

EN ROUTE TO AWAY FROM HERE

This is not an absurd piece of writing.

Musicians and actors can switch between ensemble and musician roles.

The space is dark.

From a distance and slowly getting closer, the sound of nursery rhymes of varying languages, and games of varying cultures. Laughter. Screams, shouts, calls, counting—anything, as long as it happens in darkness.

Slowly the lights come on, with Molly facing the audience. It is revealed that it wasn't a playground at all.

Molly wears sunglasses and has a walking stick.

Slowly the sounds fade out into atmosphere.

Molly is waiting for a train.

The ensemble enters as commuters waiting for the train.

(In a language that nobody else understands, switching conveniently between that and English. It could be a real language... or not.)

I have thoughts are moving so quickly through my head that nobody hears them but me.

The thoughts are on a speeding train that travels through time and space into the various stations of my life, through this tunnel of experience that I have collected.

The train arrives. Everyone else gets on except Molly, and the train leaves.

Nothing stops for anyone anymore. If you are late, you miss the train.

But today I am going to make time stop for me.

Put simply—I am going to end my life.

A sensation of loneliness and separation enters.

Music changes.

The ensemble comes in, takes away Molly's sunglasses and walking stick, and spins her around.

Molly transforms into her five-year-old self.

The ensemble is now full of five-year-olds. The sound of nursery rhymes of varying languages, and games of varying cultures. Laughter. Screams, shouts, calls, counting—this time, it is real.

Molly finds her way in the semi-darkness. She is confused by the noises and she attempts to make logic of the soundscape. The children create a medley/ mash-up of games and nursery rhymes, ignoring Molly.

They are all speaking in different languages yet somehow understand each other. Some might not even be speaking a real language—the point is, they enjoy playing together.

Someone bumps into Molly.

(Looking in a completely different direction from the person)

Hey! (Remember, this is in her language.)

The group swivels around. Who is she talking to?

They look in the direction that she is looking at. There's nobody there.

They realise that she can't see them.

They decide to have some fun with it. They aren't evil, just innocent, and ignorant.

They play Marco Polo.

Molly gets confused by all the different directions where the noise is coming from.

She follows the noises erratically, stressed by the quick changes in direction.

The children start running everywhere.

They grab her sunglasses and walking stick and return them to her, then spin her around.

The children transform into commuters rushing about at the train station.

Marco Polo becomes conversations yelled over everyone's heads.

Present day. Molly is no longer confused, but calm and aware of her surroundings.

*Everyone weaves in and out of each other as if there is a sea of people.
A busker, or two.*

*I said this way!
Damn we just missed it!
Will you please stop pushing me!
Oi!
Watch it!
Come on, hurry up!
Stay close to me!*

*And the crowd disperses.
Molly has let another train roll by. No one cares.*

*Sunglasses and walking stick are removed.
They are back in the playground. Marco Polo.*

*Molly gets frustrated. She tries to talk to them.
Molly repeats herself.
Molly repeats a keyword, and again, and again, and again.
She starts to cry. And they back away, uncertain.
She cries harder and the children get exasperated.*

*One of them attempts to calm her down but she violently rejects human contact.
A stylised struggle ensues. There is a genuine eagerness from the group to calm Molly down.
They realise that touching her doesn't help, and stand back. Molly realises she is struggling against nothing.
Someone slowly reaches for her hand. Molly is apprehensive.
He/ she lets Molly feel his/ her face. Molly starts to see him/ her through her hands. She likes what she sees.
She feels her way to his/ her hands. An understanding.*

*Music.
He/she leads Molly slowly around... wherever they are.
Left... right... up... down... over... under... backwards... sideways...
They take turns leading her. They take care of her. They let her see her way around their little world.
Slowly, they let go of her and start to form the world that she explores on her own.
The nursery rhymes come back.*

*This is the text for the following stage directions, or something to this effect, ad-libbed in both languages:
(Stop the action/ everyone freezes if necessary)*

*I walk I move I climb I crawl I twist I crouch I step I leap I hop I splash I wade I soar I go
up I go down I go through I go over I go under I go left I go right I go backwards I go
forwards I go sideways I go and I go and I go and I go and I touch and I see.*

*Molly goes up some steps...
Under a bridge...
Through a tunnel...
Field of flowers...
A puddle of mud...
A pool of water...
On a swing...
A see-saw...
Anywhere. Sometime she staggers, sometimes she stumbles, sometimes she trips, but she enjoys her adventure.
She climbs on someone's back. He/ she gallops around. She screams in excitement and fear and everyone cheers.*

(Raising her palms to the audience) I see.

*Sunglasses and walking stick come back—to the present.
Everyone around her either avoid her, or stare, or point, or commentate.*

Molly returns to her original point. Commuters around.

I see. I don't need eyes like yours. I don't need eyes like yours to see the looks you give me. I sense it. Your eyes are saying that I am less of a person because my sight is not the same as yours. And I start to believe that it is true. I am less. And I don't belong here. So maybe I should...

The train is coming.

She times it such that just as the train pulls in she can...

A commuter yanks her back.

Woahhhhh ma'am!

No one else notices.

Are you alright?

(In her own language) I don't know.

The train stops. Doors open. Commuters enter.

Here, mind the gap.

The commuter helps Molly onto the train.

So, where are you headed?

(In her own language) I don't know.

(As if he understands her) Well, anywhere but six feet under, eh?

Music. The commuter slowly removes her sunglasses and walking stick.

They start to connect.

Everyone else fades away.

End.