

**Last Dreams of Helene Weigel
or
How to Get Rid of The Feminism Once and for All.**

Prologue

BRECHT:
(dressed as a German farmer of the 1500's, hat and boots)

Hello. I am here to make a few points clear before this performance begins. This is necessary as a delicate subject such as this one can raise many hackles.

So let me be clear about the ten positions of this play:
(reading off a paper)

- 1) Women are closer to nature but farther from the scientific sphere of rationale, i.e. even the most intelligent, conscious woman is more animal than the most reptilian-brained man.
- 2) A man always comes up with the new ideas, a woman can adjust those ideas but they will never belong to her. Women will never quite grasp the habit of deep thought.
- 3) The female body belongs to society, which is comprised of men.
- 4) Women are defined by men. Even women outside of a hetero-normative framework only exist as women in comparison to men.
- 5) Transsexuals, drag queens, and other men dressed up or surgically altered to look like women are not women. Their experiences are irrelevant. Furthermore, women are sexual receptacles and so as we view lesbianism as a perversion at the very least, behaviors or desires straying from heteronormative, submissive, and receptive sexuality will not be considered.
- 6) All women are the same. They do not have varied experiences depending on race, age, class, sexual orientation, or nationality, they all call themselves women and are women. You know what a woman is when you see one.
- 7) Women are dangerous. Nearly all the great civilizations of the world have been overthrown by women. Troy at the hand of Helen, the kingdom of the Jews through the accursed Jezebel, and her daughter Athaliah, queen of Judah, the Romans through Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, the Aztecs at the words of Malinche. Therefore it is no wonder if the world now suffers through the malice of women.

- 8) Women do not understand the ways of the world and should never be allowed to participate in politics or world orders.
- 9) Women can not be artists, as the creative force is a masculine one.

(ACTRESSES enter, they are EVE in lingerie)

10) Finally, through these points we may see that Women do not have souls and do not necessarily belong to the human race.
Thank You.

(BRECHT exits)

ACTRESSES
(as music begins)

At the very least, most of us are fools, fools, fools.
How else do you explain our sublimation, obsession with sex and subsequent self-prostitution, our inability to make decisions, our passion for flowers, our taste for the sweet and sharp slapping hands, our slabs, our flesh, our beds, our toilets, our perfumes, how else do you explain our hysterical diseases and the sounds of our shoes?

(sung)

I have never met a woman I can respect.

PART ONE

Act 1: Mother of the World

Scene 1: she lets fall the egg

Helene is born from an egg)

MALE ACTRESSES
(entering in boots and hats and poorly done make up)
FAST, harmony (3)

The defining feature of a woman /is her ability to bear and raise children/ and the organic systems of this:
Their wombs, ovaries, and mammary glands /pertaining to this the recognition of her children as mother/ and all included in this

ACTRESSES

(MUSIC comes in full: actresses begin rocking chair movement)

while, she slept/she shifted/spreading legs
warming egg /fell from her knees
warming cave/ the cloud of bees
lips parted/thick air/she ceased to breathe

Waves of nausea/clods of shaken earth
Sighs of cattle and beetles giving birth
the smooth shell
the clear meat with the yellow center

ACTRESSES

PACKED, WITH SALT AND CLAY
SALT AND CLAY
HERE WALK THE CURSED
(someone was the first)
...she lets fall the egg...

MOTHER OF THE WORLD

(video)

When bending down or over
A woman hears the seconds sliding across the floor
Like a raw egg on linoleum / whisper of viscous flesh
Through the window, the scarecrow
Propped up by the hardened nerves of the historic
And the glint of the cold morning sun off the rhetoric

ACTRESSES

Helene Weigel is the example
of the perfect woman...

JUNG

*(sampled, moon landing radio
Music creeps)*

The overdevelopment of the maternal instinct is identical with that
well-known image of the mother which has been glorified in all ages
and all tongues.

ACTRESSES

PACKED WITH SALT AND CLAY

SALT AND CLAY

HERE WALK THE CURSED

(someone was the first)

...she lets fall the egg...

(egg falls and falls, actresses punctuate cracks with vocal sound)

JUNG

(sampled)

Intimately known and yet strange like Nature, lovingly tender and yet
cruel like fate

ACTRESSES

(in a whisper, sung)

Helene Weigel, the communist and scientist
Is no more a mother to any other
thought than any other woman.
She has real children, many of them...

*(sounds of children laughing: on video children appear and
disappear)*

She welcomes all who come
into her home...

JUNG

(sampled)

Mother is motherlove, my experience and my secret.

HELENE

(echo male actresses at top of section)

But what kind of mother?

The frail and child-like mother that Betty Freidan says Freud had?
Or the big-bosomed matriarch ready with embraces, gingham clad?
Or the bony drudge with her slaps and her tears, perpetually sad?

ACTRESSES and MALE ACTRESSES

PACKED WITH SALT AND CLAY

SALT AND CLAY

HERE WALK THE CURSED

(someone was the first)

...she lets fall the egg...

JUNG

(sampled)

'joyous and untiring giver of life-mater dolorosa and mute implacable portal that closes upon the dead.

ACTRESSES

And she has poisoned her little boy's heart as she strokes his hair (redeemer)

And she has eaten more knowledge than is her share (also a schemer)

HELENE

(lightning rod for the emotions of others
O my poor baby caught in a storm)

JUNG

(sampled)

Why risk saying too much, too much that is false and inadequate and beside the point, about that human being who was our mother, the accidental carrier of that great experience which includes herself and myself and all mankind,

HELENE

(speaking

Music drops back)

What is this instinct to go under to the warmth I feel for others
Like pieces of broken plates
Beneath the blades of a plough...

ACTRESSES

(but you could not be more needed Helene)

HELENE

...to the infesting schemas of the reigning sex, whose worldviews are taken as fact without a second thought

ACTRESSES

but you could not be more noble Helene

JUNG

(sampled)

about that human being who was our mother, the accidental carrier of that great experience which includes herself and myself and all mankind, (sample)
and indeed the whole of created nature, the experience of life whose children we are?

ACTRESSES

(music swells)

Mother/daughter

Mother/son

intersubjection/dear reflection

(music drops)

HELENE

(sweetly)

To the rage like a bad smell sinking into the background until you leave the room and then return
(sampled)

JUNG

A sensitive person cannot in all fairness load that enormous burden of meaning, responsibility, duty, heaven and hell, on to the shoulders of one frail and fallible human being-so deserving of love, indulgence, understanding, and forgiveness-who was our mother.

ACTRESSES and MALE ACTRESSES

(music back UP)

PACKED WITH SALT AND CLAY

SALT AND CLAY

HERE WALK THE CURSED

(someone was the first)

...she lets fall the egg...

(ACTRESSES continue a MALE ACTRESSES speak and through Jung sample)

MALE ACTRESSES

The tendency to narrativize and generalize is the same as the will to power.

JUNG

The mother carries for us that inborn image of the mater nature and mater spiritualis, of the totality of life of which we are a small and helpless part.

"Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype" (1939) In CW 9, Part I: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious P.172

(ALL exit)

Act 1, Scene 2: BREAD

(a flat plain)

HELENE

I the plane, the flat plane, the flat earth
the thirsty flat plane

MALE ACTORS

Women must bind their lives to repetitive action

Otherwise they lose track of who they are.

A good list of tasks for women:

(this list continues throughout HELENE, spoken, rhythmic)

Bread baking

Child changing

Bread baking

Clothes hanging

Bread baking

Gardening

Bread baking

HELENE

In 1932, after playing the role of *The Mother* on the stage, I found myself oversleepy all the time, as if my vision was being slowly flattened out by a heavy oak rolling pin

(rolling pin sounds, rocking cradle or chair)

HELENE

plane, the flat plane, the flat earth, the swelling flat plane

ACTRESSES and HELENE

plane, the flat plane, the flat earth, the pregnant flat plane
A surface is my tenderness, smooth and empty is my brain

plane, the flat plane, the flat earth, the pregnant flat plane
plane, the flat plane, the flat earth, the widening flat plane
plane, the flat plane, the flat earth, the swelling flat plane
*mind, the flat mind, the flat earth, the pregnant flat mind
*mind, the flat mind, the flat earth, the widening flat mind
*mind, the flat mind, the flat earth, the swelling flat mind

MALE ACTRESSES

Flat, the female mind is flat

Like the earth.

(spoken, vision themes shoot through orchestra - middle age chant melodic influence with electronic delay that plays with the reverb usually applied to voices, either in instruments or with prerecorded voices played with a sampler)

HELENE

When I allowed myself to sink into the corner of the room
I was overtaken by visions of the medieval scholar Heloise.
Probably because we both have sons, mine Stefan and hers
Astrolabius.

HELOISE is in the center of an arena The sounds of beasts fill the air suddenly but are not yet seen. HELOISE remembers vaguely that she has done this before. She knows the creatures fly and looks for

twine and wire to bind their wings. She must kill them. HELENE indicates a sword and gestures towards the sky.

HELENE

These were not dreams I had of Heloise, but visions, I saw Heloise with the utmost clarity.
In one, she woke up suddenly from a dream about fighting creatures in an arena...

She was entangled in a dirty embrace with her lover, the philosopher Abelard.

As plump as I was rail thin at her age,
as apple-cheeked as I was sallow at her age,
Heloise...the smell of sage and roses...dirty linens...and mosses...

(Vision state induced: video of Heloise)

HELOISE:

(earnest)

I sleep in one bed with a man called Abelard who has no job.
He has turned down the knighthood.
This latter makes him most noble!
He is a scholar
And knowledge is power
but it was his weakness that first impressed me...

ABELARD:

(pedagogically)

abandoning the knighthood impresses the girls
more than swords/the number slain/and weather endured
men surrendering makes women out of girls
my head on her breast/weakness speaks louder/than purple words
her bread is my bread and her strength is my salvation
with deep sighs /when she is gone/ I am the center of her creation
a man can never be a muse
he can only be a child /that she cannot refuse

HELOISE:

One day I came home from my job as an Administrator in the registrar's office and found that you had moved in
Ever since then
you have been my elation
Your need has been my formation
I take care to keep you so
While criticizing your consistency of bread dough

HELOISE

My Abelard is balding, he has a long narrow face and close-set black eyes.
His thin dry arms are pocked with scars where the thorns of a society
A society which minimizes the emotions of men
have caught and torn his flesh...
there is nothing wrong with being a housewife and a mother
there is nothing wrong with the role of caregiver

MALE ACTRESSES

and it is Rousseau who says "A perfect man and a perfect woman
should no more resemble
each other in mind than in countenance . . .
One should be active and strong, the other passive and weak;
it is necessary that one wills and imposes his will, it is enough that
the other resists little"

BETTY FREIDAN

In the 1950's the women returned to the home
you could see them lining up along the highways
their equal rights sashes drabbed by the rain
their hair spoiled by the coal dust released by the passing train
they were triumphant with voting rights but weak and alone
looking for a place to rest and call home

ACTRESS Voices only, *(lightly)*

Don't you feel guilty
don't you feel dirty...

BETTY

The problem that has no name.
I feel guilty and dirty, despite my fame.

(vision end)

BRECHT

(Calling and wandering)

Wife? Wife? Are you here? Remember when I cried? How sweet I can be sometimes...

Vision state ends with tears falling across Sor Juana's face.

MALE ACTRESSES

(entering and wagging fingers in unison at HELENE)

There are examples of female visionaries and prophets certainly but I have never believed in them, how can a prophet have so many holes?

Why would supernatural forces leap inside a vessel with so many holes?

Women are sieves.

How can a woman make a leap of faith? Absurd.

Your visions are just dreams.

Absurd.

Women are sieves.

Act 2: Strawberry Jam

Scene 1: mutation

(HELENE is in a small Midwestern town, in a yellow kitchen.)

ACTRESS 1:

The ideas of one woman often do nothing but hinder the progress of women as a whole.

In evolution, mutants are detrimental 99% of the time
"an intelligent and productive woman" is a mutant in my mind

(Helene has a graniteware sieve and mounds of strawberries)

(On video: a kitchen, a river, strawberries. Strawberry plants)

ACTRESSES

in the springtime little mother beavers clog the stream

with their fetid chips and twigs
as watercress spangles the mud and farmers churn up cream
to pour in puddles over figs

ACTRESS 2 (aside)

The perspectives in question are feminine in nature
They are really too foolish and female to capture

MALE ACTRESSES

What if Helene Weigel had been a scientist instead of an actress?

Could we then measure her life as some kind of success?

The fact is that women are incapable of logic

Though they can be somewhat intelligent, they never stick to a project

As far as external talents, women can excel

But everything they do, men can also do well

ACTRESSES

(cooing)

strawberries are ripe for the picking

androgynous in red patches (when stably adapted)

cloning with green thatches (in attempts to colonize)

strawberries are generally hermaphroditic

but prefer not to self-pollinate

ACTRESS2

Unsurprisingly, this catches the attention of Helene Weigel

The communist and scientist; she appreciates the tendency to normalize

in this we are quite sure that the Weigel is wise

ACTRESS 1

The quality of thought which creates is the actual

Of course I'm referring to the normative sexual

ACTRESS 2:

behind the RV factory the smell of vinyl makes strawberries growing there especially sweet

alone as the suns sets, Helene longs for something to eat.

ACTRESS 3:

(repeats)

One woman is every woman.
One woman is every woman.
One woman is every woman

HELENE:

(rhythmically)

In the springtime of the year, my experiments were getting the expected results, I was working in the scientific compound of strawberry jam, which is as complex a chemical compound as any.

ACTRESSES *(continuing)*

One woman is every woman.
One woman is every woman.
One woman is every woman.

(continues)

And every woman was once a little girl
Have you ever met Simone de Beauvoir?

HELENE (ACTRESSES assist or are pre-recorded in bold)
(rhythmically, speaking vaguely to the actresses, but also as if singing along under her breath to a silent radio)

You see, a woman is incapable of representing all women, especially when she has another person
Inside of her

ACTRESSES

strawberries are more curious than any other fruit
From worms to bears they are consumed by the mute
when flutterbys flicker behind your eyes
Get a berry between your thighs
Strawberries are the best berries of all

ACTRESS

(First rinse them then pluck their stems and pith with a pair of silver

pincers)

HELENE

I don't mean much more so than any other Other, no one can represent, but least of all, a woman.

ACTRESS

(Then heat honey and water in a big pot)

HELENE

I know where the voices come from, believe you me

ACTRESS

(Add the fruits in and simmer until they turn to pulp)

HELENE

See, I Helene Weigel , am not metaphor or allegory for your visions.

ACTRESS

(Then add a small amount of gelatin)

HELENE

My vision are mine all mine.
See, I am not a character, I am Helene Weigel

ACTRESS

(Pour pulp into jars and seal them in a pressure canner)

HELENE

I am a scientist, if you follow this proposal

ACTRESS

(I pull the hot jars out of the canner with tongs)

HELENE

I am a Communist, though would I just read the works of Marx and those who followed I might be transformed into not so perfect a woman...

ACTRESS

(I love to see them all lined up on the bread board)

HELENE

I experiment all women.

ACTRESS

(I love to hear the lids pop as they seal)

HELENE

But I am also just myself.

ACTRESS

(I love to drop one jar on the floor)

HELENE

Do you see?

ALL

Bright spray of STRAWBERRY JAM!

(Bright spray of STRAWBERRY JAM)

MALE ACTRESSES

(viciously)

you are not what you seem!

You are mysterious!

HELENE

I have seen thunderclouds, bald patches on hills, and a solar eclipse

Also once a reddish beetle giving birth in the middle of the road,

shaking with emphasis

But never before lessons, rules, plans, and laws all clumped

together, pouring into me, reclaiming me, calling me.

Calling me!

It's very flattering. Nobody has ever called me before.

ACTRESSES

Outside the smudged window, the cracked eye,

Almost invisible insects

choke the white sky right above the chest-high

grasses on the edge of the field

how delicate and how poetic!

Like addition!

(silence)

Act 2, Scene 2: Linoleum Salesman

knocking sound.

HELENE wipes sweat from her brow. She is very arrogant in the way that men can be)

(2 LINOLEUM SALESMEN are at the door)

LINOLEUM SALESMAN:

Hello? Ma'am? Is anyone home?

HELENE

I'm home, what do you want?

ACTRESS:

A man breaks into your house after you invited him

Expects you to buy yellow rose patterned linoleum on a whim

Never trust a man who chose to be a traveling salesman

Or his cauliflower-eared, underweight, chicken-faced friend

LINOLEUM SALESMAN

The age of traveling salesmen isn't over

MALE ACTRESSES

So says Judith

Head on a plate

So says Judith

Late for her date

With her undeniably unreal culturally constructed fate

LINOLEUM SALESMAN

But I have seven different patterns here with me today, it's easy to

install, just peel the backing and stick, it's easy to clean, it lasts

eleven years, and it makes your whole kitchen, bathroom,

OTHER LINOLEUM SALESMAN
or any other area of the house

BOTH:
feel tidy and bright.
you love to decorate your home, am I right?

(videos of Target)

ACTRESS
Linoleum salesman, hedgehog breeder
dirt on the floor where your boots tracked in
throw your shirt on the edge of the coal bin
Linoleum salesman.

HELENE
Well I don't think I need any of that, as you can see, my floors are
wooden. Hey wait, where are you going buddy?

*(HELENE gets pushed. One Linoleum Salesman goes to her old
patent leather purse and takes out five dollars)*

LINOLEUM SALESMAN
Is this all you have?

HELENE
Are you *robbing* me?

ACTRESS
Out back there are luddites scratching around
You'd never believe the things they've found
The remains of an ancient traveling salesman and his linoleum
His lips and eyes and brains are pools of pure petroleum
Linoleum Salesman

MALE ACTRESSES
So says Judith wand'ring in a daze
So says Judith, pinned by his gaze

ALL ACTRESSES
Can I turn into a computer and live forever
Can I eat earthworms and send you a letter
Linoleum Salesman

HELENE
Are you *robbing* me?

LINOLEUM SALESMAN
Yes ma'am

ACTRESSES
Steam may be an outdated concept
This is something you have to accept
Linoleum Salesman

OTHER LINOLEUM SALESMAN
(rifling around)
Look at this shit, this house is full of shit, there's nothing of any value
here

(HELENE goes to the phone but it is dead)

HELENE
Are you *robbing* me?

ACTRESSES
I know you'll cut my telephone wires and take my rings
My collection of 1970's newspapers and precious plastic things
The farmhouse is haunted where my mother died
We must find a place to live outside
Linoleum Salesman

LINOLEUM SALESMAN
C'mon let's go.

OTHER LINOLEUM SALESMAN
Wait, let me take some of these strawberries

(he takes a handful and knocks them down all over the floor)

HELENE

Wait!

(They push her down and EXIT)

MALE ACTRESSES

Smart, sexy, oh Judith, Oh Helene...

ACTRESSES

There's an inside world and one without
Linoleum salesman you'd be better off dead than in my bed
An inside world and one without
An inside world and one without
Bbq shredded pork on a piece of white bread.
Linoleum Salesman

HELENE

It is traumas such as these that make us believe that capitalism has
caused us to change our instincts regarding sex
Warning against vulnerability
And encouraging construction of the self through product
consumption

ACTRESSES:

The delicious robbed
The cat raped
The little girl grown up
And the strawberries all over the floor
shall we increase the value of relation to others
or seek ourselves as separate beings?

Act 2, Scene 3: Barn Fear

HELOISE

Almost, almost...I almost won

ABELARD

Though I do love you, I am not in love with you, for to be in love with
a woman is to eat soup with a fork.

HELOISE

I thought you didn't love me, I thought you said I was twisted and
emotionally perverted
That every dream and every plan my maternal smothering
subverted...

MALE ACTRESSES

A woman can be anything. Everyone knows that all women are
actresses. They can even have swords.

ACTRESSES

Swords!

(the actresses laugh about this and poke fun)

ABELARD

Heloise! I just want to kiss you and kiss you! This is so easy!

HELOISE

This battle is the greatest battle that I have ever known
I can hardly breathe for the smell of bloated bodies rolling in the dust

(violins)

(ABELARD takes HELOISE into his lap)

ABELARD

I would comfort you under the severities used by persons of great
virtue:
I would moderate the vivacity of your zeal to give you the air of a
statue
I would point out those duties you ought to perform,
I would point out those actions which you need to reform

I would satisfy those doubts which through the weakness of your reason might arise,

HELOISE

Shhh! you must be quiet. My seven mothers and seven Uncles sleep in fourteen separate beds below this floor.

ALL:

The mothers, they are deaf, blind, and mute, but the Uncles, oh they have swords, swords.

ABELARD:

You look up to me don't you? I never realized it before...
I am your model, aren't I? I never realized it before...
You are my other half, my sidekick, my structure.

HELOISE:

(hysterically)
The Other is flying at me from all sides, I can't see!

ABELARD:

I am your massive rupture
taking you to places you could never imagine or find
while your desires are fulfilled I'm expanding your mind

HELENE:

(In a bit of a trance, softly)
Lord Byron said that any woman who gives any advantage to a man may expect a lover -- but will sooner or later find a tyrant.

ACTRESSES AND HELOISE

When I was young I did not desire a lover, I desired a tyrant.

(the actresses laugh about this and poke fun)

ACTRESSES

to be

MOTHER:

(onscreen)

one or the other, or to be a Narcissist, which is the worst worst worst

ABELARD:

(thoughtfully, appearing for a moment)

Too much participation in distribution of the sensible can tear the delicate fabric of a woman

ACTRESSES

"from somewhere else" which is what it can feel like, but not is

(The Actresses and Male Actresses turn into animals)

Simone de Beauvoir

Now, what peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she - a free and autonomous being like all human creatures - nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other.

HELENE

The perfect woman, that's me

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (*conscience*) which is essential and sovereign.

HELENE

when in doubt, open yourself to what others want you to be

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego) - who always regards the self as the essential and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential.

HELENE

don't worry, they'll let you know what it is they want you to be

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

How can a human being in woman's situation attain fulfillment? What roads are open to her? Which are blocked? How can independence be recovered in a state of dependency? What circumstances limit woman's liberty and how can they be overcome?

HELENE

and while you are being what they want you to be work hard to adjust to being a being but not really Being.

(Video...)

(barn doors)

(animal sounds)

(animals)

The actresses are on stage. They are all playing Greek tragedy, soundlessly.

Shift

ALL:

Should we have stayed home love and not gone looking for this?

HELENE:

who are you?

HELOISE:

Heloise of course. You know, Abelard and Heloise? You were the one babbling about purpose and self sacrifice.

HELENE:

I'm no playwright, I'm just a woman.

HELOISE:

You're selfish. Suicide is selfish and so is sacrifice of the self.

HELENE:

I am a perfect woman and it's the only power I can get

HELOISE:

Run away with me, I'll tell you my story. It's very similar to yours.

HELENE:

I simply can't

HELOISE:

why not?

HELENE:

The public adores me, just as I am.

HELOISE:

Yes, the public. We should start with them.

HELENE:

have you been drinking blood?

Act 3: The Science

Scene 1, the Swan

MALE ACTRESSES

The only thing that can save us now from the nail-biting horror of The Feminism is The Science and scientific construction of being. It MUST be possible to separate facts, facts about differences between men and women, from the socialized constructions, the emotional nests of knots and thorns, the historic horizon, the media, the zeitgeist, the plethora of subjective panoramas...from the gender arguments, from the sexuality studies, it MUST be possible to find facts!

ACTRESSES

(They are HELEN OF TROY now)

Just look at the animals and how they behave

Just look at the scientists and the answers that they give

Of Helene Weigel the New York Times in 1971 printed this:

SHE had the face not of an actress but of a woman, a woman who had lived with the soil, a peasant woman browned by wind and sunlight, with high cheekbones half-Spanish, half Oriental. She was

small, almost tiny, but on stage seemed a giant; lean as an animal who has had to hunt for food and who has been hunted as prey.

MOTHER:

(video)

too much a martyr Helene, or not enough of one?
Too much a narcissist Helene, or not enough of one?

MALE ACTRESSES

It's not as if we're saying that there are no *wise* women
It's just that wisdom is not the same as knowledge
Women have a tendency to be mythic
We point to them
As I said before, representative specimens

HELENE

And I don't want to be congratulated as "finally an intelligent woman"
(for it is nearly impossible for any person to remain exemplary in some way) and to be rare is to be under constant scrutiny and to be removed in some way

ACTRESSES

Just look at the animals and how they behave

(As she stands there before the jack in the pulpit, a huge swan peeks out of the foliage, a monster, a glutton, another thief)

HELENE

Oh my, Oh my

(the swan is hissing as a threatened fowl does.)

Oh my, oh my
Here he comes, flexing his wings.

(the swan comes forward, hissing mad)

I am trapped by the mad present
Who sharpens his spoon and spreads
My legs.

(HELENE seizes the swan and breaks its neck)

Any body placed in the middle of a compost pile
Will smolder in the heat of the rot
And decompose!

LEDA and HELOISE

Oh Helene, this is quite unbelievable, a very poor performance overall...I'm not even sure that you *are* a woman, tell me, do you really bleed?

HELENE:

A new experiment: How long does it take for a swan body to turn into bones?

(She takes the swan backstage, appears again with it and a shovel, crosses the stage, disappears again)

BRECHT

(Calling)

Helene? Helene?

(HELENE enters without the swan, carrying the dirty shovel. She is tired. She sits down askew.)

HELENE:

The visions interfered terribly with my work as an actress in my husband's plays.

He was frightened then
Norms all over the place, broken like teacups
How was I to know that swan was his personal pet?
How was I to know that swan was his best desire yet?
I'll have to work like mad to re-balance the world

MALE ACTRESS

Please for the love of god, let's replace feminism with science!

ACTRESSES

deep at the root of social constructions
we currently believe in factual reductions
from scientific sources we can discern facts
about the binary sexes and their acts
Teleologies, you mean nothing to me
you only apply to those who are protected by existing powers

MALE ACTRESSES

A man without a cock is no man at all
a cock without a man is a fact without a world
and a man without the facts is a woman

ACTRESSES:

in the scientific arts we continue to address
that which affords us popular success
boundless interest in differences between women and men
speaks to anxieties that have never reached an end

MALE ACTRESSES

A man without a cock is no man at all
a cock without a man is a fact without a world
and a man without the facts is a woman

HELENE

General patterns are broken down and given back in pieces to those
experiencing the pattern.

But to speak of this, we are constantly trapped between the
declarative and the subjective
my story as a woman
and my representation of women
when can I be an individual?
when can my experiences be both female, and subjective?

ACTRESSES

Yet we can make the private public with scientific fact
we can generalize behaviors where we'd usually get attacked

(toss and turn)

MALE ACTRESSES

(louder than ever)

A man without a cock is no man at all
a cock without a man is a fact without a world
and a man without the facts is a woman!

HELENE

I don't care about him! He's nothing but a picture, a falling man
without a parachute.

ACTRESSES

I think women have more interesting thoughts

MALE ACTRESSES

Sure, I'll give that to you, women are people.

ACTRESSES (suspiciously)

But what kind of people?

BRECHT

Helene? Helene?

(Helene wakes up)

HELENE

Oh God, what time is it?

BRECHT

It's afternoon...have you been sleeping?

HELENE

No, No, I've been working...but Bertie....can I tell you something?

BRECHT

Certainly you may, you can tell me anything

HELENE

No, never mind.

(the trill of a xylophone)

BRECHT

Okay, so then wife, what are you up to? Devising a plan for manipulation of the patterns? Yes, women do this because they don't know which way is really Up. Like children.

HELENE

Or like the proletariat, rearranging the details in hopes of impacting the overall effect of the picture.

BRECHT

Oh you!

(he chuckles and kisses her cheek)

HELENE

The telephone wires are cut, if you want to make a call, take note of that.

BRECHT

what happened?

HELENE

Then I think, perhaps it's just an excuse to get rid of the preserves we've had since before the first world war.

Then I think

ALL

Perhaps

HELENE

I spend too much time thinking about myself and my cellar

ALL

Perhaps

BRECHT

But what happened to the phone lines?

HELENE

They were sliced in two by a mad swan, which I have killed and buried

BRECHT

Any day is made more strange by its contact with Helene! I marvel at this...but at the same time, I'm not really concerned with truth.

(He follows her around as she changes the stage)

BRECHT

What are we having for dinner?

HELENE

swan with strawberry jam

Act 3, Scene 2: The lung

(The Actresses put on lungs)

BRECHT:

Helene, darling, let's be serious.

I have written a new experiment, and of course you will be the woman.

I need you to be a part of the lung

I need you to breathe

HELENE:

Is that my role? Am I the lung?

BRECHT

You are a lung. You taste like a lung. You look like a lung. Here are your lines.

HELENE:

"lung breathes in, lung breathes out"

yes. I can do this.

BRECHT:
what are you saying?

HELENE:
I'm sorry. I need to sit down for a moment.

(low gravelly music transition. The stage empties. Cello. Murmur. Darkness)

(Castration dance, we see Abelard in shadow on the barn wall, horses neigh, stamp, rhythms and straw and steam)

ACTRESSES:
it is a scientific fact that the uterus and lady sex parts are an inverted penis. Did you know?! The uterus is just a penis, inside out! The ovaries are really testicles! The lady's sex parts simply failed to come out of the body, because a lady is not as warm as a man. The hotter the body the more perfect it is, and heat causes the organs to emerge. Science.

(LEITMOTIF)

INTERMISSION PART TWO

BRECHT
If you don't mind
while I'm up here
I would like to recite a short poem
which I wrote for my wife
lovely Helene:

(Clears throat, wipes brow)

Helene, faith is a jar of ground meat.
Please cook this meat into something I can eat.

Put it in a skin, your skin
or a section of gut, your gut
or let me suck
like a goat
from your teat.

Thank You.

(He EXITS)

Act 4: The uses of mythology Scene 1: the house on chicken legs

MALE ACTRESSES
Sample (Mallus Maleficarum)
Let us consider also her gait, posture, and habit, in which is vanity of vanities.

(shift)

but is she not as lovely as the first time you saw her?

ACTRESSES
(pedagogically)
The princess entered after everyone was seating for dinner
The roast swans had just been carved
Her billowing garments drew all eyes
And then as she sat and ate all stared
As she slipped swan bones into her sleeves.
suddenly the princess cast live swans from her sleeves
the swans, having only just been swan bones, honked and flew out
the open window.
All the other women sat like pillars of salt,
who can't be anything other than objects, moving or unmoving;
They can rely blindly on light but they cannot make swans out of
swans bones.
Oh what kind of skills do women like that have.
And why can't I be a woman like that woman is?

LEDA (on video, in a decorous bed)
(mumbling to herself)

But then she came back to the fur-covered chamber.
But who trusts a woman who expects magic?
Especially a captured princess who used to be a toad?
Especially a pampered woman who is known for her lovely eyes and
her scathing lies?

ACTRESS

Here's a myth for your little mouth:
Remember when you were a little toad, princess?
And you ran around with the grass squealing under your moist feet,
princess?
And you fed grasshoppers to the spiders in their webs?
Then, at some point, everyone began suddenly to hate you?
How did that feel?

*(A deep green forest, sound of bullfrogs and insects, crunch on
twigs, pulse)*

MALE ACTRESSES

No man will tell you otherwise: Misandry is alive and well
There are plenty of witches who would ring that raucous bell
I've seen them dancing, trampling the ground
Walking up the hill in moonlight, then walking down

ACTRESSES

I've been waiting
In the lukewarm water of a deep forest pond

VASILISA:

Oh me! A little house on chicken legs!

ACTRESSES

I've been waiting
In the lukewarm water of a deep forest pond
The sun rises and the sun sets, but you have not yet come

VASALISA:

Oh me! An arrow in my mouth...

ACTRESS 2

you must speak in complete sentences if you expect me to
understand you

ACTRESS 3

Are we witches?
As right, as romantic?

ALL

Yes and No
Although

ACTRESSES

I've been waiting
In the lukewarm water of a deep forest pond
While Helene in her hut
Makes her tea and peeps out the window

HELENE

The candle glared at as I pored over texts. I identified flowers, many
of them extinct. At night, when I had fixed dinner and cleaned up for
my uncles and mothers, I would sneak out, jumping across road,
down the bank, into the honeysuckle bushes in the empty lot.

RECORDED ACTRESS: (scratchy recording)
a tendency to narrativize is the same as the will to power

PRINCE:

(to VASALISA)
How beautiful you are.

Act 4, Scene 2: Los Angeles and the cow

(Vision fades)

BRECHT:

I am hungry. Listen HELENE...

HELENE:

HELENE *(spoken)*

It is hard to keep on reading
with my doppelganger squatting
now yawning in a silent howl

JUDITH BUTLER

There is no such thing as women

As a category, as a group, or in actuality
gender is performative

And drag, in destabilizing the performative iterations of gender, is the
only political way out of the binary gender structure that oppresses
us all

HELOISE

You...stunned and apple-eyed with natural / drugs,
watch the Bark crawl in patterns all day long and / slap at bugs
pouring bones out of teacups / all afternoon in the yellow lull

ACTRESSES

fragile body/made of raw ingredients/ and fantasies
conception of the self as woman/no less than a disease
meta yourself honey

Meta, meta, meta, only meta here

HELENE (*spoken*)

To whom will I compare
when the sound of shovels prove the existence of my melting ears

shovels ditchmaking
turning crotchless monuments into islands
beneath precipitating clouds of biomechanic purpose

ACTRESS (Jessica)

At the base of your skull is a growing tumor

If only our bodies had a sense of humor

HELENE

so many facts and question marks
that screw into the cork and I pull their small handles
but can't release responsibility

HELOISE

Pacing on the rooftop of a prison on the sea

Stumbling over fallen logs/forest for the trees

(shift, with panic)

biscuit colored pus/a black worm
open bowels/rotting sperm

terrible seeds/bursting weeds

in the corked bottle/and tough gristle

JUDITH BUTLER

I know you have difficulty escaping the naturalized constructs of sex
and gender through daily performative choices
But listen, and you will hear the other suffocated voices

ACTRESSES

fragile body/made of raw ingredients/ and fantasies
conception of the self as woman/no less than a disease
Meta, meta, meta, only meta dear

JUDITH

The subject is opaque
you are only what others tell you that you are

Freedom, freedom, FREEDOM

ACTRESS (Loren)

social forces are sweeping your lungs
controlling your breathing and shaking your tongue

ACTRESSES

(at the same time, continuing, quietly in a shaky whisper)
I rise to explode

with ingredients combined

intentionally

I know you see right through me, I mean who I am

In reality

A small town

a floral gallop

a big hush/the wrong crush

and now sex, dare we mention it

(the eye of a needle

stored inside a fertilized egg

sitting heavy in the belly of a wet-feathered hawk,

Who, stuck and crying, with horny beak, makes a siren's squawk

snips at the liver-flavored muscle of a skinny rabbit

running in twitching circles/living inside her own grave out of habit

a stone chest with a red lid/buried deep beneath the ocean)

HELENE

are these things weapons

rotting bombs

ready to bang

and blaze into nothingness like the swinging

yeasty stumps of phantasmic arms

throwing help flares into

dryness

and turning whole crops

into torches?

ACTRESSES

fragile body/made of raw ingredients/ and fantasies

conception of the self as woman/no less than a disease

HELENE

Of course I have constructed a chart, *gesamtkunstwerk*

my Wagner conduction, a "unity of production"

I forget that this is no play (on words or
Representative action):
to define is to combine
to combine is to bear the load alone

ACTRESSES and JUDITH
To be embodied is to be exposed to social craft and form
to be embodied is to surrender to their idea of the norm

HELENE
I am not a visionary but I can't find
You
self

Or for ("the metaphor" aren't we greeks? As right as romantic?)

HELENE and HELOISE
Meta meta meta meta

ALL
God, I hate being a woman!

(Back to L.A.)

HELENE
He said, once we moved from Germany to the U.S. to escape the
bad times: Listen HELENE, the age demands knowledge of digestion
Los Angeles is like a cow's stomach..."

BRECHT:
Not its structure, as the spiny tunnels have long been drawn on
vellum and canvas with frayed quill pens like the ribs of sucked fish

HELENE:
Fish, kiss me!

BRECHT:
Oh leidersnauzer, your body is like the little letter "s"

HELENE:
And yours is like the letter "t"

BRECHT:
Bring the wagon on, bring it on. What do you have for lunch?

HELENE:
Weinerschnitzel. Saurkraut. Pate, worsted wool, beer and lager.

BRECHT:
Good, we'll have a picnic here, overlooking Los Angeles.

HELENE:
But back to what you were saying.

BRECHT:
Yes, right. I mean the gulp and clogged gurgle of actual process...

HELENE:
I remember that summer when I experimented a lung! I was so
beautiful then!

LEDA AND THE ACTRESSES:
(ACTRESSES are MARY)
She was so beautiful then, breathing in, breathing out.
It's too bad you can't act again Helene, but you are a good woman,
the perfect woman.
maternal without being overbearing
self sacrificial without being a martyr
self-security without narcissism

BRECHT:
We can eliminate the work
Of slogging through our own mess with yolks-Buckets full of solid,
beautiful
Food transformed to familiar, similar
Stink-hanging from our oxen-thick necks!

HELENE:

(teaching the Actresses)

Discipline is no delicate subject; I Bent over, with lips pulled back,
And sucked up my whole gut
until I gagged
and knew that I was like to make a fine nun
that I could harass and define the science of my hunger
until my stomach itself floated before me
no more than a buoyant
gas-filled hypothesis
scraped clean and tied off

And once this institution with the arched ceiling and fence between
field and state
accepted my sterilized and steady hand
I called myself Sister and both hated
And pitied the four-stomached cow,
Begged her turn to prayers for
Other, holier ways to
Fill herself...

BRECHT:

I will write about the cow. The scientists put a Plexiglas plate in her
side so that they could see her digestion.

HELENE:

But she, with the Plexiglas plate gasketed and stitched with black
surgical thread into living hide
so that all could see inside her starvation fogged the window with her
hot breath
while I fucked for the last time, and she rolled her membranous
marble eyes

Until this cloister of lab and love swallowed me feet first and exposed
me and my filthy lessons to men with rubber gloves,

Proved me to be merely a white mass churning, tangled in a bad
habit, along with foamy grass mash against the splashy red walls of
Nauseous ignorance.

LEDA and HELENE:

I was experimenting by the water in the brown tufts of hackled
grasses
Grazing as swans are wont to do I saw this God
Oh me
Poor cow
How deep your nausea reached, it pulled up red from childhood, the
crow with the single leg! Oh!

BRECHT:

pass me my pipe

HELENE:

Bertie my baby, don't smoke too much tobacco

BRECHT:

just sit there and think...is that possible? I mean, really? can a
woman just sit there and think? You never see it in experiments.
Hmmm. Women are so interesting. I wonder what they're thinking
about. Arthur Miller perhaps.
Helene, I know you, women do not separate emotional desire from
physical arousal

BRECHT and MALE ACTRESSES

you want a man who travels from town to town
you want his superstitious viscid scorn like the skinned body of the
dog in the road
the pinker inside meat of his harmonica-raw mouth where the square
grates slid across swollen wet skin
you want his shadow through the curtain as he pulls it slowly aside
and sees your long white thighs lying together like swans wings

you are grateful for our grotesqueries
as we spit at a phone pole crawling staples and scraps of old fliers
the pimple in the fold of my nose
the way I bite you like a rabid opossum

you want a man like Arthur Miller, crispy black eyebrows eclipsed by
black glasses

raised in surprise at your aggressive advances towards him

we touch your body like you touch your own
we know where your pubic hair knots
we know where you hide your red crayon, ready to write all over the
marble floor
you are the sourish white pulp of an apple, with shiny skin
afterwards, he beats you with a golf club and turns you out across
the dew-slick cropped lawn

(aside: HELENE: I was going to Utah and I saw Arthur Miller in a pit
toilet by a playground, a lady screamed at me about a
murder...distracted by this, I suppose in retrospect, it could have
been Spiro Agnew...either way I now confuse my lovers with political
cartoons...overall, I think about you)

you want Pablo Picasso, this goes without saying, the way he draws
a massive bull in the air with a single lit match and makes you look
two ways at once with his eclipsed eyes
you want the bumpy human rind of his naked scalp and the stubs of
his bitten yellow fingernails

you want him on the sand on a dropcloth, the seagulls screaming in
unison and the olives dripping with salty oil

afterwards he pressed cages of pigeons into your arms, expecting
you to collect their eggs and train them to perch fat, soft, and white
on the backs of your hands

don't spend too much time arguing about lust and who's a better
person than whom
what did you expect when you flashed your throat and licked your
teeth at us?

HELENE

I like the idea you have of me
It's better by far than the idea I have of myself

The audiences come to see me. I experiment all women.

LEDA:

What a little black eye

HELENE

What shiny sharp red beaks

For hours I drag the wagon round the stage

LEDA

Cow

HELENE

Cow!

LEDA

COW!

MALE ACTRESSES

Prevailing opinion of the sexual character of women:
Ignorance, anxiety, inhibition, aversion, mistrust, pain, avoidance,
distress, and lack of physical response, shame, and sickness.

HELENE

Help! What am I, tell me quick, what am I

BRECHT:

Helene, stop rolling around on the grass and clean up this mess.

HELENE:

I'm getting old. I'm distracted and confused
I am going insane

BRECHT:

You're not

HELENE:

I am.

BRECHT:

You're going out of your mind you are

but out of your mind is normal for a woman
I'm not too worried about you old girl
and if I'm not worried, why should you be?

HELOISE: (*reading*)

My Doppelganger
1943 writes:
"I have become an *Übermarionette*
aware
but unable to move
per se
without
instruction
Also I can no longer reload
My memories or emotion
I am a barrel
Rolling down a rain-slick
hill gently"

Act 5: Nuns. Scene 1: Passante

MALE ACTRESSES:

In 1953 a scholar of Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz named Robert Graves will write that "every few centuries a woman of poetic genius appears, who may be distinguished by three clear secondary signs: learning, beauty, and loneliness[...]. The case of a woman poet is a thousand times worse[than that of a male poet]: since she is herself the Muse, a Goddess without an external power to guide or comfort her, if she strays even a finger's breadth from the path of divine instinct she must take violent self-vengeance"

ACTRESSES

Passante....
murky byways waver under divided light
all planets out with their capes on
she saddled the bogman and rode him down dark alleyways
fed him on beef jerky with maggots in it

The lady Passante....

MALE ACTRESSES

women can't go wandering

ACTRESSES

Passante....

MALE ACTRESSES

in search of what is rightfully theirs (A: Passante....)

for women have nothing (Passante....)

but empty bodies and desperate prayers (Passante....)

HELENE

I don't mind if there's no destination
just don't tell me too soon what nothing is

MALE ACTRESSES

what we learn from Helene is only
that women shouldn't carry shovels
or make men grovel
or go out into the night alone
women are interpersonal
their selves are constructed by their contact with other people
and so they can not wander alone

HELENE

As a woman in the street I pull my trenchcoat tight around my body:
men in cafes stare
cigarettes hang from the lips of every sad-eyed young poet
Yet I am the protagonist and they are the numerous interchangeable
sexual beings at my whisper stunned

ACTRESSES

(*whisper: sybillant*)
constant low level sexual harassment keeps us in our places...
if we could I know that we would all exchange our faces...

products homogenize us as long as we choose them right
as long as we don't step in or out of a certain kind of light...

Act 4.: Scene 3: The guru with his limp and shining

HELENE:

Listen Helene, when I was young I did not desire a lover. But I met a
good man, he was in shipping.

HELOISE:

Brecht was not in shipping.

HELENE:

I'm not talking about Bertie, I'm talking about my lover.

HELOISE:

Female artists fall into deep depressions, I know.

HELENE:

I'm not in a deep depression, I'm...I'm... gripped by an internal
passion

HELOISE:

You hate me.

HELENE:

I don't hate you. But I want you to admit that I am not a mad woman.
Although I have been playing madness from time to time—who
doesn't—I'm not ready to fit into the category boots and all. I'm not a
madwoman.

HELOISE:

Helene, remember the time you heard violins?

HELENE:

What?

HELOISE:

You dragged me out of bed because you heard a violin playing
somewhere in the house. "A GHOST" you said, a ghost violinist.

HELENE:

I never....

HELOISE:

Listen, I have, I have, I have

HELENE:

Spit it out

HELOISE:

Witness! Witness
Diagetic sound

(ACTRESS enters and plays the violin briefly)

non diagetic sound

(a recorded snatch of orchestration)

which is real? Which is not real?

HELENE:

I don't remember any of this, you're making it up.

HELOISE:

You made me search all over the house, in the dark closets, under
the drip-drip sink

HELENE:

I never. We've never even lived together.

HELOISE:

Then, there was a sound. The Ghost Violinist! You cried, you were trembling and laughing.

HELENE:

So it did exist!

HELOISE:

It was a train! A fucking train!

ABELARD:

Dear Heloise, the questions stack up in my head like wicker baskets. Why can't you be what I want you to be? Your seventh mother visited me at the abbey three days ago. At first, I thought she was you. She told me that you've fallen in with an actress, a certain Helene Weigel. I can only warn you against other women. They want to eat your organs like clams. Are you surprised? I love you, Abelard.

HELOISE and HELENE sit at a table at an outdoor café. They smoke cigarettes and are wearing hats.

ACTRESSES are SOPHIA.

HELENE:

How are you doing these days?

HELOISE:

well I am willing to behave as I see fit
for a period of time
while I can hang on to the impetus
and the anger drives me
then I'm sure it will get all foggy again

HELENE:

I just wish I could stay angry, anger is so productive for women...

HELOISE:

You can't hold on to it. Tsk tsk.

HELENE

am I talking too much about myself?

HELOISE

secretly I feel that yes, you are, as another woman I judge you as harshly as I judge myself
and you will never meet my standards

HELENE

that's what I was afraid of!

(They laugh)

HELENE:

Listen, let's get serious

HELOISE:

Of course, what is it?

HELENE:

I have decided that I will write your experiment and experiment in it.

HELOISE:

Oh!
Oh...
OH
Oh

(chorus: long drawn out note that ends sharply as an egg breaks)

BRECHT and ABELARD

(reading in unison)

Dear H. I have found your undergarments in my suitcase. Now how did they get there? I must have packed them when you ran away. I have come to the conclusion that everything is your fault. Do you want them back? If so, send me your current address. If not, please send me your current address.

Love, Bertie and Abelard.

HELENE:

It's based on a dream. It's very short. It's about construction of the self itself and the contrast between masculine ideas of the self as a separated soul and those of a woman as a self flowing off into many other selves in many directions.

HELOISE:

Look! They've found us!

ABELARD and BRECHT are standing, staring.

HELENE:

Run!

HELOISE:

I can't. I'm frozen. I am a frigid woman.

BRECHT:

Listen, my voice is like hot leather now, we conduct heat like copper. Dear bark, let me set sail.

HELENE:

Always, an obsession with the ocean.

ABELARD:

And I! I have worked all night at a low, chip-littered bench beneath the eyelet lace of the frosted window, tacking little brads into balsam, trying to rebuild you poppet!

BRECHT:

Look at the stuffed and woolen breast of blue She who slinks into the room winding her spine with a wrench and moaning to the relative room with the low ceiling and the exhaust pipes and the exhausted body...*(disgust)* Oh

HELENE:

You're getting close, guru with your limp and shining

The actresses appear, LEDA leads them.

ACTRESS

Does she have the will to slit with the gypsum clear
The concubine's throat, the cat neck, the different will, the will to be different, I beg,
Truly I admire him,
the guru with his limp and shining

ACTRESS

(in awe)

Lying like a silent yodel strung out and fainted or dead.

LEDA:

Here, let me translate for those of you with accents in the head
begging to be "real people"
Who scream "I'm so sick of wands" or "I am so sick of daily letting
what isn't me penetrate me"

you should rather wonder, is he only a small white fox? The sun of
Lot? A barrel full
Of that? Made up at that?

ACTRESSES

(limerent)

To lick the splintery cores and tin annals of description
The ten tin fingers, some wood, with an unlatched tongue? I'd agony
adore
Of the guru with his limp and shining

1 ACTRESS:

Rot in the marrow, reminds me of his beet-dyed porous pear bark
lips

HELOISE

But some door cracked open with the weight of the light, the back,
and I said.
The great day! Small waters desire waves and I
You, but also the 1700's, and reeling it in. Wellingtons that fit over
my heavy feet!

and knowing the table for all things symbolic: AU Is gold and a grunt
and neither belongs to
the guru
with his limp and shining

LEDA:

That's what got me paid for, knowing, I couldn't tell the difference,
you whore of a winged witch, now I'm all ash, or oak, the grain
running from my eyes, the grain gobbling up the movement
Oh I swallowed the pulpy phlegm of politic indifference but let me
put it down in spare ink: February, February.

THE ACTRESSES

Oh the guru with his limp and shining

ACTRESS

His body arching like a starving whale beached and wormy, skeletal,
almost blue
Skin hanging in slack tarpaper curtains, the collapsed hollow of his
red gut
Where once I slept and I can still smell it! With
Hatchet, chisel, swiss army knife.
Herd of us.

ACTRESS

I am the one made of wood, hacked out of solidity
Form of a face, walking on hinges, O what I'd kill him for.

LEDA:

Are you thinking "lies?" "But how did he get it in if she's wood?" "How
can she separate her wood from the hard flesh of everyone other?"
"Are we not all pulp to begin with?"

HELOISE

"Or is that paper Leda, with your violent swans?"

LEDA

Blue lover! This is what kills you! Gets you piled on a fire like so
much twinkling! This is kindling! Rather chop chop!

HELENE

You must have visions! And act on them!

ALL:

But only of the guru with his limp and shining
The horror of his limp and shining

HELENE:

Now I said, I mean to visit my homeland, but not know who my father
is, not squeak
In the snow like any other hot footed food for him, hanging on his
word
When I'd rather be a rope to string him to the wrinkled armpit of a
construction.
Sap, leaves, I, like Heloise, am a pile of leaves.

HELOISE ongoing sound:

Board,
Boarded, wood/Lavish/tense/serene/saturated when I float/
pretentious/organic/loose/hurted/ableminded/precious/idealistic/furth
ermore/I'm not sure/panic/and then
some/avoidance/repentance/humiliation/hope/albuquerque/undermig
hty/gregarious/principality/injurious/forcable/not I understand/all the
rest is sentiment for/

ACTRESSES (shouting)

the guru with his limp and shining!

LEDA, HELOISE, HELENE:

He knumbly pegs (this is a game of throwing knives) her down as
she alights on the wooden windowsill.

Please

Please

Please

Please now, I'm carved out of
the guru with his limp and shining.

HELOISE and HELENE are begging by the side of the road. They are old hippie ladies.

HELOISE:

If we could only produce your experiment...

HELENE:

If only we had some meat

HELOISE:

We are the index, what's left once something has gone.

HELENE:

Did you learn that from Abelard?

HELOISE:

No, on my own. I mean it too. We're like words and something was the writing.

HELENE:

Do you have your letters?

HELOISE:

Yes.

She kneels down and dumps them out of a large satchel.

HELENE:

Do you think these are worth anything?

HELOISE:

Oh, I couldn't sell them.

HELENE:

We're dying you know.

HELOISE:

Yes, I can't feel my hands. What's that?

HELENE:

My experiment...

ACTRESSES

(low moaning)

I have constructed a chart

I, I, I

I am sick of myself

HELOISE

Helene! We've done it

HELENE

what?

HELOISE

we are a valued part of society. Look at us dancing. Sexuality. Think of it.

HELENE

(unsheathing a long sword)

what are the rules

HELOISE

don't think too hard Helene, just be grateful that you're an issue. let's play darts.

HELENE

phallic. everything is so phallic. I still feel lonely. Sometimes, after you've gone Heloise, i lick the blood off my sword. Does that disgust you?

HELOISE

fashion is power. I bought myself a ring. There's a movie about me. Let's make love!

HELENE

Look Heloise, you know this vision? where we're fighting, and each time we forget that we've been here before, but the creatures we fight remember, and they keep getting stronger, adapting to our methods, immune to our tactics, getting to know us, looking into our

eyes, and now who has the advantage? Who has the advantage
Heloise?

HELENE

Dogma! Laughter! Heloise help me! Let me use your dress, just
once!

HELOISE

wait, wait, what's that smell?
Is that my Abelard?
(seeing him in a pile of rags)
Abelard!

ABELARD and HELENE

Heloise? Heloise?

(his pants are bloody at his crotch)

HELOISE

(running to Abelard)

I, wretched I, have ruined you, and have been the cause of all your
misfortunes. How dangerous it is for a great man to suffer himself to
be moved by our sex! He ought from his infancy to be inured to
insensibility of heart against all our charms. 'Hearken, my son' (said
formerly the wisest of men), attend and keep my instructions; if a
woman by her looks Endeavour to entice thee, permit not thyself to
be overcome by a corrupt inclination; reject the poison she offers,
and follow not the paths she directs. Her house is the gate of
destruction and death.' I have long examined things, and have found
that death is less dangerous than femininity. It is the shipwreck of
liberty, a fatal snare, from which it is impossible ever to get free. It
was a woman who threw down the first man from the glorious
position in which Heaven had placed him; she, who was created to
partake of his happiness, was the sole cause of his ruin. And the
same evil spirit made Heloise an instrument to ruin Abelard.

*Helene is abandoned by Heloise, who kneels before Abelard.
Heloise helps Abelard offstage, Helene is left.*

HELENE:

I have inherited a rage which cannot be expressed or shared
communally, it can only be applied to my personal experiences: 1.)
seen as a result of events or incidents in my own life and not as a
larger problem and 2.) it can only be dealt with on a personal, private
level. Public rage over the injustices and unfairness suffered as a
woman are no longer acceptable or viable, only private rage
remains.

And so

I have packed my little bag, in it
A packet of seeds, tarot cards, scissors, and
Skin crème.

I have packed my little heart
So full of salt and clay it will stay

Fresh for ever

I have packed my little mouth

With quotes by wise men and knowledgeable men

And I will unpack them again when I have need of them.

I have packed my little hands, a penny and a cube of sugar
In each.

And in my stomach, I have packed just the results of my experiments
And a tin of breath mints.

But then I wonder, why does this world not belong to me? Why not to
me? Why am I not the keeper of my space, and why should I leave?
Who are these masters with whips and hatchets who ride over the
frozen ground and build square monoliths and monuments? They
have turned ourselves against ourselves

ALL

We slit our own throats

We throw our own bodies over the wall

We slice our faces again and again with shards of glass

Bereavement overflows my cracked jar, my paper hat, my red lips,
the loss of my space here

A constant shoving out

What if I fight back

To stay standing

Will I be killed?

BRECHT:

There is also a story of a man whose wife was drowned in a river, who, when he was searching for the body to take it out of the water, walked up the stream. And when he was asked why, since heavy bodies do not rise but fall, he was searching against the current of the river, he answered: "When that woman was alive she always, both in word and deed, went contrary to my commands; therefore I am searching in the contrary direction in case even now she is dead she may preserve her contrary disposition."

THE END