

Stay – Leave. Don't go  
– *an audio-essay based on imperative  
addresses for three voices*

1.

Tale:

I'm laying in my bed

I am only a child

This is a child's bed

The wallpaper is brown

The duvet is yellow

I'm breathing

I want to reach my hand out and turn on the lights

I can't

I do not move

I lay there feeling the weight of my body against the mattress

Just breathing

Just staring at the wall

There is something there on the other side

There is something waiting behind the door

*Short pause*

Jørn Bjørn:

A stranger enters the room

Liv Hanne:

A darkness enters the room

Jørn Bjørn:

The door closes behind it – and it /

Liv Hanne:

stands there /

Tale:

I can't look at it

I can't open my eyes

I want to shout but I am not able to and it /

Jørn Bjørn:

bends over me /

Tale:

– and grows. The darkness grows

and I'm just lying there unable to stop it unable to say anything –

Liv Hanne:

Mummy – /

Jørn Bjørn:  
You cry, but /

Liv Hanne:  
nobody hears you

Tale:  
Mummy – I'm frightened

*Short pause*

Liv Hanne:  
Maybe that's where it starts  
There in the dark  
That first time you cry out, shout, reach for a hand  
In that moment when you awake and stare into the darkness and there are no  
other words than /

Jørn Bjørn:  
– Mummy

Liv Hanne:  
Or:

Jørn Bjørn:  
– No.

Liv Hanne:  
Or:

Jørn Bjørn:  
– Me –

Liv Hanne:  
Just that which you want and that which you are afraid of.  
Just the darkness all around you and /

Jørn Bjørn:  
you say your name.

Tale:  
Tale

Jørn Bjørn:  
Your name and then: afraid

Tale:  
Tale afraid

Liv Hanne:  
Liv Hanne afraid.

Jørn Bjørn:  
Jørn Bjørn afraid

*Short pause*

Liv Hanne:  
Or – maybe it starts somewhere else  
Your hungry  
but you are too small to reach the bread bin

Jørn Bjørn:  
Liv Hanne hungry

Liv Hanne:  
You're thirsty, but cannot reach the jug of water

Jørn Bjørn:  
Liv Hanne thirsty

Liv Hanne:  
And you turn around  
looking to see if there is someone there that can help you  
that can lift you up  
or are taller than you – and you shout

Jørn Bjørn:  
Thirsty!

*A beat*

Tale:  
But now  
just now you are laying there in your bed  
staring into the dark  
Into that  
or who  
or it that is  
and isn't there  
Into your own imagination, maybe – and you do not want to be there anymore  
Tale /

Jørn Bjørn:  
– does not want to be here /

Liv Hanne:  
anymore

Tale:  
In the lack of something else you say /

Liv Hanne:  
– I do not want to /

Tale:  
be here

Liv Hanne:  
Just that

*Short pause*

Tale:  
I want to. I do not want to –

Jørn Bjørn:  
Just me. In the dark.

Liv Hanne:  
And then /

Tale:  
the one that can help you. The one that can open the door, enter the room, turn  
on the lights and make everything OK again

Why isn't she coming?

Liv Hanne:

—

Tale:

Why isn't she coming?

Jørn Bjørn:

She's coming

Tale:

She's not coming.

Jørn Bjørn:

Why shouldn't she come?

Tale:

She's just not —

She can't hear me

She —

Liv Hanne:

Wait!

Just wait.

I'm coming

I'm here

*Short pause*

Tale:

Sometimes I think these words must be the first

Words like:

— Help me

— Save me

— Stay with me through this

Sometimes I think these words must be the last

Maybe even the only ones we have

That everything we ever say centers around utterances like:

Help

Me

Stay

Here

Save me

Don't go

And then we wait

And then we listen for the answer

for someone to come

until they are there

until everything is OK



Jørn Bjørn:  
I forgive you

Tale:  
– Do you?  
– Do you want what I want?

*Short pause*

Tale:  
In /

Liv Hanne:  
the imperative /

Tale:  
I show you what I need  
what I want from you:

Jørn Bjørn:  
Come  
Go  
Stay  
Don't stay

Tale:  
When I /

Liv Hanne:  
address someone /

Jørn Bjørn:  
with what feels imperative *to me* /

Tale:  
When I attack  
When I reach out  
language takes leave from the narrative  
action turns into event –  
and as the storyteller falls silent beside her camp fire, ethics stirs and tragedy  
shakes into action as comedy tilts its head. Tenderly mocking the girl as she  
starts to undress for her lover, bidding him to come closer. Bidding him to stay  
– and then the next morning, while she puts her hand on his, searching for  
something there – a confirmation maybe, a caress – he does not look at her, he  
does not even turn his head away. He is no longer there. He has already left –  
as he sips his tea, his hand dead on the table – as he gets up, as he puts on his  
jacket, his back all rigid, his face all closed – she realizes that what she thought  
meant something never meant anything. That he never meant anything by his  
embrace, his kisses, by being there – and then he's gone. He does not even  
bother to close the door behind him, and she wants to shout, but there is no  
words left in her, and her voice is but a whisper when she says:  
– So why did you come?  
– Why did you kiss me?  
– Why did you ever say yes when you meant nothing by it?

I say yes to everything you are  
You say yes to everything *I* am  
And then I realize your yes was a no

The shame of it  
It's that  
It's the shame ...

- Turn around
- Turn around so I can look at you

4.

Jørn Bjørn:  
Orpheus walk through the underworld  
Orpheus walks and Eurydice follows  
She is right there behind him, but he must not turn and look at her  
That's the deal  
as long as he does not turn around and look at her  
they will be fine

Liv Hanne:  
He walks  
along razor edge cliffs. Over steep mountain passes  
He crosses

Jørn Bjørn:  
marshes maybe –  
Do not turn around /

Liv Hanne  
He says to himself

Jørn Bjørn:  
Do not turn around

*Short silence*

Jørn Bjørn:  
Orpheus walks  
He is deep in mud  
All sounds, all light is as sucked out of this landscape  
It is as steering into – nothing –  
There they are  
one living  
and one dead – and all he can hear is the pounding of  
his own heart as he keeps repeating to himself:  
– She is there. I am not alone. She is there. I am not alone.  
As he keeps on repeating to himself  
– Don't turn around. What ever you do, just do don't turn around and look at  
her

Tale:  
And we know that he is I going to do just that

Liv Hanne:  
Yes

Tale:  
Just a moment now, and he will turn around and look at her

Liv Hanne:  
Yes

Tale:  
There

There

There

There he did it –

*Silence*

Tale:

The child in her nursery

The woman on her deathbed

Orpheus in his underworld

alone

exposed

Its an outcry /

Liv Hanne

Mummy!

Tale:

a confession

an act

Jørn Bjørn og Liv Hanne:

–

Tale:

In the myth it never ends

the act repeats itself as the story is being told and retold

Liv Hanne:

– Orpheus. Stop!

– Orpheus, look at me.

– Why would you not turn around and look at me?

– Why don't you answer? Don't you love me anymore?

Tale:

The imperative answered with a question

The question answered with an action

and all is lost –

And thus

Eurydice

is erased

from history

*Silence*

5.

Liv Hanne:

Come

Come closer

Come over here

Jørn Bjørn:

Jump!

Do it!

Do it because I ask you to!

Tale:

In the address – it begins

In the imperative – it ends.

By approaching You, I enter something I don't yet know. It's a  
summoning. It's a revelation. It's what I desire.

By approaching you, I leave myself vulnerable

Liv Hanne:

It's a bridging of the gap

Tale:

Its an: /

Jørn Bjørn:

– I see you

Tale:

Its /

*possible echo sequence with all*

Liv Hanne:

Turn around

Jørn Bjørn:

Turn around

Tale:

Turn around so I can look at you