyphs he knew.

(He shines his light around, reads one such panel.)

ALEX

Fire. Thought Alex. To himself. The love that consumes. The love that possesses. Water. The love that rejoices. The same sign. And that one --

(He stumbles and falls, dropping the flashlight. The flashlight goes out and everything is dark. Silence for a moment. Then:)

ALEX

Shit.

Thought Alex.

Of course he had not followed expert advice. His other flashlight was not in his pocket, but far away.

A crawl on hands and knees away, most likely. If, that is, he could only remember which way was out and which was in.

Shit.

Thought Alex again.

He sat for some time. Analyzing his own stupidity in some detail. Felt around on the ground for his flashlight. Found it.

FLASHLIGHT  
(in darkness)

Click. Click. Click.

(Silence.)

ALEX

Shit.

He said out loud.

The man named Alex concluded there was nothing to do but try and make his way

in the dark. Pitch dark. He rose, almost falling again. Took one step. Another. Another. Like a blind men led by blind men without a sound. Clutching the broken flashlight in his hand. He stepped, and stepped. An occasional drip. Until he heard noises that were . . . .

(In the darkness, sounds. Distant?  
Shouting? Gunfire? Alex's voice.)

ALEX

Puzzling.

(Closer shouting and gunfire. Sounds of  
battle. Quite close)

ALEX

Alex would have hid, if hiding had any meaning in total darkness. He crouched with his arms up over his head . . . .

(Shouts, gunshots, screams of pain: a battle  
actually rages around him, in the dark, then  
passes away, dwindles to silence. Pause.  
Breathing. By someone other than Alex.

Very gradually, a red light has been coming  
up on the scene. We can see the shadowy  
figure of Alex, though he is still totally  
blinded. He is crouching on the ground in  
fear. Near him, a wounded soldier. The  
soldier sprawls, trying to move or rise,  
breathing with noisy difficulty. Alex,  
trembling, feels around toward him with  
flashlight extended like a tool; gets closer;  
pokes the soldier, who jerks in response and  
starts talking in a stream. Alex winces back  
as the soldier speaks in a monotone without  
pausing, enunciating words even on his  
intakes of breath.)

SOLDIER

my throat like bone or sandpaper swallow this grit what dirt this hot hot hot sweat  
water need water close smell it water that brook back the house what was that tree  
what kind of tree strong thick bark hung that swing board and two old ropes broke  
that time heh heh me and her stupid sitting together old rope course it breaks dad  
knew it that water sound rocks were there fish never knew never knew wonder  
wonder  
wonder

(Silence.  
Long silence.)

ALEX

Hey.

(Silence.)

ALEX  
Hey.

(Silence.)

ALEX  
Are you still there?

(Silence. Another man has entered.  
Crouches near Alex.)

ALEX  
Can you hear me?

MAN  
He can't hear you anymore.

(Alex jumps back at this sound from a new  
direction.)

MAN  
He's dead.

ALEX  
What happened to him?

MAN  
Shot. They're fighting over a pipeline for water. Never enough water, seems like.

ALEX  
Who's fighting?

MAN  
Zit matter?

(Pause.)

MAN  
A young fella. Wife and a little baby girl. Been married four years. Imagine that.  
Works for a computer company.

ALEX  
Are you sure he's dead?

MAN  
Pretty sure. Unless someone trades for his place.

ALEX  
Trades for his place how?

MAN  
Someone willing to die instead.  
(pause)  
You willing to die instead?

ALEX  
(pauses)  
Maybe.

MAN  
Not sure?

ALEX  
I'm lost. I might die anyway, right? What's his wife's name?

MAN  
Gloria.

ALEX  
And the little girl?

MAN  
Christie.

ALEX  
I'm just me. Can I really trade?

MAN  
Let's find out.

(A sheet of red fabric rises to cover them for an instant. When it passes, the body is gone and the Man and Alex are kneeling beside the edge of a lake of red, which the fabric becomes. Alex still can't see.)

ALEX  
What happened?

(The man takes Alex's hand, sets it in the water.)

ALEX  
Water?

MAN  
Taste it.

ALEX  
(does)  
It tastes like . . . sand. Stone.

MAN  
Red sand.

ALEX  
Like that red ground.

MAN  
Yeah.

ALEX

Where are we?

MAN

A lake underground. We're under the high peak of Blood Mountain.

ALEX

I still can't see it. Is it deep?

MAN

Deep as the earth. Whole earth's a furnace, burning into water. Comes up here. Pulls up the red dirt with it. Red milk, we call it. To drink it dry, you'd have to drink the whole planet.

ALEX

Is that possible?

MAN

Don't put it past them.

ALEX

Does anyone know about this lake?

MAN

Not up there, no.

ALEX

Then this could be a whole new source of water. If they find this lake, they can stop fighting over water. Is that right?

MAN

(pauses)

Nope.

ALEX

Oh.

MAN

No pipe will attach to this lake. They still got the same water everywhere up top. They just hafta learn to make do what they have.

ALEX

Mm. It tastes really good.

MAN

I'm glad.

ALEX

Are you drinking some?

MAN

No.

ALEX  
Guess you don't need any, huh?

MAN  
Oh I do. I'm awful thirsty.

ALEX  
Why not drink?

MAN  
I'm not really there. I died in a lot of pain and I'm not quite over it yet.

(Another man kneels beside them.)

BILL  
Mm.

ALEX  
Who's that?

BILL  
Hey Alex.

ALEX  
Bill?

BILL  
That's me.

ALEX  
I think I can see you.

BILL  
Good for you.

ALEX  
Are you dead?

BILL  
Uh-huh.

ALEX  
(pause)  
What's it like?

BILL  
Hell.

ALEX  
Oh. (pause) You don't look bad.

BILL  
You can't see. Cuz you're not dead. You think I'm with you? Where you are? You couldn't see if I was shrieking in agony. Which I am.

ALEX

I'm sorry.

BILL

Oh that helps. I tell you, Alex, you could hold me down and shit on my face right now, I'd still prefer it to being dead.

ALEX

Oh.

BILL

One thing. You can see the future.

ALEX

Oh. Uh. What happens?

BILL

We die out.

ALEX

The human race?

BILL

No. Just us. You and me and like us. We got recessive genes. We get killed, get overrun, enslaved. We've gotten soft. Too much wealth. Too much comfort. You know. I tried to warn them. You. If we'd stick together, we'd have some chance. But no. The jungle will win. Jungle take over the world. No place left for us. I cared, Alex, that was my tragedy. I cared about all the generations. Seven generations from now, I'd like our children, yours and mine, to be alive. That's all. But it won't come to be. It won't come to be.

ALEX

Is that a prediction?

BILL

No. It's the future. I live in it now. It's hell. Bye Alex. Stay alive. Might as well. Might as well. Him and his kind will rule the earth.

ALEX

Who?

BILL

See ya.

MAN

See ya Bill.

(Bill goes.)

ALEX

Bill?

MAN

He's gone.

ALEX  
You know him?

MAN  
I see him around. So what do you think?

ALEX  
About what?

MAN  
You want to stay? Or you want to go back?

ALEX  
What about uh?

MAN  
I don't know his name. He'll be fine either way. What Bill says about being dead, that's just Bill. It's not so bad.

ALEX  
Oh. What about the future?

MAN  
That's Bill too.

ALEX  
Oh.

MAN  
If you go back, will you do me a favor?

ALEX  
Sure.

MAN  
Will you see Natalie?

ALEX  
I can.

MAN  
Tell her . . . .

ALEX  
Tell her what?

MAN  
Actually, never mind. She'll know.

ALEX  
What's your name?

MAN  
She'll know that too.



ALEX

Oh. Oh. You know Bill real well.

MAN

We go way back. Just tell Natalie you saw me, okay? Will you tell her?

ALEX

If I can.

(Noise. Light from offstage.)

MAN

See ya.

ALEX

Wait. Where you going? Should I, uh . . . .

(The man leaves. A flashlight points on.  
Enter a young man with flashlight. The light  
finds Alex, who squints and covers eyes.)

YOUNG MAN

Hi.

(It is Robin, Rachel's son. Alex doesn't  
respond - maybe he can't see yet.)

ROBIN

You lost?

ALEX

Is that . . . Robin?

ROBIN

Uh huh.

ALEX

How did you find me?

ROBIN

I know this cave. These tunnels go all over. I thought you might be lost.

ALEX

Thanks.

ROBIN

Are you lost?

ALEX

Yeah.

ROBIN

I know the way out.

(pause)

You coming out?

ALEX  
I don't know.

(Silence.)

ALEX  
Do you come up on Blood Mountain much?

ROBIN  
Some.

ALEX  
What do you do?

ROBIN  
Nothing. Run around. Listen. Watch.

ALEX  
Mm. Me too. I never saw you much.

ROBIN  
I saw you.

ALEX  
You did?

ROBIN  
I told my mom. She asked me to. You know. Keep an eye on you.

ALEX  
Why?

ROBIN  
Not for trouble. Just to. You know. Make sure you're okay.

ALEX  
Oh.

(Silence.)

ALEX  
I been making a calendar.

ROBIN  
I know.

ALEX  
How do you know?

ROBIN  
You say things out loud. I remember them. Sometimes I write them down. I put them on the new wire service the Council set up. Hope that's okay.

ALEX

Did you put my name on them?

ROBIN

No. Don't have to put a name, so I didn't.

(Silence.)

ALEX

I didn't know I was saying them out loud.

ROBIN

You were.

You made one about the hornbark tree. You know if you chew on the hornbark, sometimes you can find water.

ALEX

How?

ROBIN

You can smell it. Sometimes hear it. Underground.

(Silence.)

ROBIN

I watched you move your stick. When you said out loud. All the words you were making. Hope that's okay.

ALEX

That's fine. I'm glad I didn't know, but it's fine.

ROBIN

There's a bug that moves like you did.

(Robin starts to move a little in the dark, waving his body around very similarly to the way the Body of Alex moved while composing.)

ROBIN

The pin bug does a kind of . . . twirly thing. You can watch him close sometimes. You know about pin bugs?

ALEX

Yeah.

ROBIN

There's a woodbeetle too. Makes bigger circles. You can hear them speaking out loud too. If you listen close.

(stops)

Do you know what I mean?

ALEX

Yeah. I do.

ROBIN

(nods, starts moving again)

And then there's the dragonwing. You seen it?

ALEX

Uh-huh.

ROBIN

Make big loops, big loops, writing big letters I think, I think I can read them sometimes. But then they go. But that's okay. They're gone. There's more. There's always more.

ALEX

Yeah.

ROBIN

There's always more.

ALEX

You were hurt.

A while ago.

I saw you outside.

I should have come to help. I didn't. I'm sorry.

ROBIN

That's okay. I didn't want company then.

(Silence.)

ALEX

I heard about your dad. I'm sorry.

ROBIN

Mm.

He was not a good person.

If he was alive, we'd have to leave Blood Mountain.

(Silence.)

ALEX

That woodbeetle. I haven't heard it speak out loud.

ROBIN

It does.

ALEX

Can you show me?

ROBIN

Yeah.

ALEX

Okay. Let's go.

(Robin leads Alex off.)

**SCENE TWELVE**

(Loud fast drumbeat. Many men wearing black ski masks line up facing us. They are bloody and soiled with battle. They speak in unison with one voice over a loudspeaker.)

**MASKED MAN**

One blood. True blood.  
Blood fill the heart with strength.

(They hold up arms, cut them. Hold up the bleeding arms.)

**MASKED MEN**

Heart of blood. Heart of stone.  
The Bloodguards are true as blood.  
No one invades the land of Okwalnu.  
Homeland! Okwalnu! Homeland! Okwalu!  
Never forgive. Never forget!  
Never forgive. Never forget!

**SCENE THIRTEEN**

(Teresa and Matthias.)

TERESA

What can we do to keep you here?

MATTHIAS

It's too late. I'm sorry. Carla wants me home anyway. I didn't come back here to stay.

TERESA

Is that why you're going?

MATTHIAS

No.

TERESA

We can find a compromise.

MATTHIAS

Do you control the Tribunal? From what I see, the Tribunal makes the law here now.

TERESA

The Tribunal is just to investigate --

MATTHIAS

And so any question they ask we must answer. And if we don't answer correctly, they ask again. And again. They want me to say my father was only a halfblood. They will not rest till I say he was not full blood. My father was a son of a bitch and a killer, but he was full blood and so am I.

TERESA

We need you on the Council, Matthias.

MATTHIAS

I know you do. Tell Lucas he better find some kind of leash for his old friend Ethan and those Bloodguards of his. I wish I could stay and help, but this is too much. Tell Lucas I'm sorry.

TERESA

He doesn't need your apology, he needs your *help*!

MATTHIAS

It's not only my help he needs. Too bad. I was almost starting to like this dump heap.

TERESA

Stay a minute a least and talk to him.

MATTHIAS

I'm sorry Reesa. Bye.

(Hearing noises approaching, he hurries off.  
Enter Ethan and Lucas. Ethan is dressed like  
the paraders, without the mask. He paces,  
skips, almost dances with energy.)

ETHAN

From now, they never forget. From now they think again before attacking us.  
Congratulations, brotherman.

LUCAS

Congratulations yourself.

(Drum, shout.)

ETHAN

Say something to them.

LUCAS

They don't need me. This is your day.

ETHAN

You not happy?

LUCAS

Go ahead.

(Ethan goes.)

TERESA

How many killed?

LUCAS

I don't know. Not too bad. But some.

(Huge shout offstage.)

TERESA

These Bloodguard men should report to you, not to him.

LUCAS

Because I'm above corruption?

TERESA

To balance it out. They'll listen to him but take orders from you. That's how it was  
in the mountains, wasn't it?

LUCAS

When it had to be, yes.

TERESA

He controls those Bloodguards, he controls the Tribunal with no kind of mandate, he can use it however he chooses. You set it up to investigate, not as a secret service.

LUCAS

And what about settlers?

TERESA

What about them?

LUCAS

You agree with him about them. Don't you?

(Enter Ethan.)

ETHAN

Presti, presti, presti. It's time, brotherman. We're strong, we have what we need, we can take the action we need. We can take it to vote or you can just sign it. The settlers stay as you command, we almost lose the pipeline and people die. I have the votes now. The settlers have to go.

LUCAS

Most of them are gone. The ones who swear allegiance stay.

ETHAN

So we vote then. Fine.

LUCAS

I hope you count your votes well.

ETHAN

I do. Here's the one vote I need, in fact. How do you vote, Teresa?

(They look at her. She doesn't respond.)

ETHAN

You know her answer.

(Ethan does a little hop dance of victory.)

LUCAS

Well then. You've got a Council that wants to do to them what they used to do to us.

ETHAN

It's not the same.

LUCAS

No? Well I say this: if the Council moves to violate people's rights, it's no longer the leadership council of this people.

ETHAN

What does that mean?



LUCAS

It means I dissolve the Council before I see it make this choice.

ETHAN

What are you talking about? How can you dissolve the council?

LUCAS

Because I'm elected. You're appointed. By me. I can unappoint you.

ETHAN

Hey Lucas. Be careful what you say.

LUCAS

You threaten me, I threaten right back. That's how you like to play, isn't it?

ETHAN

Lucas. Don't do this.

LUCAS

You give no choice.

ETHAN

The vote doesn't stop for a threat like that.

LUCAS

You do what you have to do.

TERESA

Ethan.

ETHAN

What?

TERESA

You're mistaken about your count.

ETHAN

Why?

TERESA

I vote with Lucas. The settlers who swear allegiance stay.

ETHAN

(a beat)

I see.

TERESA

You'll lose the vote. So let's not bring it to that. What do you say?

ETHAN

I say, I say, oh well. Some you win, some you lose.

TERESA

I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong impression.

ETHAN

That's all right. By the way: those legends about you? The woman who comes back to save us all? They come from me. I figure they might be useful. Guess I figure wrong. We'll talk.

(He goes.)

LUCAS

Why do you change your vote?

TERESA

Because of what you were about to do, my love.

(Silence.)

LUCAS

You'd have hated the mountains, you know.

TERESA

Probably.

LUCAS

You remind me of them. You make me feel the way Blood Mountain feels. Without the cold and hunger and thorns.

TERESA

I'm glad for that.

LUCAS

I'll show you the Red Water Spring sometime. I feel as though you're always there. Back then and now. With me. Do you feel like that?

TERESA

Yes.

LUCAS

This is some trouble. Julian will help. We should talk to him.

TERESA

I'll go --

(A clerk enters with an envelope.)

TERESA

Yes?

CLERK

For you.

TERESA

What is this?

CLERK

From the Tribunal. You're summoned to appear.

(Clerk goes. Teresa opens the envelope and reads letter quickly.)

LUCAS

What is it?

TERESA

I am to appear before the Tribunal and answer "certain questions", it says here. Some questions about my prior relationship with a known agent and author of an accusing letter written on the day of the election of the current Council. Which letter in question is currently in Ethan's hands.

**[INTERMISSION]**

**SCENE FOURTEEN**

(Teresa addresses a crowd. She speaks through microphone; amplified voice. She faces us. Behind her, a line of actors in black masks.)

**TERESA**

Such short time, we come so far. The world knows us now. The world does not forget. Do we let them stop us? Do we let them stop us?

**VOICE**

(from the crowd, unamplified shout)

Who's your hoona man?

(Silence.)

**SCENE FIFTEEN**

(Some black-masked actors in back bang hammers on pieces of stone and metal. Sometimes rhythmically, sometimes as punctuation, sometimes simply as sound effect of construction. Lucas and Ethan side by side watching something.)

LUCAS & ETHAN

Scene Fifteen: Defense.

ETHAN

Why here?

LUCAS

Figure you like it. From here we can see both the Mountain and your wall.

ETHAN

Mm.

LUCAS

Razorwire around Blood Mountain again.

ETHAN

Not between us and the Mountain this time. Maybe that's all we can hope for: a little more space inside the wire.

LUCAS

You think this will stop them.

ETHAN

From crawling across, yes. Let them bring tanks. Let the world watch.

LUCAS

You know people already use it as a bulletin board.

ETHAN

Good. It belongs to them.

LUCAS

Or they belong to it. Maybe we should still be on the Mountain.

ETHAN

Sure, living in the wild. That would suit them outside there. They love it when we live on roots and berries. They hate it when we protect ourselves. Which is what we're doing, pava. Protecting ourselves.

LUCAS

From Teresa.

ETHAN  
Questions, is all.

LUCAS  
This is not about her.

ETHAN  
She's the one summoned.

LUCAS  
It's about me.

ETHAN  
She's not you, little brother.

LUCAS  
I know that. Do you?

ETHAN  
Come to court and watch.

LUCAS  
Not court. A special tribunal and it can rethink this matter.

ETHAN  
A special investigative tribunal and all it's doing is asking questions.

LUCAS  
Ethan. Who you think you're talking to?

ETHAN  
Not Teresa, that's for sure.

LUCAS  
If you're after me, come after me. Leave Reesa alone.

ETHAN  
I'm not after you. I'm after truth.

LUCAS  
You're a liar.

ETHAN  
Easy, brotherman.

LUCAS  
I'm not your brother.

ETHAN  
I guess not.

LUCAS  
Call off your hounds while you still can.

ETHAN

What about truth then, good old friend? What about justice? You think your khayla is above the law, or should be? You see the letter, you wonder yourself, now there are spies everywhere like insects. You set this Tribunal in motion --

LUCAS

You set it going. I just let it happen.

ETHAN

So let it perform its job. Our people deserve to feel safe. Let her answer, we thank her, everyone goes home happy. What's to fear? The mountains are scarier, but you're never scared up there. Why are you so scared now?

LUCAS

The Tribunal was yours from the start. But I can dissolve it.

ETHAN

Go ahead try. We'll see who dissolves.

(Silence.)

LUCAS

Ethan. You remember the Red Water Spring?

ETHAN

Sha.

LUCAS

You remember how we cry there?

ETHAN

Sha.

LUCAS

Maybe we need to go back there. Draw some blood. Listen to the spring.

ETHAN

I got plenty of strength right now.

LUCAS

Different kind of strength we need.

ETHAN

What we need is tahu. What we need is trust. They're squeezing us, we need tahu with each other. And tahu lives in the blood. You know that. Lucas. You slow down and think. You sure this is where you want your line on the ground? You really sure? If the Council Chair says we can't question his khayla, maybe we can't. I don't know. You think. Is this where you want your justice to stop? You know her that well? You know this woman who comes from Ashcroft that well? You think about that letter. You tell me. Wednesday we set the date or don't. You tell me.

(Ethan goes.  
Masked actors end their hammering rhythm.  
They change scene, set chairs around Lucas.)

**SCENE SIXTEEN**

(Lucas still stands.  
Teresa enters, sits.)

LUCAS  
Scene Sixteen. Our house.

(Teresa offers a hand. Lucas takes it, sits.)

LUCAS  
I'm sorry our home is taken up with us.

TERESA  
Me too. It's my fault.

LUCAS  
I want you to have refuge.

TERESA  
Me too. For you. We don't have any time of our own.

LUCAS  
I know. Every moment is about them. We have to get out.

TERESA  
I don't see how.

LUCAS  
I do. I'm going to disband the Tribunal.

TERESA  
You can't.

LUCAS  
I can.

TERESA  
It's too much.

LUCAS  
Maybe. I can and I will if you ask me.

TERESA  
I won't ask for that. Do you trust me?

LUCAS  
Yes. Do you trust me?



TERESA

Yes.

LUCAS

What's your choice then?

TERESA

What do you want me to do?

LUCAS

I stand by you whatever you do. Do you believe me?

TERESA

Yes.

LUCAS

Do you really believe me?

TERESA  
(hesitates)

I believe you mean what you say. I'm scared.

LUCAS

Don't be. We see this through.

TERESA

How?

LUCAS

It's a brushfire that burns itself out.

TERESA

I hope you're right.

LUCAS

I'm right.

TERESA

You still haven't said what you'd like me to do.

LUCAS

Whatever you choose.

TERESA

I'm not ASKING that!

I'm asking your advice. I'm asking what you would do. I'm asking what you might ask me to do, if you were forced to ask. Don't say you'll support me again; I heard you. I'll make the choice. I'm asking your opinion. That's all. What would you like me to do?

LUCAS

Reesa. I don't know. You could refuse to appear. That's a statement, but people wonder. Go answer their questions, you're giving in. But when you answer, you put it all to rest.

TERESA

I answer them now, then they ask you, then they ask somebody else, then they keep asking until they find something. Something I said in school when I was seven.

LUCAS

Yes true. But if you *don't* answer, that's a victory for them. An advantage they can exploit. Why not scuttle it now? Stop them from using it. It doesn't matter what you answer, just answer something.

TERESA

It really doesn't matter?

LUCAS

(a beat)

It's not true, is it?

TERESA

(a beat)

Are you part of the tribunal now?

LUCAS

I repeat. And repeat. Make your choice, I make it right with you.

(pause)

He wants to know by Wednesday. Can you decide by then?

TERESA

Yes.

LUCAS

That's my Reesa.

(Takes her face in his hands, kisses her. She clutches his hands on her face. They look at each other, and he goes.

Teresa sits. Rubs her eyes. Takes out a piece of paper that she's been carrying. Looks at it.

Enter Robin. He stands behind her. He texts the message to her.)

ROBIN

The  
man you  
know is  
ready to  
meet  
you  
now.  
Where  
the  
fence  
used  
to be.

Just you  
he  
says.  
If you  
still  
want.

**SCENE SEVENTEEN**

(Lucas, Natalie. In her house. She has served him tea and food.)

LUCAS  
Ondu excellent. As always. How do you make this?

NATALIE  
Like everyone.

LUCAS  
Na.

NATALIE  
A little moonberry and salt.

LUCAS  
Ah. That's the taste. Berry and salt. How'd you think of that?

NATALIE  
You make enough, you try a lot of combinations.

LUCAS  
It's a good one.

(Pause.)

NATALIE  
So why me?

LUCAS  
That's no question. You've got a good head. You've been working hard as anyone including me, longer than me. You've been through it all. You should be Council Chair instead of me. You'd be better at it.

NATALIE  
Na thanks. Only a buruhandi zozo like you take a job like that.

LUCAS  
Presti, I'm zozo stuck then. So you take something less. One among many on the Council. You can help us a lot. We need your head and your heart and your voice.

NATALIE  
(pause)  
Why you think Matthias is gone?

LUCAS

He'd go soon or later anyway. But I know why. The tribunal wants him to daktu your father. We need your level head.

NATALIE

The tribunal wants to daktu your Teresa.

LUCAS

They may try.

NATALIE

What's she going to do?

LUCAS

Don't know. I think she should answer.

NATALIE

Why?

LUCAS

Because why not? There's nothing to it.

NATALIE

You know that?

LUCAS

(pause)

You know something different?

NATALIE

I know there's a fight that wants to happen over this tribunal. I don't know that this is the place for that fight.

(Silence.)

LUCAS

We can use your help.

NATALIE

Let me consider. It's not easy to think these days. Your bloodguards make a lot of noise.

**SCENE EIGHTEEN**

(Alex and Teresa. Outside. Night.  
The demon mask is visible somewhere behind  
them.  
They sit silent for a while.)

ALEX  
Where's the funeral?

TERESA  
Very funny.

(Pause.)

ALEX  
You're thin.

TERESA  
So I'm told.

ALEX  
You sleeping these days?

TERESA  
Not well. You?

ALEX  
Better. I wasn't for a while.

(Pause.)

TERESA  
You're thin too.

ALEX  
May be.

TERESA  
Something wrong with your leg?

ALEX  
It got hurt.

TERESA  
How?

ALEX  
(shrugs)

Same way a lot of legs get hurt. Around here.

(Pause.)

ALEX  
You wanted to see me, I hear.

TERESA  
I did. Then I changed my mind. Then you sent a message.

ALEX  
So you changed your mind again?

TERESA  
The first time I came to help you.

ALEX  
Help me how?

TERESA  
You've been posting things on the wire service.

ALEX  
(chuckles a little)  
I haven't, as a matter of fact. But they did get posted. I'm surprised you noticed.

TERESA  
Other people noticed. I was going to ask you to be more careful.

ALEX  
Oh. Oh. Well thanks. You're a Minister of Education now, is that right?

TERESA  
I work in that office.

ALEX  
That's great. Education office handle censorship, does it?

TERESA  
It's not like that.

ALEX  
What is it like?

(Pause.)

TERESA  
I hoped we could put the past behind us.

ALEX  
Fine. It's behind us. Now what?

TERESA

Why have you been posting the things you've written?

ALEX

I told you, I haven't.

TERESA

They fly there themselves.

ALEX

Sort of.

TERESA

I see. But you have been writing them.

ALEX

Yes.

TERESA

To whom?

ALEX

No one.

TERESA

No one at all.

ALEX

No.

TERESA

Are you sure of that? Are you very sure of that?

ALEX

(pauses)

Oh. You think I've been writing to you. Well. You're mistaken.

TERESA

Am I.

ALEX

Yes.

TERESA

Only you can answer, I guess. But your actions have consequences. You have energy. Lots of it. You send it out, and I'm asking you: stop sending it out at me.

ALEX

Like I'm casting a spell.

TERESA

You know what you're doing.

ALEX

It's not my actions, Terry.



TERESA

My name is Teresa.

ALEX

Teresa. It's not my actions, it's my existence. I'm a document you'd like to shred.

TERESA

Will you let me go, Alex?

ALEX

I have.

TERESA

Have you.

ALEX

Some time ago.

TERESA

In your heart? Be honest. Be honest now.

ALEX

We have a bond. That doesn't stop.

TERESA

Thank you for being honest at least.

ALEX

But not like that. That's gone. That got stamped out for good.

TERESA

(looks at him carefully)

I'd love to believe you.

ALEX

You can. Your boys stamped it out. And now you're in trouble with those same boys. Because of barnu. Is that right?

(Pause.)

TERESA

Are you satisfied now?

ALEX

No.

Some of me was. For a while. But no. This is not what I want.

TERESA

You can help. If you want to.

ALEX

How?

TERESA

Write another letter.

ALEX

Saying what?

TERESA

Just the truth. That you made it up. You were angry, you were lonely, you had feelings against me, you made it up. You weren't a spy. I'll swear to that.

ALEX

You want me to write a letter refuting myself.

TERESA

It's the past, it was never what you thought.

ALEX

Oh what did I think?

TERESA

We were never like that.

ALEX

Like what?

TERESA

You know what I mean.

ALEX

Do I. Do I.

TERESA

I was an exotic flower for you. You were a reason to come home for me.

ALEX

So you felt nothing.

TERESA

I didn't say that. But it was just . . . .

ALEX

Just a dream. Just a fantasy. Just a puff of smoke in my imagination.

TERESA

It's past. What difference does it make?

ALEX

Is this why you came here?

TERESA

No. I don't know.

ALEX

You want me to erase myself? You want me to step inside that lie you tell yourself? Past is past, yes gone, but it didn't never exist, Terry, it didn't never exist.

(He has risen, is pacing. The demon mask hovers near him.)

ALEX

I can disappear, I already have, but you want history gone. Is that what you want? You want me to tell another lie? THE PAST DOESN'T DIE! YOU WANT ANOTHER LIE?

TERESA

Yes! I want you to tell a lie so I can keep my life! Lucas has disappeared.

(Alex stops, stares at her.)

TERESA

I can't find him, he won't talk to me. I'm alone. I'm from someplace else and they haven't forgotten. Everything I'm afraid of in the world is about to happen. I want you to undo the damage you've done. I want you to take your hand off my heart, I want you to take your hand off my future. I want you to lie, if that's what it takes. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked you.

(They are silent. The demon mask hovers near them.

Alex reaches in pocket, takes out a piece of paper. Hands it to her.)

TERESA

What is it?

ALEX

The letter you want.

(pause)

It felt good to write it. It didn't feel good to be asked for it.

(She reads it. Doesn't look at him.)

TERESA

This scares me.

ALEX

Will you use it?

TERESA

(pauses)

I didn't think you'd do it.

(Folds it. Rises. Looks at him. Leaves. Alex stares after her for a time. He looks away, sits silent.

A noise, like a fluttering birdsound or a flute.

The demon mask, held in the air by an actor, circles him slowly. He doesn't look at it, but rises, moves in a wandering circle as well,

speaking with other voices.)

ALEX

before time and before all things  
there was hurt  
which gave birth to anger  
which gave birth to hurt  
which gave birth to fear  
which gave birth to cold  
which gave birth to silence  
which gave birth to sound  
which gave birth song  
which gave birth to heart  
which gave birth to beauty  
which gave birth to want  
which gave birth to envy  
which gave birth to anger  
which gave birth to hurt

(The birdsound continues as Alex and the  
demon mask circle away and off.)

**SCENE NINETEEN**

(Rachel, Natalie, and another woman: Maya.  
Rachel's house. Daytime. Rachel sits. They  
stand.)

NATALIE  
Your son not home?

RACHEL  
No.

NATALIE  
Out wandering Blood Mountain?

RACHEL  
Probably.

NATALIE  
I see him there sometimes. He learns the plants.

RACHEL  
Yes.

NATALIE  
He knows bugs I don't know. He's a good kid.

RACHEL  
Thank you.

(Silence.)

NATALIE  
You know there's a group of these Bloodguards forming here.

RACHEL  
I've heard. Who's joining?

MAYA  
Boys.

NATALIE  
Mainly boys. Some men too. They play at soldier.

MAYA  
But for real.

NATALIE

They mention your name. You know that.

RACHEL

I would guess it.

NATALIE

You're not safe here. The Bloodguards call for a purge. Even some halfbloods are leaving.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

NATALIE

We're trying to warn you.

RACHEL

I'm grateful. But this is where I live. My son wouldn't leave even if I did. I can't go. Thank you for your concern. I mean that. I know it's hard for you. But this is my home.

(Silence.)

RACHEL

I've already asked you to sit down, but you won't. I'd offer you tea or something, but you won't take it. Is that right?

NATALIE

(hesitates)

Here is the situation. Maya and I come to say something. We're glad your son isn't here. We know you have a visit by federal agents, and you turn down their help.

RACHEL

Yes I did.

NATALIE

We have something to say that we deny if you repeat.

RACHEL

I will keep your secret.

NATALIE

Don't speak too quickly. You may not want to keep this secret.

RACHEL

I will keep your secret.

NATALIE

We deny what you say if you speak it.

(pause)

About your husband.

RACHEL

What about him?

NATALIE  
You know about my husband.

RACHEL  
Yes.

MAYA  
Tortured to death.

RACHEL  
Yes.

MAYA  
The police didn't say so.

RACHEL  
But it's true. I know that.

MAYA  
You know that?

(Pause.)

NATALIE  
Your husband Bill. You know back then he's a night rider.

RACHEL  
Yes.

NATALIE  
He's one of the ones that brings the death of my husband.

MAYA  
Mine as well.

NATALIE  
It's the truth.

RACHEL  
Is that your secret?

NATALIE  
No. Repeat that if you want, whether you believe it or not. The issue is. Your husband is executed because of that.

RACHEL  
I know.

NATALIE  
By me.

MAYA  
And by me.

(Pause.)

NATALIE

Others too. But listen hard. Maya here, and me, we are among those that bring your husband's death. You understand that?

RACHEL

(pauses)

Yes. I thought that might be the case.

NATALIE

Not by accident. Not for revenge. No law to stop him, so we stop him. We put him on trial, we come to decision, we execute. We don't come now for penance or regret.

RACHEL

No. (pause) Aren't you afraid I'll try to hurt you?

MAYA

Go ahead try.

NATALIE

We know our neighbors here sekulak, always. Now you know your neighbors too. We come now, we say this out loud, because we think maybe you recognize truth when you see it. The truth is that your husband murders my husband and we execute him in return. We don't come to threaten. We don't come to wish you harm. We come to ask: you still want to live here now? You know now, you don't suspect, you know. You still want to live and be neighbors with us?

MAYA

We come to give you a chance. We come so you understand. And go. We are staying. How can you stay here now?

(Pause.

After a moment, Rachel moves off the chair. She kneels on the floor in front of them, looks up at them. They don't know what to do.)

NATALIE

What are you doing?

RACHEL

I loved my husband. We lived together for eighteen years. We had a child that we both adored. I want my husband back. I miss him. But I swear to you. I don't know what to swear by to make you believe me. I'm kneeling on the floor and I swear to you. I would lose my husband again if it would bring you back the husband he killed. Or yours.

NATALIE

(shaken)

Don't say that.

RACHEL

I would lose him again if I had to, to bring back even one. Even one. I will kneel in the street and say this again if you want. I'll shout it. If you'll just believe me.



NATALIE

Get up please.

RACHEL

I won't. I'll stay here until you believe what I say.

MAYA

How can you say you give up your husband?

RACHEL

I had lost him already. He became something different.

MAYA

Because of us, you think.

RACHEL

Because of what he was taught and would not unlearn. I don't want revenge. I release you from guilt for this crime. He killed and was killed. I'm your neighbor. I have always been. I will be as long as I live. I've said what I've said. You can tell me you believe me, and I'll stand up and keep living here. Or you can turn and leave my house if you still think I'm lying. You choose. Do you take my word?

(Silence.)

RACHEL

Do you take my word?

(Silence.)

NATALIE

Do you know who lives in this house before you?

RACHEL

Yes. The Williams family. Settlers, like me. Fangatu. Before them, another family of settlers. Before them, I believe, a family was forced off this land to make room. Do you want this house back? Let me live somewhere else. Just here someplace. On Blood Mountain. Do you answer my question?

(Silence.)

NATALIE

I know you're not lying.

(pause, looking at Maya, then at Rachel)

That's all the answer we have. I'm sorry.

(Natalie and Maya turn and go. Rachel looks after them. Bends down, exhausted. Lets her head droop, maybe to the ground.)

**SCENE TWENTY**

(Teresa and Ethan.)

TERESA  
(to audience)  
Scene Twenty. Only One Home.

ETHAN  
It's a while since I'm in your house.

TERESA  
Yes.

ETHAN  
Seen Lucas today?

TERESA  
No.

ETHAN  
He has something to tell me.

TERESA  
Does he?

ETHAN  
It's Wednesday.

TERESA  
Maybe he wants to tell you that I'll appear before your tribunal.

ETHAN  
It's not mine.

TERESA  
Good. Then it can be in public.

ETHAN  
Fine.

TERESA  
And broadcast.

ETHAN  
Why?

TERESA

That's how I want it. No closed meetings that can be distorted.

ETHAN

No one distorts.

TERESA

Get your questions ready.

ETHAN

He's not gone long. This is your house. You and him.

(pause)

We work for the same cause.

(pause)

Do you want me to call it off?

TERESA

No. Prepare your questions.

(She goes. He leaves opposite.)

## SCENE TWENTY-ONE

(Actors upstage create sound effect: stick across grid or small clangs -- soft sound. The intent is rippling water in a brook, though it need not be exact or instantly recognizable.)

Outside on Blood Mountain. Alex alone. Composing with a stick. Large letters on the ground.)

ALEX  
 before time before all things  
 there was water  
 which made planet  
 to burn itself into being  
 and planet made spring  
 to bring water to the surface  
 and spring made sound  
 to announce water  
 with the sound of a thousand bells

(Behind him has entered Lucas, who squats, watching. When Alex is done:)

LUCAS  
 Do you mean the sound or the flower?

(Alex looks around at him. Not too surprised. Lucas comes forward, kneels not too close. Points.)

LUCAS  
 That flower. What do you call it?

ALEX  
 Thimblecap.

LUCAS  
 Mm. It has a different name in Okwalni.

ALEX  
 What?

LUCAS  
 Eshkila. Little bell.

ALEX

Eshkila. Good name.

LUCAS

You say bells, so maybe you mean that. Or maybe the sound the water makes.

ALEX

The sound mainly. But now the flowers too.

(Silence, with water sounds.)

LUCAS

You come here much?

ALEX

Sometimes.

LUCAS

You like this water?

ALEX

Yeah.

LUCAS

Color doesn't scare you?

ALEX

I've drunk red water before.

(Pause.)

LUCAS

You been inside the Mountain.

(Alex nods.)

LUCAS

Nah Ku-uyi. Red Water Spring. You know that name.

ALEX

Not till now. Nah Ku-uyi.

(Silence, with water sounds.)

ALEX

I haven't seen you here.

LUCAS

I come a lot, back when I live up here. No more though.

(Silence, with water sounds.)

LUCAS

You working on something?

ALEX  
Sort of.

LUCAS  
What?

ALEX  
A calendar.

LUCAS  
What kind?

ALEX  
Book of days. Each day has its place.

LUCAS  
Today is ku-uyi then.

ALEX  
I guess so, now.

LUCAS  
How many days altogether?

ALEX  
I don't know if it ends.

LUCAS  
Which day is first?

ALEX  
Every day.

(Silence. Lucas points at the ground.)

LUCAS  
You do those?

ALEX  
Yeah.

LUCAS  
What's that one mean?

ALEX  
Wind.

LUCAS  
That one?

ALEX  
Snow.

LUCAS  
Oh yeah snow. I know that one. It means forgiving.

ALEX

Forgiving. Huh. I thought it meant snow.

LUCAS

It does. Snow and forgiving both. The one for fire means justice, too.

ALEX

(draws on the ground)

Fire means justice. Snow means forgiving.

LUCAS

At least I think so. They change. Or maybe they don't mean anything. Maybe I remember wrong. One time up here, I read them all. No more. That's why I come up today. See if I still read anything on Blood Mountain.

ALEX

Can you?

LUCAS

No. Just rocks and bushes now. Been off Blood Mountain too long, I guess. They all forget who I am. Guess I forget too.

ALEX

You read these.

LUCAS

These are the first ones. And I'm not even sure about them.

(Silence.)

ALEX

I used to know things.

LUCAS

Mm.

ALEX

Long time ago. I think what I knew was wrong. I came to Blood Mountain and all that changed.

(Silence.)

LUCAS

Down there. In town. I make myself too important. If I'm not so important, they couldn't attack me through someone I love. And then I wouldn't let her down because I'm afraid of what I might find out.

ALEX

You'll go back though.

LUCAS

Sha. Yeah.

ALEX

What if she does something you don't expect?

LUCAS

She always does. That's why I'm with her.

(Silence. Alex draws on the ground.)

ALEX

Does snow ever put out the fire?

LUCAS

Sometimes. But sometimes the fire melts the snow. If it's hot enough.

(pause)

Come here.

(Stands facing Alex. Alex hesitates a little, but stands facing him.)

Lucas takes Alex's hand, lifts it up, twists Alex's hand so that the palm faces Lucas. Lucas looks at it. Draws something on the palm.)

LUCAS

What is that?

MASKED ACTORS

Stone.

LUCAS

Yes.

(holds up his own palm facing Alex)

Draw something.

(Alex does.)

MASKED ACTOR

Gone.

ALEX

How did you know?

LUCAS

We know together.

ALEX

How?

LUCAS

We just do. Sometimes we make it up.

ALEX

Then it's not a real sign.



LUCAS

It's real. It's a new word for Okwalnu. Or an old word we just remember. On Okwalnu everything is true.

(draws on Alex's palm)

VOICES

Lost.

(Alex draws on Lucas' palm)

VOICES

Remembered.

LUCAS

Yes. Wait.

(draws on his palm and on Alex')

Snow. And fire. Together they mean something.

(presses his palm to Alex' palm.)

Snow and fire mean . . . .

ALEX

Work.

LUCAS

Work.

(Lucas draws on Alex' palm.)

VOICES

Water.

LUCAS

Yes.

(Lucas draws on his own palm, showing Alex)

VOICES

Fire.

LUCAS

Now:

(presses his palm to Alex' palm)

Water and fire together make:

VOICES

Blood.

(Lucas nods, separates palm, takes Alex' other hand, draws)

VOICES

Ground.

(Lucas draws on his own palm, shows Alex.)

VOICES

Sky.

LUCAS

(presses their palms together)

Ground and sky together?

VOICES

Mountain.

(They press together palms of both hands.)

LUCAS

Blood. And Mountain.

ALEX

Okwalnu.

LUCAS

Okwalnu.

(They stand silent, palms together. Water sounds. They separate palms.)

LUCAS

How does a person forget that?

ALEX

You remember it now.

LUCAS

Until I go back down. That's how it works.

ALEX

You'll remember.

LUCAS

Some. Enough I hope. (pause) You coming?

ALEX

No.

LUCAS

Presti. Stay well then.

Thanks.

ALEX

Wait.

(Lucas turns back to him.  
Alex lifts Lucas' palm and his own. He  
draws on Lucas palm.  
He repeats Lucas' actions in reverse.)

ALEX  
What's that?

LUCAS  
Abandon.

ALEX  
The love that dies.

(Draws another.)

LUCAS  
Betray.

ALEX  
What else?

LUCAS  
(silent, then)  
The love that kills.

(Alex draws another.)

ALEX  
Fire.

LUCAS  
The love that consumes. Same for you?

ALEX  
Yes.

(Alex repeats Lucas' actions in the air and on his own palms.)

ALEX  
Fire is the love that consumes.  
Water.

LUCAS  
The love that gives.

ALEX  
Fire and water. Blood. The love that both gives and consumes.

VOICES  
The love that tears.

ALEX  
Earth.

VOICES  
The love that feeds.

LUCAS  
                                  (draws on palms)  
Sky.

                                  VOICES  
The love that lifts.

                                  LUCAS  
                                  (as they press palms together)  
Mountain.

                                  VOICES  
The love that makes grow.

                                  LUCAS  
Blood Mountain.

                                  ALEX  
Okwalnu.

                                  LUCAS  
The love that tears.

                                  ALEX  
And makes grow.

                                  VOICES  
The love that tears the heart to make it grow.

(Silence, palms pressed together, water sounds.)

                                  ALEX  
Do they also mean that?

                                  LUCAS  
They can. Everything is true.

(They separate palms, look at each other.)

                                  LUCAS  
Down there. Lots of work to do.  
Are you part of it?

(Look at each other. Lucas turns, goes.  
Water sounds.)

                                  VOICES  
Alex.

                                  ALEX  
Terry?

                                  VOICES  
I guess this was for me after all, wasn't it?

ALEX

Yes and no. Everything is true, Terry.

VOICES

I'm not really here, Alex.

ALEX

You're always here. I'm always there too. I know you hate that. Sorry.

(He holds up two hands, palms out, side by side. Brings the palms together, clasps hands together on forehead, eyes closed.)

**SCENE TWENTY-TWO**

(Tribunal. A clerk asks questions of Teresa, who stands. Both have microphones.)

CLERK

You know him from your college in Ashcroft, is that right?

TERESA

Yes.

CLERK

A professor of yours?

TERESA

No.

CLERK

Your relationship: social or academic?

TERESA

Both.

CLERK

Do you know of any contacts he has with the federal government?

TERESA

He had none.

CLERK

None that you know of.

TERESA

None that I know of.

CLERK

Have you seen this letter?

TERESA

Yes.

CLERK

Written by him?

TERESA

As far as I know.

CLERK

To whom?

TERESA

It was addressed to Commander Zero.

CLERK

How do you come to see it?

TERESA

Commander Zero showed it to me.

CLERK

You know the text of the letter.

TERESA

I read it then. I heard you read it into the public record this morning.

CLERK

This letter from Alex Richardson states in no uncertain terms that you have relationship more than academic, and more than merely social. Is that true?

TERESA

What does "more than merely social" mean exactly?

CLERK

You have heard the text of the letter, maam.

TERESA

Yes.

CLERK

Does the letter give a true description of your relations with the author, this Alex Richardson? Or not?

TERESA

(pauses a moment)

What you want to know, but will not ask, is did I or did I not have sexual relations with this barnu professor.

Under no law or custom do you have any right to ask that question. This summons is meant to discredit my husband, because nothing else could be found to discredit him. Instead, you bring me to ask if I had relations with a barnu, and am therefore not truly fullblood in my heart.

Okwalnu has already lost valuable friends with this foolishness.

What is the plan of this tribunal? To test our blood for purity? To be more racist than the government we overthrew? To bury our sorrow in the flesh of new victims? My blood is as pure and as impure as yours. I live here as much as you do now. I have given myself to this place and by giving myself I claim the right to be native. I reject your dictatorship of blood.

I call on my husband to reject it also. I call on him to stay in office regardless of this cheap attempt to put dirt on his name. If there is punishment, let it fall on me. The charges that lie under your smirking small-hearted questions are preposterous. I have been faithful without blemish to my husband from the moment we acknowledged our love for each other. You may put your lurid conjectures to their tortured sleep.

That is more than you have any right to know, and I only say it out loud to shame you, those among you who have yet the heart and scrap of soul to still feel shame.

This is the complete truth. I will tell no lies to this body.

However.

There are other truths as well, and I'll tell them for your further shame.

You have no evidence that the man who wrote that letter was a spy. In fact he was not. He was a supporter of our freedom and I will not see his memory covered with dirt. That letter was written out of the malice of a broken heart.

But for all that.

It contains nothing that was not true.

It was all before I knew my husband, and so is of no concern here.

Will we live by truth in Okwalnu, or live by lies like everyone else?

That's all I have to say.

(She leaves.)



# SCENE TWENTY-THREE

(Alex alone at his cave on Blood Mountain.  
He writes on the air.  
Actors make animal and other sounds around  
him.)

ALEX

you will live  
grassberry  
you will live  
hat beetle  
you will live  
featherwillow

(Other voices join him on "you will live.)

ALEX & OTHERS

you will live  
cedar wing  
you will live  
startail  
you will live  
bloodvine  
you will live  
budstone  
you will live  
pearl flower  
you will live  
star petal  
you will live  
palm tail  
you will live  
rain petal  
rain ball  
lake of rain  
lake of cloud  
sky flower  
you will live

(He stops. The sounds end.  
Actors disperse, leaving Teresa standing near  
Alex. He turns to see her.  
Silence.  
She takes out the letter he gave her.)

TERESA

I shouldn't have asked for this.

ALEX

Maybe not. You didn't use it though.

TERESA

No.

(She holds it out to him. He takes it.  
She sits.)

ALEX

What shall we do with this piece of history?

TERESA

It's yours. You choose.

(Alex considers; then takes a stone bowl, sets  
it between them. Puts the letter in the bowl.  
Takes out a book of matches.)

ALEX

I always carry these now. Robin tried to show me how to make fire with two sticks.  
It didn't take.

(pause)

I worked hard writing this. I wish we had that other letter to burn. Oh well.

(pause)

Anything you want to say to this?

TERESA

No more lies.

ALEX

No more lies.

(Alex strikes a match, sets the letter aflame.  
Sits back to watch it.

The letter burns, not too quickly. Alex and  
Teresa sit on either side of the stone bowl,  
watching the letter burn. They are silent.  
They watch the flame, and the smoke, and the  
crumpling to red-edged black.

When the letter has burned completely,  
Teresa and Alex look at each other. Silent.  
Gently they move together on their knees;  
reach out and embrace, still on their knees.  
They hold each other close, without speaking,  
for a long time.

Finally one of them speaks.)

TERESA

I broke my own heart trying not love you.

ALEX

I broke my own heart trying to punish you. And I brought new suffering into the world.

TERESA

Not for a minute. I never stopped loving you for one minute.

ALEX

I know.

TERESA

(draws on his palm)

Before time -- in my heart -- of all things you -- always you.

ALEX

Yes.

(She holds his hand close, looks at him. No words.)

ALEX

Lucas.

TERESA

Yes.

(No words.  
He draws on the ground.)

TERESA

My life. My home now. My choice.

ALEX

(nods)

Give him this.

(He draws on her palm. She nods.)

TERESA

If he'll take me back.

ALEX

He will.

(pause)

You know I lied to you too.

TERESA

When?

ALEX

I said he wouldn't make you happy. It's not true.

TERESA

You weren't lying. You were just wrong.

ALEX

This is what comes of spending time in libraries.

TERESA

Are you sorry you ever knew me?

ALEX

If I hadn't met you, I would never have come here. If I hadn't come here, I wouldn't now be an illegal alien in the country where I was everything but born. If that hadn't happened, there are many things I could never have come to know.

TERESA

Okay then. You're welcome.

(Silence.)

ALEX

Where will you find him?

TERESA

He talked about a special place. The red water spring.

ALEX

Mm.

TERESA

I think he'll be there.

ALEX

Yeah.

TERESA

What will you do now?

ALEX

I don't know. Might be time to come down off the mountain. We can see how I like being an immigrant minority. Though I have friends in high places.

(Silence. Teresa takes his palm, draws on it.)

ALEX

My heart.  
Rooms.  
More rooms.  
More rooms.  
You.  
There.  
Always.

(She stands. Goes.  
Alex sits a moment. Stands, lifting up the

stone bowl. Holds it up in front of him.)

ALEX

So the man named Alex blew away the ashes of all his hard work. And the ashes settled to earth slowly, like flakes of snow.

(He does, and they do.)

**SCENE TWENTY-FOUR**

(The drumbeat of the Bloodguards offstage.  
A low fence in front of Rachel's house. Night.)

Rachel and Robin stand inside the fence,  
facing out. It's cold.)

ROBIN  
Do we have to wait outside?

RACHEL  
Best meet them here. Being inside won't protect us.

(They shiver. Drumbeat louder.  
From the rear of the house comes Natalie,  
wrapped up against the cold. She stands  
beside Rachel. Rachel is surprised, but no  
words for a moment.)

RACHEL  
Good morning.

NATALIE  
Good morning.

ROBIN  
Hi.

(No words.)

RACHEL  
Have they sent you to negotiate?

NATALIE  
Them? They don't send me anywhere.

(Natalie stands next to them, facing outward.  
Maya enters. Stands next to them, facing  
outward. No words.)

RACHEL  
This is dangerous for you.

MAYA  
Not so much.

RACHEL

What they do to us, they might do to you as well.

MAYA

They'll have to do us first.

NATALIE

They're boys. We know their mothers and sisters and aunts and uncles.

MAYA

We change their diapers, all of them.

NATALIE

Boys are less bold when you've seen their penis the size of a jellybean.

(No words. Drumming offstage.  
Another woman enters. Stands beside them.  
Another woman enters. Stands beside them.  
The drumming is louder.  
Rachel mumbles something.)

NATALIE

Sorry?

RACHEL

Nothing. Just. Thank you.

(More women have come. It's cold and some  
of their faces are wrapped in scarves. They  
stand beside the rest, facing out. The  
drumming is very loud.  
Suddenly the drumming stops so we can  
hear:)

RACHEL

If we turn them away here, they'll just go somewhere else.

NATALIE

Then we have to go there next.

(Drumming up loud. getting closer and  
closer.

The whole cast is part of the line of people  
now. They face us silent and unmoving as  
the drumming continues louder.)

**end part two**  
**end blood mountain**

## APPENDIX 1

**In case the invented words are not obvious from context, here is a**

### **TRANSLATION OF PASSAGE FROM SCENE EIGHT.**

**This translation is not to be published in programs or in any way made available to audience. It is only included as a resource for performers.**

#### COMMANDER ZERO

Gunpowder one way, sure. Dynamite sure, that will make your point. Done it myself. But what're we struggling to win, brothers and sisters? We risk our lives and our sacred bodies for power to buy those cigarets rolled by our poorest of brothers in Barney's cities and sold to us for profit? Power to drink their soooda that's only our own water betrayed by sugar and syntheocratic orange and sold to us for profit? Power to swallow that disgusting wheat powder they sell to us for profit?

On Blood Mountain, on Odol Okwalnu, we drink the mountain milk/blood, the water which is the mountain's own milk. We grind the rice/barley grain which grows of its own sweet self, wild as air, too full of flesh to be lawful in townships. We pick the leaves of the wiseberry plant and dry them to rooooll and smoke, when we smoke.

You don't have to come to the mountains for this. The sweet rice/barley has grown on our flat places and valleys for time and time and time before Barney and John arrive to steal it. The wiseberry grows all around. Water to drink there plenty and sweet, what's left when they pipe their gallons to hose transistor chips in their fucktheirmothers! computer mills.

Do we slave at their jobs for crumbits of money to earn their soda and cigarets? Tomorrow, third day third month, we call you: purchase none more. Drink mountain milk instead, eat the wealth of our country instead. Let Barney and John and their children drink down their petroleum soda themselves, and eat their savorless cigarets rather than force them on us. We are the roots of our land and this land will upnourish without us kneeling to commodities of cardboard and paint.

(He disappears.

Somewhere on stage is a suggestion of razorwire - a set piece, or a section held by two actors. It is far in the background now, but will move to different positions on stage during the rest of Part One.

Several men have already entered and begun playing a game that involves throwing stones on the ground like dice.)

#### ONE

Whatcha playin for?



TWO  
Dunno. Could be a car.

THREE  
What kind??

TWO  
Anything get me outta this place.

ONE  
You say it. (cf you can say that again)

THREE  
You say it.

ONE  
Throw.

TWO  
(tosses stones; curses)  
Fuck!

THREE  
Okay. You go.

ONE  
Fuck your mother.

THREE  
Fuck YOUR mother. Go.

(One takes up the stones; looks at them;  
starts a little hop dance. Others clap in time.)

TWO & THREE  
yah yah yah yah

(One reaches peak of dance, tosses stones.)

ONE  
Fuuuck!

TWO  
No car for you.

ONE  
Whatever/shit. You're up. Whatcha playin for?

THREE  
House.

TWO  
Won't get yourself outta here with a house.

THREE  
Never get outta here. Might as well have a nice house.

ONE  
Kay throw.

THREE  
(throws; no good)  
Shiiiiiiitfuck!

TWO  
Too bad, too bad.

THREE  
Never win this ever?

TWO  
Never.  
(takes up stones)  
Okay okay.

ONE  
Go go.

(Two starts a sort of exaggerated strut.  
Others clap, then punctuate the strut with  
macho grunts. Two picks moment, tosses.)

TWO  
Fuck.

ONE  
Okay okay.

THREE  
Whatcha playin for?

ONE  
You know.

TWO  
Yah we know.

THREE  
Same as always. Ever get it?

ONE  
(nods)  
Get it, get it!

TWO  
Then whatcha playin for?

ONE  
Future!

(Shakes the stones in his hands.)

TWO

Okay Mister Hoozle, kay Jon Loser, kay Willyam Humbumbum . . .  
[settler/whitepeople names]

(One throws.)

ONE  
(triumphant)

So there!

THREE

Nah.

ONE  
(points at stones)

So there! Look!

THREE

Nah nah nah.

ONE

Whaddya mean?? Look here.

TWO

So?

THREE

Nah nah. Look here close small close.

(They all look close.)

ONE

And?

TWO

It's a three

ONE

Fuckfuuuuck!

TWO

Go again.

ONE

Yeah yeah. Never ever win this?

THREE  
(shakes head)

Never. For all time.

ONE  
(shakes stones)

Bwee bwee bwee bwee bwee bwee BWEE BWEE -- [exclamation]

(A kid runs on.)

KID

Hi!

ONE

Ohhh okay. Gotta go.

TWO

What? You gotta do this.

ONE

(holds out stones)

You go.

TWO

Fuck no! You're holding, you throw.  
(makes throwing gesture)

ONE

(points at kid)

My kid's here.

TWO & THREE

Ooooooooooh, crybaby! (mock crying) Waahahahahaaaaa!

ONE

Okay okay okay.

(One picks up kid, starts swinging the kid around in circles, gently at first, wider and wider, finally spinning and swinging kid high up and low down round and round. Kid terrified with delight. Others punctuate with swooping hollers.)

ONE

woooooooooOooooooooOOooOOooooOooooOooooooooOoooo!

KID

yiiiiiiIIIIIIIIIIIOooooooooooooooooobaaaaaaabaaaaaaayaaaabaaaaayaaaaaaaa!

(A few other men and women have entered by now. They stand or sit or wander, aimlessly. One sets down Kid, holds hand and starts to strut with some rhythm while others clap. Some others might join in.)

ONE

You. Little kid. You look close. This is one stupid game, one [racist epithet about themselves] game, one dumbfuck stupid game. Never ever ever ever win this game. Only a clown would play this joke of a game. Only victim loser clown tonto would sit around enough to play this. Right?

KID

Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

ONE

Because Saldu people got nothing to loze. Nothing to play for. Play for nothing. Right?

KID

play for nothing, play for nothing

ONE

Saldu people got nothing. Because why?

KID

cuz why cuz why cuz why

ONE

Because Saldu people are not Barnu/whiteghosts/white people.

KID

saldy people not white people

ONE

Barnu got plenty to play for. When we got plenty, we'll stop this stupid game. Right?

KID

plenty to play for, plenty to play for

(One stops; all stop clapping. To kid:)

ONE

And how do we get our plenty to play for? Huh? Huh?

KID

(has to think; then:)

Take it from Barnu!

ONE

Take it from Barnu! Okay! Great, kid, great, great great, take it from Barnu.

ALL

(clapping hands as One and kid strut again)

Taka from Barnu, taka from Barnu, taka from Barnuween!

(The men exchange a victory salute slapping hands in the air.)

ONE

Okay, okay, great, kid. You remember this well. You remember this really well. Yeah?

KID

Yeah.

ONE  
(calls offstage)  
Hey! Baker! When are you done?

BAKER  
(offstage)  
Soon, soon.

ONE  
Hurry it up!

BAKER  
(offstage)  
Soon!

WOMAN  
(entering opposite the voice)  
He done yet?

TWO  
Nah. Soon soon soon.

WOMAN  
He should hurry.

THREE  
Yeah yeah yeah..

WOMAN  
Nothing better to do than stupid Barnu stuff?

ONE  
You wanna play?

WOMAN  
Got grownup stuff to do.

TWO  
Come on, throw.

(She considers, then takes stones.)

THREE  
Whatcha playin for?

WOMAN  
For something worth the muscle of all these strong boys.

TWO  
Yoo say it.

ONE  
Yoo say it.

(Suddenly all stop. Look offstage, tense and silent.)

How many? TWO

Two trucks. WOMAN

Doin what? ONE

Nothn yet. WOMAN

(Sound effect: clanking and grinding; made my masked actors, also with clacking sticks. The noise moves subsides. All relax.)

What's that? KID

Nothing. You stay still. ONE

You. Your turn. TWO  
(to Woman)

Why? Never win this. For all time. WOMAN  
(considers, throws)

For all time. THREE  
(nods)

\* \* \* \* \*

## APPENDIX 2

### GLOSSARY not including some words translated in Appendix 1

hak tuva	you want a turn?
presti	okay
kay	okay
sheeki, sheeki bo	child
baccus	outdoor oven/communal bakery
pava	brother, good friend
hoonak	crazy
nakwa	agree, accept
ondu	good, excellent
kwita	shit
askwali	thanks
tuwuva	oath
hongvi	strength
commakht	muscle
siva	mask/wire
tcharnimah	fuck your mother
sha	sure, yeah
hoona	lover, husband, partner
khayla	lover, wife, partner
buruhandi	stupid
zozo	clown, stupid
sekulak	forever