*Placing the chair softly. No one is there. M and J prep the stage, moving around and shifting props.*

J: *[To no one]* Would you please join us?

M: Are you sure?

J: Me? Yes of course.

M: It’s just…

J: What?

M: Nothing, it’s just… It’s just…

J: What.

M: How do you know they are right for it?

J: I think that's the whole thing. A special relation to language. People who, maybe, mistrust it in some big ways, but also know that it's all they really have. There's a sound to that kind of relation. You hear it almost instantly. It's just a good balance of fear and need. Like, a kind of quavering, with authority. Probably, also, I think you have to be honest. Honest and humble. I think you have to say to yourself, here are the rules, here are the boundaries, and, within these limits, I will do everything I can to create an effect of infinity. *[to the volunteer]* And you are that. All of that, the whole thing.

OK?

M: ...and *I* don’t have that?

*[J lifts her eyebrows]*

M: Let me paint you

J: Okay

*They look at each other*

As long as it won’t take too long.

M: I promise it won’t. I only need you for the early work, so we can probably go straight through, but let me know anytime if you need to stop. I’ve plenty of food and you can rest in the bed anytime if you’re tired.

OK...Now you sit.

J: Please sit.

M: Sit.

J: Thank you. For… Thank you.

M: No need to thank me. We’re both doing things for each other.

J: I’m thanking you anyway.

M: Well I’ll thank you too, then, in that case.

J: This will be over quickly.

Do you want a drink?

Ignore them *[audience]*. They are nothing. Invisible. Just empty.

*Silence*

M: I don’t want to confuse you

J: No

M: That wouldn’t help, not at all.

J: Like: he only lies

M: And: she only tells the truth.

J: Simple, but does the trick.

*Pause.*

J: So who am I to be, then?

M: I think St Catherine. She was martyred in the early fourth century.

*M goes to the computer and brings up googled examples of St Catherine. These can be wrong or incoherent choices. These are all live decisions.*

It’ll be a hagigino… Hangong… *[He turns and googles the word, allows google to speak it out loud then repeats]* hagiographic icon, so there’ll be scenes from Catherine’s life around the outside: when she was tortured on the breaking wheel, for instance, or when she baptised the wife of the emperor Maxentius. There’ll be a main portrait in the centre through, a portrait of her, of you, so that’s what I need you to sit for. The scenes will show us some of the things she did, but the portrait will tell us who she really was.

*Pause*

M: I can stop whenever.

*Silence*

At one time or another I used to have euphoric dreams; dreams in colour; this one which I had many years ago: I am walking through a brown forest, through long green grass, yellow light shining through the branches of the trees and at the end of the forest a luminous clearing where the colour met. Nothing else, save an ineffable joy. If at that time I had been preoccupied with my dreams, if I had tried to probe this dream, or rather to relive it, I might perhaps not have experienced it so fully; but that is what it was, earth and heaven interpenetrating one another, feeding one another and feeding me myself with vital sap. But alas, what that earth may be, what that light may be, that’s something I still don’t know, or rather something I...we no longer feel -

I have so much difficulty expressing myself...

It’s gone now. The light, the earth. I *feel*. I just don’t colour it as well as I used to. I’ve lost that. And I don’t know if I can get it back. Or perhaps they were never there. I...we’ll never know.

*Silence*

J: Do you want me to wear something?

M: There’s some clothes I use for models on the side. And take that stick, too. St Catherine is supposed to have a sword, but I don’t have a sword, so I’ll have to imagine one. The stick will be useful, though, to see how your hands clasp an object. I’ll wait outside for you to change. He goes. She looks around. She picks up a small icon and puts it into her pocket. She changes into the St Catherine clothes: a long, blue tunic and a belt. She waits.

J: And for the first time I...we hear human noises from the invisible crowd: bursts of laughter, muttering ‘shush’ing, ironic coughing. Faint at first, these sounds will grow before dying away. But ignore them. It’s passed.

M: Ready? She picks up the stick.

J: How should I hold this?

M: Like you would a sword. She holds the stick awkwardly. Don’t think about the way you’re doing it, just do it.

J: What?

M: Just try and clear your mind.

J: Yes. Just. Okay.

M: Do you feel it?

J: That was impressive. The dream, the way you told it. I listened and you told me...us.

M: You were impressive too. It is not mine, well it was. Not anymore.

J: Are you comfortable? That’s great. That’s really good. I’m doing really well. I was -

M: Inspired.

J: Considering we didn’t have time to finish before…*[the audience]*

*Silence*

Thank you for listening.

You can go now. Thank you again

M: Am I that?

J: Are we what?

M: What you said earlier. Are we that?

J: The whole thing? A special relation to language? No, that was Eno, not us.

M: But it feels true.

J: Of course, but it still isn’t me

M: Us

*Pause*

J: It still isn’t us.

M: She looks sad for a moment but then relaxes slightly. Good. Tell me something.

J: What?

M: Tell me something about you.

J: Erm…

M: Tell me about your life. If I understand your life, it will help me understand you, and I can try and put it in the painting.

*Pause*

Anything. Just start with the smallest things.

J: The ridgeline stretched across my vision. forcing my horizon up up up then down to the cross. In the ground. The calluses are gone but the pain remains. They’re only shadows now. Reaching as the sun spreads. The colours playing tricks with my mind. There are less trees than there used to be, patchy across the hills. They seem less imposing, less overwhelming less, well… The leaves are still there. That hasn’t changed. They’ve seen the world, yawning to the sun every day. The path has shrunk as well. Flattened by stamps and carts, footfall, feeling the rock, the…

Sorry. That’s not really the smallest thing.

M: It’s fine.

J: No, I should have started smaller. It’s too easy just to jump in on your first impulse.

M: Impulse is good though. You were saying about a rock?

Ok I was born on a farmstead about 4 days walk from here.

I don't know how long ago, for some reason no one told me it was important to keep count.

I don't remember them too much about my parents except my mother was fall that my father was short

From my childhood, you remember lying outside in the shade in the forest looking up at some branches above my head.

You remember throwing a ball

You remember running down a track

You remember falling and cutting my leg on the palms of my hands, crying.

You remember night when I was scared of the dark and I couldn't sleep.

I remember thinking it was darker in the room than when I close my eyes.

I remember a bull, a big one, snorting at me as I passed it field.

You remember my mother crying in the night.

You remember my baby brother dying and helping my father to dig a hole at the far end of our field.

You remember thinking it might be selfish of me to be reassured by her crying but it stopped me being scared of the dark.

You remember a man coming to the house and talking to my parents.

You remember he smelled of potatoes and then he left.

You remember he came back again and took me with him to a farm on the other side of the Valley.

You remember the farm on the other side of the Valley was exactly the same as mine except smaller and on the other side of the Valley.

You remember he picked me up in his arms through me up up up and down onto the bed.

You remember he promised not to touch me until I was older.

You remember he kept his promise and I was glad.

You remember he showed me how to chop vegetables and to feed the chickens.

You remember he was the milk the cows.

You remember he told me my parents are dead now and I only had him but that felt ok.

You remember he did touch me in the night and it hurt at first but then it didn't and then I did again.

I didn't bleed and then I did and then I didn't.

I rub my feet. To hurt all the time and I was worried I was getting fat.

You remember I went to an old woman at the valleys over and she told me what was happening.

She told me that I should rest a lot and that I shouldn't drink vodka and that I should be wary of losing my footing in places with sharp jagged rocks.

You remember I lay on my back every night terrified I would roll onto my front in my sleep

You remember one afternoon I went outside to fetch the milk pail after my husband had gone to the market

You remember I felt something split and push inside me and I bent forward suddenly and dropped my pale and the milk ran down the path and mingled with the mud at the edge of the grass.

You remember I called out several times for my husband but then, you remember, you remembered he was out at the market.

You remember I went inside slowly and took a sheet off the bed and spread it on the floor

You remember I straighten it out with my feet before I squatted down and that when I squatted down my calves hurt because I haven't done it for a while

You remember my knees what up around my ears and I scrutinised the door frame very hard

I felt something push inside and I pushed back against it

You remember I pushed and it started to hurt

You remember I pushed and it hurt more than ever before but I knew it was worth it

You remember I pushed and I look through the window at the sun on the trees on the ridgeline

You remember I pushed and I felt opened up from my crown to my toes

You remember I pushed and my toes made a fist on the floor

You remember I pushed and pushed with a quick in my neck You remember I pushed as I screwed up the sheets with my feet You remember I pushed and it hurt You remember I pushed and it was worth it You remember I pushed and it hurt You remember I pushed it was worth it You remember it was worth it You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed You remember I pushed I remember I pushed You remember I pushed my remember I

You remember I was told it supposed to cry

You remember I was told it supposed to move

It's supposed to breathe at least

You remember that

It isn't a child if it isn't alive

It isn't a son or daughter

So what is it then a Blob, a rock a rock a rock a rock a rock a rock a rock

I looked out of the window

Can you put that in? Can you put that in the painting?

I sure can!

**Ending**

*[M and J light up cigarettes. M starts to paint, away from the view of the audience]*

I struggle constantly. Not constantly but it comes in waves. You know, like a cold sweat in the middle of a balmy night. Like a heart drop when you remember.. And it’s not so much a struggle as a worry. A wavering worry. A fear that something is… That everyone can… That I am not as good as I think I am. Some might see that as humbling or a necessary dampening of ego but it’s disheartening and I get these urges to scream. A scream so deep, so loud and so freeing that my throat burns, burns for days. Hurts to swallow. I want to scream. I want to scream, tear my shirt off, smash through the window and run until my legs burn, the sweat stinging my eyes, run till my legs are numb and the steam emanates off my face, because if I lose *this*, well, I loose it all, then I’ll run further and my legs collapse and the sweat evaporates. Then I’ll.. *[Finding a place on the ground, trying to find the panting]* Well I never got this far so I don’t know what would come next. Maybe I’d vomit, maybe I’d quietly cry to myself or to a passing stranger. Or I’d shun comfort and put on a brave face, or just lie in the middle of the road, sweating, panting, letting the worry steam off me. *[Sitting up]* Or I’d imply a slight discomfort overtly in the presence of others with a quiet sigh and keep my struggle, and keep my running, and keep my screaming and keep my tears to myself. St. Catherine wouldn’t smoke… I’ll edit it out later. This isn’t finished either. I’ll cut and move bits around to make it gel better later..

Go to sleep.

*[Moves over to the bed and gets comfortable]*

It’s getting there though. I really think we’re on to something, J.

*[falls asleep, s still in position for the painting, still, calm.]*

*Silence*

He talks too much. It’s ok. We can change it though. Change him. Change it.

*[She stands and walks over to the painting.]*

I don’t think he’s really a painter at all. There’s no easel here for a start, no canvas. Just a paintbrush and the warm air of the stage. But I can see it. I can see what he was painting. I can see it in my mind. I remember that, it’s mine and he made that for me. For us.

*[She moves over to the bed and lays on top of the covers, spooning, motherly, happy.]*

*[Lights fade out.]*

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The Chairs

Ionesco Interview

Will Eno - Thom Pain

Cannibals - Rory Mullarkey

This is about loss. The loss of a memory. And as memory makes up you, as memory is all that you can remember, when you forget, does a part of you go with it? And as the memory fades, as does those all important visceral attachments to it. They become more sedated, more numb. Less important.

Clear basis in ‘everything's a remix’ Constant postmodern references to show the work in progress metaphor of the painting and the script itself.

Serious consideration taken into scenographic elements and a high concentration on semiotics to display the correct message to the audience.

Allegri - Miserere Mei, Deus

Berkley, perception of food taste, cigarettes, colour are all mental perceptions as no one colour, taste can be nailed down. Perceptions change and therefore cannot be a constant from the object, rather a mental phenomenon presented by the individual. **(Do a section on the paint colour, taste of a cigarette etc.) John Locke. A ‘sensible object’**