

The apple in the sand OR  
The sand in the apple.  
- By P. LAYWRIGHT

"But we all know that little flame  
and its flickering in the wild shadows."  
- Samuel Beckett.

"Think how phenomena come  
trooping out of the desert  
of non-existence into this  
materiality.  
Morning and night, they  
Arrive in a long line  
And take over from each other,  
"it's my turn now, get out!"  
- Rumi.

PERSONS IN THE PLAY.

THE ACTOR.  
THE PLAYWRIGHT.  
SPECTATORS.  
THE PILLAR.  
THE ARCH.  
THE DOORWAY.  
NO.  
THE PRINCESS.  
THE PRINCE.  
SHOPPING MALL. (?)  
EVER.  
FUN.  
OPEN.  
FATE.  
TREE.  
APPLE.  
GRAIN OF SAND.  
BODY.  
ARCHITECTURE.  
SOUL.

ACT I. Entree.

Scene: Night-time in a small theatre. The party is over. The rehearsal is over. The play is over. The actors are on a cigarette break. The actors are recovering. Only a dog, lost and peaceful, is a witness to the scene. No, he doesn't belong here, but his presence is essential! There is a table and some chairs, food left-overs and wine bottles. It is dark outside, but there are no windows. A few candles are left burning. It is a mess; flies everywhere and it smells of french cheese. Scripts are left here and there, containing a play. Back-stage the ACTOR is in a state of nervous inertia. PILLAR, ARCH and DOORWAY are on the threshold between light and darkness. Sound of orchestra tuning in the background.

(enter audience)

PILLAR: (standing in doorway, blocking the passage, looking angry inside)  
Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.  
Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.

Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.

Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.

ARCH: We are deep, deep, deep within a forest, uhhh fortress,  
So you have nothing to fear. :)

PILLAR: Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.

Welcome! Please take a seat... the performance will begin shortly.

ARCH: what happens inside, doesn't happen outside.

DOORWAY: In the beginning there was darkness,  
Then there was light,  
Darkness separated from the light, etc. etc.  
Bla, bla, bla, you know how it goes.

PILLAR: A tiny spark lighting the candle to illuminate the infinite. The light in the end is no better than the shadow.

DOORWAY: They're just two sides of the same coin.

ARCH: you know, I dreamed of strange unions at a counter. There were pink and red and organic tube-like forms merging with me.  
Hmmm, I wonder what that was all about.

DOORWAY: Yes, I was turning a bit into you. That's the thing I do when I don't know what to do with myself anymore.

ARCH: You're talking very nicely,  
But I prefer drinking.

DOORWAY: Let's! A toast to our union! That you may be me, and I may be you?

(enter through the opening in the darkness PLAYWRIGHT. NO sits in his left ear, ANY clutching PLAYWRIGHT around his right knee)

PLAYWRIGHT: I'm too scared to write a play,  
therefore i want to write a play.  
I want to set sail on the ocean of freedom and feel the cool breeze of possibility in my hair.

I would leave half of the realities on land,  
simply because i don't like them... i *simply*  
don't like the look of them!

NO: But we don't have time.

PLAYWRIGHT: Time-time?

No No, there is plenty of time, for ANYthing.

NO: But we have tickets for the show.

PLAYWRIGHT: The show will be when the show will be. When  
I will have finished it.

ANY: And we don't have any actors.

PLAYWRIGHT: Actors, actors, actors. A play doesn't need  
actors. It is enough in itself. It only needs a  
stage. A fearly empty projectionspace to mirror  
the mind.

Anyways, I will have to write it first, and  
that is why we are here. This is the spot where  
creation will begin. It will expand and become  
more complex.

NO: Look! There! There is an audience! (points  
exitedly though vaguely in the direction of the  
audience)

ANY: (kicks NO and whispers) Don't point your  
finger! We must pretend they don't see us and  
we don't see them.

NO: what? No...

PLAYWRIGHT: A play is like a piece of living paper. The  
pages are crowded with screaming characters,  
and they are screaming and screaming, charming,  
but screaming, and will do so for as long as  
the paper will support them.

NO: ... but you have a very nice smile.

PLAYWRIGHT: What these character scream is not really  
important - no-body is  
listening to them anyways. No, what is really  
important is the looks! The charm is on the  
surface.

ANY: Ok but, what are you going to write about.

PLAYWRIGHT: but, but, but, what about, what about?  
What i say, it trully little matters what it is  
about, this or that or any  
other thing.

NO: But surely you need a structure?

PLAYWRIGHT: I like the idea of a beginning, a middle and  
an end. But even better would be to let them  
fade into each other. In the beginning there  
was chaos, in the end there will be chaos. In  
between a little tower is being build, but what  
for?

ANY: To look at what's coming, and what has been?

PLAYWRIGHT: Perhaps to look at what's coming, and what  
has been.  
But these are not the sort of questions that  
concern me. They disrupt my creativity. The  
chaos underlying everything must climb into  
this little tower, which is me, and fill it  
with confusion.  
Questions are the building blocks of the modern  
world. But the time has come to go back. It is  
part of the infinite cycle of things. You  
understand?

NO: No.

(PLAYWRIGHT looks statically in front of him and frowns)

ARCH: Let us say I am becoming you. (looks and points  
at DOORWAY)

DOORWAY: Yes! And I am becoming you!

ARCH: We'll be one!

PILLAR: But then I'm not I anymore (looks worried at  
ARCH)

ARCH: Don't worry, you'll be alright. Maybe you can  
become HEAD OF A WOMAN.

PILLAR: But you will close the doorway!

ARCH: Don't worry, you are not alone.

DOORWAY: We all have to become.

ARCH: It's natural to change position.

DOORWAY: Yes. Just relax, it's going to be ok.

(PILLAR transforms into HEAD OF A WOMAN; ARCH merges with DOORWAY)

PLAYWRIGHT: Oh? Can I hear voices in my head? Am i finally going crazy?  
Yes, I can feel it now: thunder and lightning in my soul!  
On an ordinary day like today?  
Of course!  
Luckily I have plenty of energy to write, hahahaha!  
And plenty of time!---wine!  
Anyways yes, yes, there should be a lot of wine to make the words flow. The words should flow and bump into each other, occasionally merge and create strange unheard-of-before unions.

(PW sits down, long silence, stares in front of him, frowns)

Well! What keeps me from writing what I want?

(long silence)

(enter from left PRINCE and PRINCESS)

PRINCESS: So you don't remember we slept together?

PRINCE: Well, I certainly cannot remember seeing you sleep.

PRINCESS: But maybe you fell asleep earlier and slept longer than me. That is possible no?

NO: no.

PRINCESS: But I do have things in my head also.

NO: no.

PRINCESS: I was dreaming that I was dreaming that I was dreaming that I had a dream. I was really far away. But i could see you down there, or up here. (confusedly points up, and down)

PRINCE: Come on, we need to hurry, we'll be late for the show.

PRINCESS: It's not as if it stopped there! Are you even listening to me? It is a romantic story.

PRINCE: You're raving. Come on, I don't want to sit in the back like last time.

(exit PRINCE at the right)

PRINCESS: But sitting in the back is so romantic.

(exit PRINCESS)

PLAYWRIGHT: hummm. No, a play doesn't need actors. They just ramble on about nothings. A play is enough in itself. It only needs a stage - a space for light and darkness to do their magic - an empty projection space to mirror the mind. But absolutely essential to a play are spectators! They bring the play to life. And there should be chairs. Lots of chairs. Chairs to sit on, so people don't walk around nervously. Walking people make me nervous, especially when there are a lot of them.

(SPECTATORS appear, indifferent)

SPECTATOR: where are we?

SPECTATOR: where are you?

SPECTATOR: we, you.

SPECTATOR: where are we heading?

SPECTATOR: where are we coming from?

SPECTATOR: when does it start?

SPECTATOR: when is it ready?

SPECTATOR: when do we go?

SPECTATOR: when do we stay?

SPECTATOR: what did you say?

SPECTATOR: what did I say?

SPECTATOR: I, you.

SPECTATOR: me, we.

SPECTATOR: how?

PLAYWRIGHT: Actors becoming spectators;  
Spectators becoming actors.  
Oh, Love it!

The actors, if we really need them, should stay off stage. They might give an occasional moan or scream, but they should not interfere with the play. The actors should be in a constant state of alertness and unquenchable desire to go on stage, but they must be at all times prevented of doing so, in order for them not to make a fool of themselves and not to meddle with the holy substance of imagination that is cooking inside the mind of the spectators.

#### MUSICAL INTERMEZZO

PLAYWRIGHT: But what about the light? Yes, the lighting, i will have to think about that. The light should mingle with the darkness. But what there is to see can only be seen with the minds eye. And now I have a deja vu. I have been here before! I know I have remembered having seen this place before. I have seen this place before!

AH! But it's my little palace, where i own my mind!  
It's a beautiful day and my mind is running up and down the stairs.  
Ahhhhhhhh, I could lounge here for... ever?  
EVER! (short silence)  
Ever! Ever! Where are you, Ever! I need you!  
Isn't it terribly hot in here? I need you to wipe my forehead, and scratch my skull.

(enter EVER)

#### CURTAIN

#### ACT II. Plat.

There is no door, no roof or window, where the wine is flowing freely.

(enter from left PRINCESS, the PRINCE is out of sight)

PRINCESS: Hi, anyone to talk to? I have so many things to say!

Everybody is busy all day.

I think people never worked as much as they do now.

PRINCE: You talk a pile of shit!  
(short silence)  
but you have a very nice smile.

PRINCESS: I mean the system has no boundaries and so they work and work and work and work in order to get to the outer limit of things and be free again. But...  
What? What is it?

PRINCE: shhhhh!

PRINCESS: (whispering) What are you doing?

PRINCE: (whispering) I'm trying to hear the silence. I can almost hear it in between the noise you produce.

PRINCESS: (looks perplexed)  
Oh, I don't know... Should I cry or should I laugh?  
OR  
HAHAHAHA! You are so FUNNY!

(enter FUN)

Now I remember why I like you.

(to FUN) Do you have anything to say?

(talking half to herself) Nothing really happening here. I have to make up everything by myself, including you.

PRINCE: what?

PRINCESS: Nothing!

(exit FUN)

I know I was thinking yesterday  
But what i have today  
I have no idea.  
As if everything is normal!

(exit right the PRINCESS)

MUSICAL INTERMEZZO

(enter from right the PRINCESS and PRINCE)

PRINCE: But in there you have to be precise, ask yourself questions, as for example wether you still are, and if no when it stopped, and if yes how long it will still go on. Once you've lost the thread of existence, you will never find it back.

PRINCESS: I feel like being in a giant shopping mall.. But it's already too intellectual. But the giant shopping mall could be the wide big crazy scary world that is around us, making us tired sometimes and sometimes scares us. Walking, then running, then walking, then running, then sitting, then walking again, trying to reach a possible end of a corridor but then you find yourself going in circles. But my reality is elsewhere. You know what i mean?

(the PRINCE suddenly walks of stage to the right, enter FUN from the left)

FUN: yes! I know what you mean. But let's have some fun. Let's play a game!

PRINCESS: oh, please, yes, let's play, let's play!  
What game?

FUN: I call it the game of love and death.

PRINCESS: Oh, that's sound very exciting, and interesting. How does it work?

FUN: It's very easy! We just have to balance between the two, between love and death that is, the first one who fails, or falls, loses.

PRINCESS: Ok! Let's start then!

FUN: yes! You begin!

PRINCESS: O-k, uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh,

Life is passing,  
There is no love.

FUN: Not bad, not bad, my turn, uhhhhhhh,

We are already dead,  
But we have no mercy?

PRINCESS: uhhhhhhhhh, oh, I know,

I would kill you if I could.

FUN: uhhhhhhhhhhhh,

It is not you who are dead.

PRINCESS: uh,

I made friends  
On the cemetery.

FUN: uhhhhh

(silence)

PRINCESS: tick-tock, tick-tock

FUN: When you are out of it  
Be out of it  
When you are in it  
Be in it?

PRINCESS: Teeeeeeeeet, you're OUT!

FUN: Ahhh!

PRINCESS: Let's try again!

FUN: Ok! Uh,

Cut all the flowers in bloom!

PRINCESS: I need what I want  
I need what I want

FUN: uhh,

I can see it clearly now,

Uhh,  
You are not miles away,  
Uhh,  
You are right in front of me.

PRINCESS: I am!

FUN: You are!

PRINCESS: You.

FUN: I.

PRINCESS: Hahaha  
I wonder what my last thought would be.

FUN: \_\_\_\_\_

(FUN mysteriously disappears)

(the PRINCESS mysteriously disappears)

#### MUSICAL INTERMEZZO

#### ACT III. Dessert.

PLAYWRIGHT with his eyes closed center stage. Bright  
light that devours everything.  
A dark speck appears. It's FATE, sitting sad and solitary  
in her everlasting corner, knitting.

PLAYWRIGHT: Oh! the great light that devours everything!  
There is no inspiration! Everything is dead!  
Get me out of here!

FATE: Oh, yes. The sky has a horrible colour today.  
But the weight of the world is changing  
already.  
Dusk is nigh!  
Be patient, my son!

PLAYWRIGHT: I'm wondering, what was god doing with  
himself before the creation? It must have been  
terrible! Now that i see the light, i  
understand why he created us!

(light dimmed, FATE looking benevolently at PLAYWRIGHT)

PLAYWRIGHT: Now i remember what happened.  
I was sitting comfortably in my little palace.  
I had blown the dark mist away over the  
mountains.

The sun was shining brightly and the birds were on my side singing beautiful romantic arias. My mind was running up and down the stairs. I was sipping wine from my own vineyard. But then i started to lose focus, maybe it was because of the sun; the sky went white hot and my landscape became a desert. I had only a few seeds in my pockets. I wanted to plant them, but then i started to lose focus again, to forget whole lines, lose the thread of the story. Where I was or where I was going I had no idea. I think I was waiting for rain to fall. The silence was unbearable. There was no breeze.

FATE: You are confused, my child.  
You have been shining your light on empty shadows. You pulverised everything with your fierce imagination. Now you are in the desert. Patience is the only way out. You have planted your seeds, now you need to wait for what is inside them to grow.  
But i can tell you that you will be dead long before, hahahaha!

PLAYWRIGHT: I don't quite understand.

FATE: You will die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again, make the same mistake, die, forget, and be reborn again. Hahahahaha!  
You will built your imaginary castles on this quicksand trying to reach infinity. But you are yourself infinity!  
You will be rich.  
You will be powerful.  
You will have empires.  
You will have many lovers.  
You will have all of these things, and more, so rejoice!

PLAYWRIGHT: really?

FATE: Life is a sequencing of different kinds of  
meditation.  
You will never understand.  
But please, go on with what you were doing...

(FATE turns into TREE with an APPLE)

PLAYWRIGHT: I feel rather funny, I don't know. Have i  
just been dreaming or did i just wake up.

(looks in the direction of the audience and  
doesn't see the TREE with APPLE behind him)

It really looks deserted.

As empty as the heart could wish.

Timeless, spaceless.

Everybody must be really busy in the city.

What will I do here until my death?

Oh! I know, I've always wanted to write a play.  
This must be the time and place to do that.

I think I'm hungry and thirsty.

TREE: (whispering) psssst!

PLAYWRIGHT: (wipes forehead)

Oh well, I'm sure it's not *all* desert...

(scratches head)

TREE: Psssst!

PLAYWRIGHT: ... there must also be forests and mountains,  
and seas also.

APPLE: Hooo!

PLAYWRIGHT: What?!

APPLE: hmmm-hmmm!

PLAYWRIGHT: Oh an apple, just what I need.

So,  
Anyone else here?  
Please, somebody, talk to me,  
I've got so many things to say.

PLAYWRIGHT B: Should I wait,  
Or should I go,  
That's the question.

PLAYWRIGHT C: If I had known before,  
I wouldn't have..

PLAYWRIGHT B: It's getting dark,  
Didn't they say it gets cold in the desert at  
night?

PLAYWRIGHT: Yes, I think I've heard about that on the  
radio.

PLAYWRIGHT C: I haven't even got any paper to write on,  
and my words dissolve into nothingness in here.

PLAYWRIGHT B: To be frank, I can barely breathe. This  
place must be in high altitude. I want to shout  
for help, but there is hardly any air for my  
words to be carried away.

PLAYWRIGHT: Maybe I should write to mother, she must be  
worried by now as it is almost dark.

PLAYWRIGHT B: Oh, when I think about the food getting  
cold!  
Hey, where did you get that apple from? Can I  
have a bite of that apple?

PLAYWRIGHT C: Oh, I can feel my soul, my soul is banging  
on the invisible doors and windows. It wants to  
expand endlessly, and grow wings to fly over  
this desert.

PLAYWRIGHT: Enough! Enough of this cry baby nonsense!  
This might well be the ultimate place to stage  
a play. No actors, no audience, no attributes,  
no light, no warmth, no music, no script, no  
heaven, no love, no death, no food, no wine.  
Just sand as far as the eye can see, and stars.

This is the blanc page i've been waiting for  
all along! It was right in front of me and i  
didn't see!

This (takes up one GRAIN OF SAND) will be my protagonist!

First get rid of everything.

But. Never stop, never stop,  
There is always more!

Never stop, never stop,  
Never stop thinking,  
Never move on,  
Never think that is it,  
It's not the end, it's not the end,  
There is always more to take away - to get rid  
of - to deconstruct.

It has to be pure.

What's left now?  
Than I will remove that too.

(PLAYWRIGHT waits a certain time, then falls asleep)