

**SURPLUS PEOPLE
PERFORMANCE COMPANY**

presents

TENT CITY PLANET

a performance for outdoors

by Edward Mast

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TENT CITY PLANET is meant for performance in a public space, with masks and visual installations and amplified voices reaching out beyond the formal audience. Some stage directions are included to suggest visual and physical actions that can be performed, not to illustrate the text, but to expand the experience.

(Creatures gather in a field of small red tents.)

Underground here once was a river
a big slow river that looped and meandered
with wandering things living in it and by it
The water would burn up from under the ground
and blend with the snow melt to glide down slow
to the sea
in the valley it built for itself
and the big slow river fed the whole valley
and held the ground
in place.

The river is still there under the ground
There are no loops now .
The river is a straight line now You can hear it
The valley is nothing but a pipe The river
is a torrent that marches down fast from the mountain
rushing like water angry to escape,
you can hear if you listen, under the ground,
grinding away at the pipe that holds it,
fast water chewing at the ground, the ground
is not held in place any more, the ground
is sinking, little by little, the water
that used to hold it is scouring it away,
the ground is sinking, the ground is sinking,
the river is howling under your feet,
listen, you can hear it, listen, listen

(The creatures move away and disappear.)

Your attention please
Your attention please
Do not panic
Everything is under control
You will be protected
Your attention please
At some point in the immediate future
the polar ice caps of this planet will melt
and the average level of ocean will rise
as much as five hundred feet
This process is already underway
and will leave the city of Seattle
500 feet below the surface
of the Pacific Ocean
Your attention please
You will be protected
We have begun to construct
a retaining wall high enough
to keep the rising water at bay
The wall will be one thousand feet high
and will be set two hundred feet below ground
The wall will be water and seawater proof
There will be security cameras to keep ocean water levels
under constant surveillance
and safe from terrorist attack
The wall is for your protection
The wall is for your protection
For this civilization-saving project, we have found
the most reliable and highly recommended
private contractor.
Please give this project your full support
Please support the wall
Construction will begin at once
and may involve some inconvenience
Please be patient as we build this wall
for your protection And please be aware:
we can't guarantee that there will be space
for every person inside the wall
Make sure that you are one of those
chosen to be inside the wall
Make sure you are inside the wall
Inside the wall is good
Outside the wall is bad
Inside good
Outside bad
Say it with me. Inside good. Outside bad.
Say it again.
Please be one of those who support the wall

Your attention please
Your attention please
Residents of Gaza.
All residents of Gaza.
Do not approach the electric fence.
For your own protection.
Do not approach the electric fence.
Do not enter the security zone
within three hundred meters of the electric fence.
Anyone coming near the fence
will be subject to self-defensive weapon-based activity
Please cooperate..
Please stay on your side of the fence.
We do not take responsibility
for the results of the self-defensive weapons activity
which will be aimed at you
Residents of Gaza
Please cooperate.
Please choose peace.

Your attention please
Residents of Beijing
Your life is being improved
Your city is being improved
Beijing is host to progress
Beijing is host to prosperity
Beijing must make room for the happy future
If your living quarters are out of date
or blocking valuable space for the future
we will make it simple for you to help
A single symbol will appear on the outside of your living quarters
You will not see who puts it there
The character "chai"
which means "level".
Level is good Level is stable
The past will be leveled
The future will proceed on the level
If you are chosen to help the future
and you discover the character "chai" on the outside of your living quarters
please prepare to be moved to a more appropriate location.
Please do not interact or argue
with the workers who will appear
to level your former living quarters
These workers are not from Beijing
They did not place the chai on your wall
They are merely instruments of the future
Proceed with calm to the future
The past is already gone
Proceed with calm to the future

(Masked characters start to enter, one by one,
carrying red tents and red bags. They set them up,
one by one, and inhabit their areas in different ways.)

your attention please
Welcome to Dubai
Please enjoy our very warm weather in Dubai
Please enjoy our resorts and most expensive hotels in the world
Please enjoy the people who work for you
They will do anything for you
They will work for you seven days a week
day and night
They have come here to work
We are holding their visas
We have detention centers for them
if they bother you
They will do anything for you
Please enjoy them
Please enjoy Dubai

Your attention please.
Residents of New Orleans.
The hurricane has missed your city.
The levees failed,
but the floodwaters that destroyed your homes
are receding.
We are rebuilding your city.
We are upgrading your city.
We are using this historic opportunity
to improve the quality of life in your city.
Please fill out an application
to enter your name and find out
if you are the sort of person
who will fit into the improved quality of life
in your former city.
Please be specific about your economic and ethnic status.
If you fit into the improved life quality profile,
you will be allowed to return to your former neighborhoods.
If not,
we wish you luck in your new location
wherever that may be.

I saw my child last on the roof of my home.
When the flood came, there was no sky.
Or when there was sky, it killed.
We clung to the shingles of our roof.
After days there came a boat, one boat.
It was almost swamped, so many people.
I begged them, I begged them,
they took my child on board.
I stayed on the roof more days, more nights,
the house sank, the roof came off,
I floated to dry land somewhere.
I almost didn't get off. They had to pull me.
No word of my son. No one remembered him.
He was put on a truck, I think. I was put on a truck
with others. Many many others.
Many trucks to many places.
Took us to a place. With a metal fence.
But I didn't stay.
I had tied a key around his neck
so when I was gone he would have a house
to come back to.
But the place is gone where he was born. Where I was born.
No house there. No town there.
No record of me. No record of him.
Someone else owns what is under the flood.
Someone else lives in my home. If a home exists.
I'm not allowed to go there.
The flood was only water, they say.
The flood that crushed my city.
The flood is an ancient tale, they say,
but now someone else lives in my home.
The flood was sent by the will of god
or fate or atmosphere, they say.
They did not bring the flood, they say.
But the flood left bullet wounds.
And someone else lives in my home

In 1948 the village of al Damoun
in what was called Palestine
was destroyed and my grandparents were driven out
They were taken in by relatives in the village of Beit Nouba.
In 1967 the village of Beit Nouba was destroyed
and my parents were driven out
along with the relatives who had taken them in.
They were taken in by cousins in Jerusalem
and in the valley of the Jordan River.
In 1997 our house was destroyed
and we went to live in the house of other cousins
while my father stayed and lived in a shack.
We built a small house. It was destroyed.
We built again. It was destroyed again.
In 2009 our relatives in Jerusalem
in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah
were driven out of their homes.
In that same year, our house was destroyed
and our cousins' house as well
and all the houses on their street.
And the houses of our relatives in the Jordan Valley
and all the houses in their village.
And some of those houses were built again
and destroyed again.

In Jerusalem
and the Jordan Valley
and Gaza
we live in tents now
because our whole community of families
has been driven out of homes.

They will not let us rebuild.
They will not let us bring materials to rebuild.
They fear that we will make weapons out of cement.

My daughter couldn't be with me for a while.
I came up here and bottomed out
and now I'm getting up on my feet
little by little again. I'll go back.
She's in foster care in California. I'll go back
when I'm ready and be her mom again.
I will. What scares me though is maybe
she'll try to come and look for me here.
And how will she find me?
We put up these tents and build a safe place
but they won't give us a mailbox address,
and sooner or later they'll come along
and tell us you can't be here anymore,
pack up your tents and move along
or we'll pack them for you. Don't make us use
the bulldozer now. Twice already
just since I been here they've come and done that.
Just long enough to make some friends
and trust some people, and maybe just to
clear my head and feel that maybe
I can focus and pull myself
into shape, and then they come. Move along.
And we scatter. Some people try again,
find a new place, set up tents,
some we never see again.
Why can't they leave us alone?
My daughter comes up from California,
tries to find me, where does she look?
Where do I leave her a message?

my house was on an island shaped like a moon
so crescent it almost touched at the tips
The island was named Diego Garcia
and we lived by fishing in the saltwater ocean
and raising coconuts to sell
A boat would come from what we called the mainland
to buy our coconuts for oil
for cosmetics in Africa and Europe.
We would ride the boat if we needed to go
to a hospital. Once my family went
on that boat because my daughter was ill.
She got better but when we went back to the boat
they told us we couldn't go back to our island.
We weren't allowed. They didn't say why.
Wait, they told us. We waited. Went back.
They told us our island didn't exist
and we had never existed on it.
They said we were transients now, people without
a fixed address or source of income.
We should settle ourselves right away
before they put us all in jail.
We went back again. They told us again.
Our island doesn't exist.
Our home doesn't exist.
Soon enough others who didn't exist
appeared on what we called the mainland.
They were told to leave our little island
that doesn't exist. They were put on boats.
None of us ever lived on our island.
It never existed. Now it exists.
A landing strip for military planes.
Some restaurants and a big room
with televisions and pool tables
for soldiers who live there and speak English.
Also some dark sealed rooms where they
keep prisoners who arrive on planes
and do not exist
and will not exist
as long as they are on our island
which doesn't exist for us. We
are not allowed to say its name.
Even the name does not exist.

Your attention please
There is no such place
There is no such place
There is no good reason to say out loud
the name of a place when there is no such place
Even if such a place existed
one time in the past it does not now
and therefore did not
and therefore does not
There is no such place
You have the right to remain silent
You have the right to remain silent
That is your right
To remain silent
Please remain silent
Please remain silent

Your attention please
Residents of this city
It has come to our attention that you once had everything
and it's gone
Some of you had more than enough
more than more than enough
and now you don't
Some of you didn't have even enough
and now you have less than not quite enough
And even if you didn't have everything yet
you might have gotten it sooner or later
but now you'll never get it
Your income is dropping and may disappear
Your costs are not dropping Your costs are rising
You are scared
You don't have enough
You will have less tomorrow
Your child will have less
Your child's child may have less, or have nothing
Your child's child may be nothing
Where did everything go?
You don't know
Nobody knows
Maybe somebody has it
But if they do, they won't give it back
That makes you angry
Someone has stolen your more than enough
Someone has stolen your everything
before you even had it
Who stole everything?
You want to find it
and get it back
Someone stole your everything
and they have got to pay

Your attention please
Listen carefully please
Be very quiet
when you approach the wall
You will need to pay 2800 US dollars
to a guide who may or may not show you the way
You will cross 20 to 60 miles of open desert
If you survive that crossing
you will come to the border
and approach the wall.
It is 14 feet high
In some places there are cameras on the wall
Avoid the cameras
They are being monitored by students in San Diego and Chicago and Tel Aviv
Stay low and go around the wall
The end of the wall is not far
Avoid the bullets from non-professional paramilitary groups
Avoid the Border Patrol
They will call you Tonk because of the sound that is made
when their flashlights contact your skull
If you succeed in passing these obstacles
and find a below minimum wage job
building hot tubs which you will never use
so that wages can be kept low
and you can send some money back to your family
be careful not to be identified
Be careful not to exist
If you exist
and are identified
you will be arrested
and your trial will last an average of 1 minute and 3 seconds
before you are sent away
If you do not succeed in crossing
you will either be turned away to go back
where there is no economic opportunity
or you will stay in the desert near the wall
and no longer be a burden to anyone
including yourself
If your body is found very soon
your relatives may be able to identify you
If your body is not found soon
there is a 24.7 percent chance
that even your gender will no longer be distinguishable

Your attention please.
Residents of Gaza.
Residents of the West Bank.
We bring you peace.
Please cooperate.
Please remain in your assigned zones
which will of course be demilitarized
for obvious reasons.
It may not be perfect
but it is a compromise.
Can't we all get along.
You will not be allowed to control your borders
but you will have peace.
You will not be allowed to control your airspace
or water rights
or imports or exports
but you will have peace.
We reserve the right to enter at any time
but you will have peace.
We reserve the right to annul your decisions
but you will have peace.
We will need to maintain some self-defensive security control
over you.
Because you have resisted our self-defensive security control
over you
we will need to maintain some self-defensive security control
over you.
If you do not like it
you are welcome to relocate
to someplace where you are wanted
or where you belong.
If you choose to stay
please cooperate.
Please choose peace.

Your attention please.
Residents of Tent Cities.
Residents of Nickelsville.
and other residents without current residence.
We feel really bad about your situation.
We are doing everything we can
because we feel really bad.
Reeeeeeally bad.
In the meantime, please cooperate.
Please do not give the wrong impression.
Our city is a successful venture
and we draw success to us by encouraging success.
If you fail to appear successful
you are interfering with the success of others.
If you are not one of those who appear successful,
please stay in your assigned zones
as soon as those zones are determined.
Please cooperate.
Please be considerate and do not interfere with our success
and our successful image of success.

I am in heaven now.
I no longer feel the cold.
There was no place inside at night.
The shelters were full. The emergency shelters too.
My seat in a doorway was made of cement.
I had an old quilt but it wasn't enough.
I shivered and knew I should stay awake
but then the shivering stopped and I
could not remember anything I knew.
I tried to burrow inside my quilt
but my fingers no longer worked so well.
For a moment I felt very hot but then
I hardly felt anything at all. And then
there were no more questions to answer.
It took my body a long time to die.
If someone had found me they might have been able
to revive me. But nobody found me till morning.
And now no heat nor cold can reach me.
I wander freely, no hunger, no pain.
I hover near my outdoor friends.
I try to whisper them words
of comfort and encouragement.
I think they hear me sometimes. I hope so.
Heaven is nice but still I tell them
don't go to sleep in the cold. Stay awake.
Living is beautiful, in its way.
Sometimes one of them falls asleep
in the cold, too cold, they won't wake up
unless they get help. I lie down with them
and wrap myself around their body.
I clutch at their body and give them all
my warmth, all the warmth I have,
but that is nothing. I have no warmth.
No heat nor cold can touch me now.
The only warmth in the world I can feel
is the heat that leaves a freezing body
and passes through me and I
am unable to stop it.
Nothing I do.
Nothing I do.
Nothing I do.
Nothing I do.
Their warmth goes away.
And they go to a heaven someplace
made of ice
like mine
where they never sleep
like me
never sleep
never sleep
always awake
and saying words
of comfort if we can

wherever we can
and waiting always
awake and waiting
for the next heaven of ice to appear.

(During the above, a dancer moves about among the
tent residents, reaching toward them but never quite
touching them.)

Your attention please
Do not look.
Your attention please
Do not look.
It will only depress you.
You have troubles of your own.
You have the right to be happy.
Do not look.
Do not venture outside the wall.
Outside the wall we cannot insulate you
from the consequences of your actions.
Stay inside the wall.
Focus on the positive.
You are too busy to look.
You are not the old busy.
You are the new busy.
Stay new busy.
The new busy is too busy to waste time looking.
The new busy is busy producing.
The new busy is happy. The new busy is positive.
The new busy will have forgotten by now.
If you are outside the wall, get busy.
You might have a chance to be inside.
Work hard. Spend money.
Even money you don't have. Spend it.
Get busy.
Stay busy.
Do not look.
Stay busy.

Your attention please.
You have no place to stay.
You have not found work in this city.
You do not know anyone in this city.
You have a child with you.
It is cold.
The shelters are full
and they would not take you and the boy together anyway.
It is cold.
Your boy needs to sleep safe somewhere.
There is a community of tents.
with an orange plastic fence.
It does not exist
and is for those who do not exist.
It appears sometimes
and then must disappear.
Right now, it is here.

(A particular sound. All stop whatever they're doing
and pay attention as a man with mask is brought on.
He carries neither tent nor bag.

Behind him, a masked creature carries two red bags,
one large one small. The man is brought to a tent.
The two bags are set near him.
He does not interact with them.

Voices on microphones:)

SAMMY - 1

Do you have a place for us here?

We do. Come on in. There's some rules.
No alcohol. No drugs. No fights.
We'll check your ID for any trouble.
Quiet starts at 9 pm.
Everyone does a security shift
like I'm doing now. All good with you?

All good. Can we leave our stuff here?

You bet. Long as you follow the rules
this is your home. No sleeping bags left,
sorry. Some blankets though.

That'll be fine.

Tent number sixteen.
I'll show you. Come on. Hello young man.

He doesn't talk.

No?

He hears you though.
They're going to let us stay here with them.
What would you like to say?
That means thank you.

Welcome, welcome.
We'll show you where to get a shower,
wash your clothes. Short bus ride away.
New in the city?

Yeah. Thought there was work.

Yeah. Hard times. Here you go.

Thanks again.

Glad you found us.
Stay warm now.
In the morning we'll show you around.

SAMMY - 2

There now.
 There now.
 Wrapped up snug. Me too.
 This tent will keep us warm tonight.
 There's people watching outside. We're safe.
 It's quiet outside. That's good. No?
 What do you hear? Cars. Yeah.
 Freeway close by. Like a river, huh?
 Like the ocean. You never seen the ocean.
 Well that's what it sounds like. Kind of a roar
 that never stops. But nice.
 Motorcycle. Idiot. Noise like that
 at night. People sleeping. You do? Not me.
 I'm scared of those things. Maybe. We'll see.
 Getting warm? That's good. Sleep now.
 No. I'm not going anywhere.
 Maybe to pee, if I have to. But then
 I'll come back. We're safe inside here.
 There's a fence, and that guy and the lady outside
 watching for us. When they go to sleep
 someone else will watch. And then someone else.
 And then someone else. And then someone else.
 All the way till morning, and then
 all the way till night, and then
 all the way to the next day.
 Rockabye now.
 Sleep safe. I'm here.
 Rockabye now.
 I'm here. I'm here.
 Rockabye now.
 I'm here. I'm here.
 Rockabye now.
 I'm here.

(During the following, the Man's large red bag is
 opened and one by one, objects are removed. The
 Masked Creature carries them gently around for the
 audience members to see; then hands each object to
 one of the tent residents. One by one, the tent
 residents leave their tents and -- carrying their bags
 come to sit silently beside the man. They don't
 interact with him; just sit beside him, with him.)

SAMMY - 3

Yes sir there are a variety of services
for the child. We're glad you've come. Let us help.

Name of the child?

His age?

Your name?

Your address?

I see.

Some identification
for the child?

Why not?

I see.

Your relationship to the child?

Your relationship to the child?

Your relationship to the child?

SAMMY - 4

Alright, we'll come to order then.
I'm the mediator today.
We're here together, we'll straighten this out.
Say what happened.

He insulted us.

I didn't insult.
I just made a joke.

What did you say?

Nothing! I made a stupid joke
and he tried to hit me.

He shouldn't have done that
but what did you say.

I just made a joke!
He was complaining about the service center,
they kept asking for ID, him and the kid
the kid doesn't have it, we know how that goes.
I said he was welcome. Him and his, you know.
You know. A joke.

He called him a pet.
The boy has cerebral palsy and this man
called him a pet, like a dog or a cat.

Is that what you said?

I guess so.

Alright.
Jerry, that was a really stupid thing to say.
I might have tried to hit you too.

I didn't try to hit him. I told him
I would.

He looked like he was going to.

I woulda looked like I was going to,
Jerry. We need a rule for you.
You need to never say anything like that again.
To anyone. You hear?

Okay.

And
you need to apologize now. To him.

I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything by it.

Okay. You accept his apology?

Just keep him away from me.

No.

There's no keeping away around here.
The apology has to be good enough
and no fighting or no looking like your gonna
no matter what anyone says. That's the deal.
Is that okay with you? We all
agree with you, he shouldn't have said it.
We all would be mad if he did, just like you.
So he can't do that around here. And you
need to take that from us, and take his apology,
and we all keep living in this little place.
Good enough?

Yes. Okay. Good enough.

Good enough Jerry?

Yes. I'm sorry.

I believe you. Shake?

Shake.

SAMMY - 5

You get riled pretty quickly.

I spose.

You don't like people talking about your boy.

No.

Mm.

(pause)

Is he your son?

(pause)

No.

Mm.

(pause)

I gave up a lot for his mom.
I had a good life. Big house. Family.
Then she came along. Now my wife and my daughter
don't wanna see me.

Love, huh?

Yeah.

Whaddya gonna do.

That's the truth.
When I met him he was one of those kids
who sits and stares. You know.
I showed him how to fry his own eggs.
Hooked him up with some sign language, so forth.
Now he laughs and runs around, if he can.
But she had stuff that was more important.

Like what?

Crack house.

Oh.

Yeah.
Any money I had was gone

to support the family that won't talk to me now.
So she decided I wasn't as good
as sitting on a beat up couch in a dark room
with her head lolling around like everyone there.
With him there sitting and staring again.
At nothing.

So you.

Yeah.
Nothing I could do to get her back.
But I couldn't stand to leave him there
like that.

Does she know?

Who knows what she knows.

Are they looking for you?

I don't know.

That makes it hard, huh?

Yeah. It does.
I couldn't leave him like that. Is all.
I've lost too many people. You know.

Yeah. Yeah. We know about that
around here.

SAMMY - 6

*your attention please
 You found a one-day job lifting boxes.
 You had to leave the boy at the camp.
 One of the ladies who lives in a tent
 offered to take care of your boy for the day.
 You wonder at first, but what could go wrong?
 You don't know her, of course. But still.
 You work your day and look for more work.
 There is no work but you have to look.*

*They're not here when you get back.
 Doesn't mean anything.
 Doesn't mean anything.
 Nothing bad.*

You wait.

They're not here.

They're not here.

They're not here.

And then they are.

Hi. Hi. You went for a bus ride?
 Did you have a good time? Huh? You did?
 What did you see? Yeah? Really?
 Like what? I don't understand. Like what?

Flowers.

Really?

They have a greenhouse,
 one of those big glass covered gardens.
 An arboretum.

Ohhh. You took him there?

It was easy. Just one bus. Big park.
 It wasn't raining, we could run around
 all day. And this big arboretum for free.
 He loved the flowers. He would look at the names
 on the little cards and touch each letter
 with his finger.

Were you spelling them out? Wow.
 I can't believe you took all that trouble.

It was no trouble at all, it was fun.
The best day I've had in years.
Are you okay.

Yes. Yes. I just. You know.
We haven't been apart very much
lately.

Of course, I understand, of course.
But he was fine.

Oh I'm glad, I'm glad.
You had a good time? Oh that's great.

Did you have any luck?

No, no.
Nobody's hiring. Especially now
with no address.

That makes it hard.
But something will come along. Don't worry.
You're fit and you'll find something.

Hope so.

And you can leave him with me anytime.

Would you like that? Another fun day?
Thank you so much. Thank you so much.
You don't know what a relief it is.

Oh it's so much fun for me.
Any time, you say the word,
any time, I mean it.

Thanks.
Anything I can do for you?

Don't bother. You ask me any time.
I mean that. We're all.

You know.

We're all.

SAMMY - 7

Dipper. Yeah. Like a ladle. Big spoon,
 Clear enough out we can see. Look.
 The two stars point to that one there.
 North star. You ever get lost
 just find the Dipper and find the North Star.
 There's a little dipper too. But I can't see it.
 Out away from the city you can.
 Lots of stars. Other names.
 What do you see? A kite. Yeah.
 What else? A book. Closed or open?
 Open. That's good. I see. A dog.
 Kind of a poodle. Sitting up.
 There and there and there and there.
 See it? Yeah. What else? A house?
 Where? Big or little? Oh.
 And a doorway. Yes I see it. Is that a window?
 And who's outside? Yeah. Yeah.
 By the lake. Big lake. With trees.
 Big tree. Sparkly little leaves.
 That's my favorite so far. You?
 What else? A rabbit? Where?
 Ohhhh yeah, two ears, good one.
 What else? What? Oh. Very funny.
 And what are those little stars? Yeah yeah.
 Funny funny funny.

Hey.

Hi.

What's doin'?

Looking at stars.
 We're finding all kinds of new constellations.

Really?

Yeah, look. A house.

Where?

There, there, there.

Oh yeah.

And a rabbit. See? Two ears, and a nose.

Oh yeah. That's a good one.

And of course. The favorite.

What's that?

Right there. No no, too bad,
 you picked it out, I'm gonna tell her.
 Cover your ears then. See that circle?

Yeah.

Wanna know what we call it?

Sure.

The Celestial Toilet.

Ah, I see.

With a line of little poops being flushed.
 See there?

I see them. This is a first.
 Very creative boy you got there.

Lucky me.

Hey that circle
 could be a toilet or else it could be
 one wheel of a bicycle. Look.

A bicycle? No way.

Yeah. Look.
 There's the other wheel, sort of,
 and there's the handlebars.

Where?

He sees them. Right there. If you squint.

Oh. Oh. Could be, I suppose.

What'd you rather have? Bicycle
 or toilet? Careful what you choose.

He's saying
 bicycle some times. Toilet others.

A toilet that transforms into a bike.
 We're rich.

We're rich.

Thanks to your boy here.
 You're an inventor.

What's that, he asks.

An inventor. What's an inventor do.

Comes up with something everyone needs
but no one's ever thought of before.
And the world beats a path to his door. How's that?
Sound like a good job to have? Yeah.
You and me both.

Me too. Me too.

Whole sky fulla stars, just waiting up there
to be invented. Can you patent constellations?
Maybe they could come down and help us out, huh?

Yeah. Yeah.

What's he saying?

He likes them better up there.

Mm.
They're better up there.

Yeah.

Yeah.

(By now all are gathered and sitting around the Man.)

Ice Cream Cone.

Clipper Ship.

Crown of Stars.

Baseball Diamond.

Parted Sisters.

Twin Children.

Lights in Windows.

Lost Years.

Memory of Love.

Unbreakable Friendship.

Carpet Tacks.

Your attention please.
Your attention immediately please.
It has come to our attention
that there has been a terrible mistake!
It has come to our attention
that we have been spending vast quantities of money
sending our young people to attack and kill other people.
This is a major drain on our resources
plus it makes those other people really mad
and they start wanting to kill our young people in return.
We don't know whose idea this was.
Furthermore it has been drawn to our attention
that we have been facilitating the transfer of wealth
from many hands into fewer and fewer.
This makes fewer and fewer happy
and more and more people more and more mad.
It turns out we've been treating the people of the world
like a labor faucet we can turn on and off
whenever we need to keep wages down.
It turns out we've been producing things
and trying to avoid giving people enough
money to buy the things we produce.
This is an incredibly stupid idea.
We don't know what we could possibly have been thinking.
We have been the victims of a a terrible misunderstanding.
And now that we are aware, obviously
we will take immediate drastic measures
to put an end to these terrible plans
at once. Right away. Without delay.
If you think getting rid of these bad ideas
is a good idea, let us know please
right away. Right now.
Shall we get rid of these bad ideas? Shall we?
Okay then.

Your attention please.
The preceding was an unpaid political announcement.
The views or opinions do not represent the views or opinions
of anyone
in charge of
just about anything.
Or their affiliates or employees.

Your attention please.
 Your attention please.
 Rumors that we are cancelling education
 due to budget cuts
 are false.
 Repeat: we are not eliminating public education
 There have been budget cuts
 but we are not eliminating public education.
 We are only eliminating the twelfth grade.
 Students are bored silly by then anyway.
 And the first grade.
 Toddlers should spend more time with their parents.
 Your children will receive the same high-quality education
 in a streamlined and highly-efficient ten years.
 It is not true that due to budget cuts
 we are ending public transit..
 Only public public transit will be discontinued.
 Private public transit will still be available.
 At market prices.
 It is not true that the streetlights will go out.
 Only one third of our streetlights will go out.
 The rest will stay on in a random rotation
 between the hours of midnight and 4 AM.
 It is not true that we will no longer pave roads.
 We will simply avoid the use of obnoxious materials
 like tar and asphalt, and rely instead on
 environmentally friendly materials
 like redrock and loose gravel. A homey touch.
 These cost saving measures are for your benefit.
 You will not end up like those others.
 Repeat:
 you will not end up like those others.

Your attention please
 Rumors to the effect that the ground is sinking
 are false
 The ground is not sinking
 Rumors to that effect are illegal
 The ground is not sinking
 There is no underground river here
 and access to it is illegal
 The ground is not sinking
 beyond acceptable levels
 Please do not attempt to access the underground river
 that does not exist

Your attention please.
Your attention please.
For your convenience
with breakthrough modern technology
we have made the wall
invisible!
And moveable!
From this moment on
if you are inside the wall,
it goes wherever you go.
You are always inside.
Your safety. Your security. Your privilege.
And you will not even know it.
You will forget about it.
It will be your silent foundation
and you will come to credit
yourself
for all the things that the wall does for you
invisibly and silently.
You will gain a deep sense of belonging
which will also be invisible.
The only ones aware of the wall
will be those outside it
and even many of them will come to wonder
what it is they're outside of.

Your attention please
Residents of Gaza
Residents of Gaza
You did not cooperate.
You did not choose peace.
We therefore have no choice
but to initiate a process
of correction.
You have brought this on yourself.
We are merely the instruments
of what you have brought on yourself.
The process of correction will begin
in exactly fifteen minutes.
We cannot be responsible for damage
that may result from flying particles
or shrapnel
or incendiary chemicals we find necessary
for our process of correction.
Please do not allow terrorist or other insurgents
to resist or obstruct our process
Association with those who resist
will be regarded as resistance
and will be subject to immediate further processing
If you would like to escape from processing
you may try giving us the names
of any insurgents you know
Bring your green ID passbook
and report to our peace processing center
which will close in nine minutes
Our process will begin in eight minutes
You have seven minutes remaining
Please do not resist our process.

(All the masked people, except the Man, have risen,
taken their bags, and left the area. He is left alone.)

SAMMY - 8

(The man with mask rises, walks around.
The Creature attendant reaches in his bag, pulls an an
empty mask, holds it over his head. He does not
appear to see it as he walks around.)

Your attention please.

You had a young boy with you.

*You traveled together and took care of him
and he took care of you
in his way.*

*He was not your son, however,
and so
when officers of the local government came
and removed the village of tents where you lived
for a while*

*the boy was taken from you and you won't see him
any more*

because you are not his blood relation

*and in any case
you do not exist.*

You still travel from place to place

but alone now.

*You remind yourself
that life will be easier without a dependent.*

You remind yourself again.

*Life will be easier.
Without a dependent.*

You remind yourself again.

You remind yourself every day.

Every day.

Every day.

Every day.

(The man with mask wanders away out of sight into
the city.)

your attention please
Your children in Gaza do not sleep through the night.
They wake up afraid of the dark.
They wet their beds. They wake up crying.
They are silent when other children might laugh.
They don't want you to go outside.
Outside makes them nervous and tense.
They especially don't like going outside
at 11:15 on a school day.
They remember the day one December
when school let out at 11:15 --
they have to go to school in shifts --
and just as they walked out of school
the bombs came down from the sky.
Your children in Gaza draw colored pictures
of where their brothers and sisters were killed.

Your attention please
Your attention please
You are on the wrong planet
You are on the wrong planet
Please relocate to your correct planet
This is not your correct planet
Wrong planet
Wrong planet
You do not belong here
You do not belong here
That is why you have the feeling
you never fully arrived
That is why you have the feeling
everyone else around you belongs
but you do not
You are correct. They do. You don't.
You are too old
You are too young
You just missed everything good
You see and hear things no one else does
They all see and know things that you do not
This is why you are so sad
It is why you giggle at inappropriate times
at things nobody else finds funny
Everyone else responds to signals
that you don't get
Bells ring and everyone moves and you don't.
This is why you're afraid all the time
This is why everything feels broken
You can't fix it. It's the wrong planet.
People on your planet would not treat each other like this.

No one can hear you here.
No one can see you. No one can touch you.
You are invisible. You are too visible.
This is why everyone looks at you here.
This is why you are hidden in the open.
This is why you want so much
and why you never can have what you want.
This is why you are never quite here
but always looking down from above,
or slightly off to one side, or below.
Things happen but you are never there.
Someone else is. Not you.
You are never quite right. You must fix yourself.
But you never succeed in fixing yourself.
You can't. You don't belong on this planet.

(cont.)

(cont.)

This planet hurts.
This planet hurts.
Even the beauty hurts your eyes.
Even love hurts. More love, more hurt.
This planet is living and you are not.
This planet is dying and you are not.
It's not your fault. It's not your planet.

Everything speaks but not to you.
Everything dances but not for you.

Be comforted. Be comforted.
Your correct planet will not be like this.

Somewhere your true planet is waiting.
You must leave at once and find your true planet.
When you find your true planet, nothing about you
will not belong. You will come into being.
You will be the wonder you wonder now.
It will feel like sleep, but awake.
You will not be afraid.

Your true planet waits.

Your true planet waits.

Find your true planet.

Find your true planet.

end