

J O N F O S S E



**PLAYS ONE**

SOMEONE IS GOING TO COME  
THE NAME  
THE GUITAR MAN  
THE CHILD

OBERON MODERN PLAYWRIGHTS





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PLAYS ONE

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Jon Fosse  
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SOMEONE IS GOING TO COME

Translated by Gregory Motton

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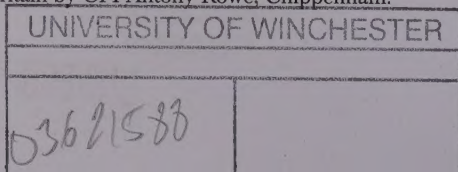
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SOMEONE IS GOING TO COME  
(Nokon kjem til å komme)



# Characters

SHE

HE

MAN



## I

*In the garden in front of an old, somewhat dilapidated house, the paintwork is peeling, some window panes are broken, but nevertheless the house, which is desolately situated on a ledge on a steep slope, with a view to the sea, has its own weatherbeaten material beauty. A man and a woman come into the garden from around the right hand corner of the house. HE is about fifty years old, slightly rotund with grey, somewhat overlong hair, shifty eyes and slow movements. SHE is around thirty, quite tall, rather heavily built, medium length hair, large eyes and slightly childish movements. The man and woman walk alongside the house, holding each other by the hand, looking lengthily at the house.*

SHE

*(Jolly.)*

Soon we'll be in our own house

HE

Our own house

SHE

A beautiful old house

Far away from other houses

and from other people

HE

You and I alone

SHE

Not just alone

but alone together

*(She looks up into his face.)*

Our own house

In this house we shall be together

you and I

alone together

HE

And no-one is going to come

*(They stop, stand looking at the house.)*

JON FOSSE

SHE

Here we are beside our own house

HE

And it is a lovely house

SHE

Here we are beside our own house

Our own house

where we shall be together

You and I alone

The house

where you and I shall be

alone together

Far away from all the others

The house where we shall be together

alone

in each other

HE

Our own house

SHE

The house which is our own

HE

The house which is our own

The house where no-one shall come

Here we are beside our own house

The house where we shall be together

alone in each other

*(They continue alongside the house.)*

SHE

*(Slightly troubled.)*

But it is slightly different

I hadn't

really thought

it would be like this

*(Suddenly afraid.)*

For someone is going to come

it is so isolated here  
 that someone is going to come  
 (*HE continues looking at the house, as if in his own thoughts.*)  
 The long road here  
 not a soul to be seen  
 we have travelled far  
 and not a soul have we seen  
 just the road  
 and here we stand before the house and  
 (*More intensely.*)  
 imagine when it gets dark  
 Imagine when there is a storm  
 when the wind goes  
 right through the walls  
 when you hear the sea roaring  
 and the waves crashing  
 when the sea is white and black  
 and imagine how cold it will be in the house  
 when the wind goes right through the walls  
 and think how far it is from people  
 how dark it is  
 how quiet it is going to be  
 and think how the wind blows  
 how the waves crash  
 think how it will be in the autumn  
 in the darkness  
 with the rain and the darkness  
 A sea that is white and black  
 and only you and I  
 in this house  
 so far from people

HE

Yes so far from  
 people  
 (*Pause.*)  
 Now we are alone at last



SHE

*(Slightly troubled.)*

But it isn't everyone  
we're moving away from  
It wasn't all  
people  
Just some  
wasn't it

HE

*(Stands and looks at her.)*

We're moving away from them all  
away from everyone else

SHE

*(Stands and looks at him. Questioning.)*

Everyone else  
Are we moving away from everyone else

HE

Yes from everyone else

SHE

But can we do that  
Won't the others  
be there anyway  
Can you move away from everyone else  
Isn't it dangerous

HE

But we wanted to be by ourselves  
Isn't it the others  
all the others  
that draw us apart  
All the others  
*(With greater emphasis.)*  
We only want to be  
together with each other  
alone  
somewhere

we wanted  
just to be alone somewhere  
where we can live  
Where you and I can be  
alone together  
alone in each other  
That's where we wanted to be  
We just wanted to be  
alone with each other  
alone in each other

SHE

But can we be alone  
It's as if someone were here  
*(Despairing.)*  
Someone is here  
Someone is going to come

HE

*(Calmly.)*  
There's only us here  
*(He turns away from her, walks across the garden, away past the left corner of the house, stands and looks down at the sea.)*  
There's no-one here  
And there  
*(Points.)*  
is the sea  
No-one is going to come  
*(She goes over to him, stands by his side. She too looks down to the sea. A little excited.)*  
And look how beautiful the sea is  
The house is old  
and the sea is beautiful  
We are alone  
and no-one is going to come  
No-one is coming  
And down there is the sea so beautiful  
look at the waves  
look at how the waves

roll themselves up against the round rocks  
down there on the beach  
wave after wave  
and then the sea  
out there  
As far as the eye can see  
there is only the sea to look at  
And then some islands  
far away  
some black islands against the blue and white sea  
And there  
(*Pause.*)

Yes

(*He looks at her. She looks down, looking small and afraid.  
Surprised.*)

Yes

(*Slightly troubled.*)

There is no-one coming

SHE

But I can sense  
that someone is going to come

HE

No we are alone  
We don't know anyone  
There is only the house here  
And then the sea

SHE

But I am sure that someone  
is here

(*With more emphasis.*)

Yes

someone is here  
Someone is going to come  
I know that someone  
is going to come

HE

No we are alone here  
*(Pause.)*  
At last we are alone  
Now we are alone  
together with each other  
*(Resolutely.)*  
And we couldn't stay  
where we were  
We had to leave  
we wanted to go away somewhere  
And it turned out to be here  
this house  
and now the house is ours  
*(Somewhat happier.)*  
And now we shall live in this house  
*(He looks back again to the house.)*  
We decided to move here  
*(Much happier.)*  
We decided upon it  
And then we did it  
And now we are here  
It is we who shall live in this house now  
We decided  
that we should move here  
In this house shall we live  
We said so  
Now we are here  
Now we shall live in the house  
*(He looks out across the sea again.)*  
And there  
*(Points.)*  
is the sea  
Big and beautiful

SHE

*(Looks out across the sea.)*  
But I didn't think  
it would be like this

to come here  
Not so  
what shall I say  
(*She looks down. Pause.*)  
The sea is so big  
I hadn't thought  
that it was like this  
I suppose I imagined it rather differently

HE

But we couldn't stand  
to be where the others are  
we couldn't stand  
to be among the others  
We just wanted to be together  
We wanted to be  
alone together  
We didn't want to be where the others are did we  
We have to live where no-one else is  
where there is only  
us there  
We were going to live where  
just you and I  
(*Louder.*)  
are alone together  
Long gone  
Far away  
from all the others  
there  
far away  
it was there that we really  
wanted to live

SHE

But here it is somehow  
so isolated  
And then there is as it were  
someone here  
without there being  
anyone here

It's isolated and not isolated  
at the same time  
It's  
(*Interrupts herself.*)

HE

Old houses are like that

SHE

Yes I suppose they are  
(*HE goes and sits on an old, rotten bench which has been put  
up against the wall of the house. SHE watches him.*)  
But it's light now  
imagine when the darkness comes  
when autumn  
and winter come  
when it's dark and cold  
And anyway we're not alone  
Because still there's someone here  
(*Upset.*)  
Someone is here  
I know that someone is here  
And someone is going to come  
I know that someone is going to come

HE

We can be with one another  
Now at last we shall be able  
to be with one another  
alone with each other  
and not be  
where all the others are  
but rather be together  
alone with each other  
Now we shall be  
together with each other  
together in each other  
alone  
with each other  
There shan't be others here

Just you and I  
shall be here now together  
*(Somewhat imploringly.)*  
Come now and sit by me  
*(Questioningly.)*  
Don't you want to sit down  
*(SHE nods.)*

SHE

But there is someone else here  
Someone is going to come  
*(With despair.)*  
We shall never  
be let alone together  
We shall never be able to be together

HE

Come now  
sit down here  
We've just arrived  
*(SHE goes and sits beside him on the bench.)*

SHE

But someone is going to come  
I know it  
I can feel  
that someone is coming  
someone doesn't want to let us  
be with one another  
Someone is going to come

HE

No-one is here  
No-one is going to come

SHE

*(Loud.)*  
I know that someone  
is going to come

HE

No



SHE

They never allow us  
to be together

HE

Don't think like that now

SHE

But someone is coming  
I can just tell

*(She gets up, stands before him, looks down at him. In despair.)*  
Someone is going to come

HE

But we've come here  
so that we  
can be alone  
together  
No-one shall come  
We've

*(He interrupts himself, looks suddenly despairingly at her.  
Pause. Afraid. Questioningly.)*

Who is going to come

SHE

I just know  
that someone is going to come  
You also want for someone  
to come  
You would rather be together  
with others than with me  
You would rather be together with others  
Someone is going to come  
If we go in then someone will come  
and knock on the door  
knock and knock on the door  
Someone is going to knock on the door  
going to knock and knock on the door  
and not give up  
just knock

As soon as we get inside the house  
someone is going to come

HE

*(Protesting.)*

No

*(Imploring.)*

Can't you sit down  
here next to me on the bench

*(Comforting.)*

No-one is going to come

SHE

I know that someone is coming  
I can feel it  
It's so isolated here  
that someone is going to come  
Someone's coming  
I know that someone is going to come

HE

No no-one's coming  
No-one is going to come

SHE

Someone always comes  
Someone comes  
She comes  
She comes  
and sits down  
sits there  
looks into your eyes  
I know it  
Someone is going to come  
And she is going to sit there  
with her eyes  
She is going to sit there  
and look almost imperceptibly  
into your eyes  
I know it

Someone is going to come  
She is going to come  
And I can't bear it  
I can't bear  
that someone is coming  
And that she is going to come

HE

Can't you sit down here  
beside me on the bench  
(*SHE sits down beside him on the bench. He puts his arm  
around her shoulders.*)  
No-one is going to come  
Not her  
not anyone else  
We are alone now  
we are together now  
with each other  
Alone  
together in each other  
(*SHE rests her head on his shoulder.*)  
It's just you and I now

SHE

You and I

HE

You and I

SHE

But I can't help it  
I can just tell  
that someone is going to come  
Or maybe there is already  
someone here  
(*Questioning.*)  
Maybe someone is in the house  
(*Anxious.*)  
There  
Didn't you hear

*(SHE looks at him, afraid, sits up on the bench. Questioning.)*

Wasn't that footsteps

*(HE looks at her. Listens.)*

It was something

Was it footsteps

I heard something

*(HE nods. Questioning.)*

Did you hear it too

*(HE nods.)*

You heard it too

*(HE looks a bit afraid.)*

HE

Yes

SHE

Someone is here

Someone's coming

HE

I think I heard footsteps

SHE

Do you hear anything now

*(HE shakes his head.)*

But there was something just now

*(SHE looks about her, then looks at him.)*

There it is again

*(HE stands up, looks down at her.)*

HE

Someone's coming

*(HE goes over to the left-hand corner of the house again, glances down, behind the house, turns around, looks at her where SHE sits on the bench, shakes his head.)*

SHE

*(Questioning.)*

No-one

*(HE shakes his head again. HE turns again towards the corner of the house again, glances down, then looks at her again.)*

HE

I'll take a little look around the house

*(SHE nods. HE goes cautiously around the corner of the house, disappears behind it. SHE remains sitting on the bench, looks about her. Then SHE stands up, goes to the corner of the house where HE has just disappeared. SHE looks down towards him.)*

SHE

*(Quite loud. Questioning.)*

Nothing

You don't see anything

Nothing

HE

*(From behind the corner of the house.)*

No

*(SHE turns away from him, begins to walk across the garden.)*

II

*SHE walks across the garden. Then SHE sees a man coming around the right hand corner of the house. The MAN is around thirty years old, quite a normal looking man. SHE looks towards him, then SHE looks down. SHE looks up again, nods towards him. The MAN nods at her. And then he approaches walking from alongside the house, looking at her. SHE looks at him. The MAN comes over to her, stands before her.*

MAN

*(Arrogant, somewhat boastful.)*

So you're the one who bought the house

*(SHE looks at the MAN.)*

I heard that someone

had bought it

I'm just taking a walk

The house has stood empty so long

it's completely dilapidated

Then there was suddenly someone

wanted to buy the house

It's me that's sold the house  
I just wanted to see  
who had bought it  
(*SHE looks down on the ground before her.*)  
I inherited the house  
my family have lived in it  
But a few years ago  
grandma died  
She was the last to live in the house  
Since that time it has stood empty  
It's a bit remote  
and it's so old  
It was quite difficult to get the house sold  
But then it was sold  
I never thought  
I'd be able to sell it

SHE

So you're the one who sold the house  
(*The MAN nods. Pause. Questioning.*)  
Have you lived here yourself

MAN

No only my father  
And my father's parents lived here  
In this  
(*Akimbo arms.*)  
this house here

SHE

It's quite an old house

MAN

Yes  
I don't know quite  
how old the house can be  
but old  
it certainly is

SHE

An old beautiful house

MAN

But I wouldn't have  
lived there myself

SHE

Wouldn't you

MAN

No the house is too old

SHE

*(Questioning.)*  
And it was difficult to sell it

MAN

Yes it was difficult  
*(SHE goes and sits on the bench. The MAN stands looking  
after her, then he too goes and sits down, beside her. SHE looks  
at the MAN.)*

SHE

Do you live around here

MAN

Yes not so far from here  
*(Pause. He looks at her, questioning.)*  
And now you're going to live here  
*(She nods.)*  
It could get lonely living here  
*(She nods again.)*  
There aren't so many people around here  
hardly any people

SHE

Yes there are few people here

MAN

Hardly anyone lives here  
*(Pause. SHE and the MAN sit looking dead ahead. HE arrives  
at the left hand corner of the house, looks around the corner,  
and just as he does so, SHE looks up, at the MAN. And HE  
withdraws, stands there, leaning up against the wall, just*



*behind the corner. HE stands looking down, doesn't listen, but hears what is being said.)*

But I live here anyway

not so far from here

It's quite

*(The MAN laughs.)*

SHE

Yes

MAN

Yes, I live around here

*(The MAN looks at her. Somewhat meaningfully.)*

Perhaps we can keep each other company

*(SHE looks at the MAN, shakes her head.)*

Oh don't say that

There aren't so many others around

and I'm not all that bad

let me tell you

*(SHE looks straight ahead. Pause. Behind the corner of the house HE stands, worried, starts to come forwards, prevents himself.)*

No I just wanted to see if anyone had arrived  
at the house

SHE

Yes

*(The MAN looks at her. SHE looks up at the MAN.)*

MAN

I just wanted to know

who had bought the house

SHE

Yes I understand

MAN

It's not every day

that I sell a house

*(Boasting.)*

And now I've got money

SHE

I suppose you have

MAN

Yes, now I've got plenty of money

SHE

*(A little afraid.)*

You say you don't live far from here

*(SHE looks the MAN in the eye.)*

MAN

No

Not so far away

*(Flirting.)*

Do you want to

SHE

*(Interrupts him.)*

No

no

*(Behind the corner of the house HE stands, becoming more and more troubled, until HE, as it were, forces himself forwards, HE comes walking around the corner, walks into the garden, looks down at them both where they are sitting on the bench. HE stops, looks down. SHE looks at him.)*

SHE

*(Nervous.)*

This is the man who owned the house

The one we bought the house from

*(The MAN stands, goes over to him. Quickly.)*

He says it was his grandfather who lived here

*(Hesitates, turns towards the MAN.)*

Or was it?

MAN

Well yes, my grandfather as well

But he died

many years ago

I have no memory of grandad

But my grandma she lived here  
until a few years ago  
when she died

*(The MAN stands before him.)*

I just wanted to pay a visit

*(He stands staring down.)*

HE

We've just arrived

MAN

In that case I'm sure

You'll be wanting to accustom yourselves

*(MAN looks at him.)*

But I can come back

in a while

Then I can show you the house

SHE

*(Quickly.)*

Does anyone else live

nearby

I wondered

*(The MAN walks over to her, shakes his head, stands in front of the bench.)*

MAN

No not exactly nearby

No wait

*(Hesitates.)*

Yes me

The only one is me

*(SHE looks down. Pause. The MAN walks out into the garden.)*

I'll be back in a while

So I

I can perhaps offer you a drink this evening

Because I've got money now

*(The MAN gives a short laugh. SHE and HE nod to the MAN, who raises his hand, waves to them, then goes round the right*

*hand corner of the house. HE walks apart and sits down on the bench, at the furthest end, leaving as much room between them as possible. HE looks straight ahead, downwards. SHE observes him cautiously. Long pause.)*

HE

*(A bit shakily.)*

Was it you asked him to sit down  
here on the bench  
next to you

SHE

No no

HE

So he just came  
and sat down  
*(Somewhat ironically.)*  
Just like that he just came  
and sat down  
on the bench next to you  
*(SHE looks down in front of her stiffly.)*  
So it was a secret desire  
that you emitted  
Come and sit down here  
right next to me  
That's what you said  
without saying it  
as you usually do

SHE

No stop it now  
It scares me so

HE

No you didn't do anything  
You didn't even look once into his eyes  
*(Brutally.)*  
Were you looking into his eyes all the time  
Or was it only

just as I came along  
that you just happened to do it  
(*HE shakes his head dejectedly.*)

SHE

No please  
It scares me so

HE

(*More agitated.*)  
And was it just as I came along  
that you sort of happened to  
lean against him

SHE

I didn't lean against him

HE

But I saw it  
with my own eyes  
I saw that you leaned up against him  
(*Somewhat conciliatory.*)  
I saw it

SHE

(*Slightly dejected.*)  
I didn't

HE

Did you like him

SHE

I neither liked nor disliked  
him

HE

You liked him

SHE

Yes I suppose I liked him in one way  
(*HE stands up, walks across the yard.*)

HE

I saw you sitting there  
 making eyes  
 and he must have waited until I went behind the house  
 so that he  
 could come  
 into the garden  
 and talk  
 all alone with you

*(HE shakes his head in despair.)*

And then  
 he's going to come again  
*(HE breathes deeply and despairingly.)*

He's always going to come  
*(HE goes and sits on the bench again, slightly closer to her.)*

He lives here all alone  
 A blasted inbreed

And he's never going to let  
 you and me  
 be with one another  
*(HE looks at her.)*

And he's the one we bought the house from  
*(HE stands up.)*

Bloody hell  
 And to think that creature's family  
 lived in the house  
 where we are going to live  
*(HE looks despairingly at her.)*

In the house where we have to live  
*(Calmer.)*

And you sit there looking  
 into his eyes  
 looking and looking and looking  
 into his eyes  
*(More brutally.)*

Clinging onto him on the bench  
*(SHE stares ahead. Pause.)*

And this creature is coming back

He'll come back  
He's going to come  
*(HE starts pacing up and down the yard. Pause. Calm.)*  
You knew of course that someone was bound to come  
I knew it too I suppose in a way  
But I just wanted not to know  
And you knew all the time  
*(HE stops, looks at her. Brutally.)*  
You wanted him to come didn't you  
You just say that you don't want  
anyone to come  
but in reality  
that's all you want  
*(HE shakes his head dejectedly.)*

SHE

*(Calm and composed.)*  
Calm down now  
*(HE continues to pace backwards and forwards in the garden.)*  
No more now  
Just calm yourself  
*(Pause. Exaggeratedly optimistic.)*  
We have to go in and look at the house  
*(HE just continues walking around the garden. SHE stands up. Imploringly.)*  
Won't we  
go inside the house

HE

Someone had to come  
*(SHE goes over to him, takes him by the arm.)*

SHE

Come on, let's go  
into the house  
*(HE looks at her.)*

HE

I don't want to live here  
*(Despairing.)*  
I don't want to be here



SHE

*(Comforting, a bit afraid.)*

Come let's go in

HE

Did you have to look into his eyes

*(HE pulls his arm away, goes and sits down on the bench, with his elbows on his knees, supporting his face in his hands. Truly despairing.)*

No no no

*(SHE comes and sits down beside him on the bench.)*

SHE

*(Exaggeratedly optimistic.)*

Everything's going to be fine

*(HE looks at her. Pause.)*

HE

*(Totally candid.)*

I am so fond

of you

*(HE puts his arms about her, presses up against her, looks into her eyes. SHE puts her arms about him, begins to rock him gently.)*

SHE

You and I

*(SHE kisses him upon the forehead.)*

HE

You and I

SHE

You and I

*(HE looks at her, dejected.)*

HE

Someone always has to come

SHE

*(Comforting.)*

Be calm now

You and me  
You know that

HE

Yes just be calm

SHE

And now we can go inside our own house  
*(HE sits up.)*

HE

Let's go in  
*(HE stands up from the bench. SHE gets up. They take each other by the hand and go towards the front door of the house.)*

SHE

*(Looks at him.)*  
You have got the key  
*(HE stops, feels in his pocket, nods. HE takes the key out of his pocket. They go to the door of the house. HE unlocks it, opens the door for her. SHE goes in. HE goes in after her, closes the door after him, HE can be heard locking the door and checking that it is locked, pulling at the door.)*

III

*SHE comes walking in through the kitchen door, entering an old fashioned large oblong kitchen. HE goes in after her, closing the door behind him.*

SHE

*(Looks enthusiastically at him.)*  
Look at the lovely big kitchen table  
*(Points to a long, worn-out, whitewood kitchen table, which stands the full length of the room from the furthest short wall.)*  
we can sit and eat there  
opposite each other  
we can sit and eat  
*(SHE looks at him.)*  
Shall we sit down

*(SHE goes and sits down at one of the worn-out whitewood chairs which stand in a row along one side of the kitchen table. HE follows, sits down opposite her on a worn-out whitewood kitchen bench, which stands along the other side of the table, up against the wall.)*

We can sit many mornings like this  
For now we are in our own house  
And here it's going to be just us together  
here we will be together  
alone together  
Alone in each other  
And no-one shall come here

HE

Yes just us together

SHE

You and I

HE

You and I

*(HE stands, walks over to the kitchen window, which is in the centre of the wall and looks out to the garden, HE looks out, in all directions. Pause.)*

SHE

Do you see anything

HE

No

*(HE turns to her.)*

I don't think

*(Interrupts himself.)*

SHE

What is it

HE

No nothing

SHE

*(Encouraging.)*

Look at the old stove

*(SHE points to the stove. HE nods.)*

And the old fridge

*(SHE points to the fridge.)*

I don't think I've seen  
such an old fridge before

It seems to work though

And then these curtains

And then this old smell

*(SHE looks about her in the room.)*

And this is where we shall live

We have bought the house  
bought all this

And now we shall be together  
be alone

together in each other

And no-one shall come here

*(HE looks out through the window again. SHE looks at him.  
Not quite convinced.)*

We shall be together

*(More convinced.)*

Just you and I

*(Even more.)*

No-one else

*(Completely convinced.)*

No-one shall come

*(HE still looks out through the window.)*

HE

*(Dampened.)*

There he is again

SHE

No you're joking

*(HE looks anxiously out through the window.)*

HE

I thought I saw him

SHE

But he just left  
(*HE looks at her.*)

HE

Yes but I'm almost sure  
that it was him I saw  
Out in the garden  
Over there by  
(*Interrupts himself.*)

SHE

But it can't be him  
(*HE looks out through the window again.*)

HE

But I think  
it was him  
(*SHE goes over to the window, stands there beside him, puts  
her arm around his back, looks out.*)  
I saw something  
It must have been him  
(*SHE glances sideways up at him.*)

SHE

Do you want me to go out and have a look  
See if he is there  
(*HE looks despairingly at her, with frightened eyes.*)

HE

No  
(*SHE looks down. Dejected.*)  
Do you just want to meet him  
Don't you want to be  
together  
with me  
Do you just want to meet him

SHE

(*A bit afraid.*)  
Stop that

will you

*(Pause.)*

You know it's not like that

*(Pause.)*

You can go out yourself

*(Pause. Exaggeratedly optimistic.)*

Or shall we go around and look

at all the old things

that are here in our own house

We can do that can't we

HE

But I'm sure that I saw him

Shsh

*(HE stands listening. HE looks at her. Quietly, questioningly.)*

Did you hear something

*(SHE shakes her head. Slightly louder.)*

Nothing

*(SHE shakes her head again. HE looks out through the window again. Then there is a knock on the door. HE looks at her with frightened eyes. SHE looks at him with large frightenend eyes. HE shakes his head, then goes and sits down again on the bench. SHE goes and sits down on the chair.*

*There is another knock on the door, harder this time. They sit motionless, looking at each other.)*

SHE

*(Quietly.)*

We won't open it

*(HE shakes his head. Enthusiastically.)*

We'll let him just stand there

*(HE nods. There is another knock on the door.)*

He can just stand there

and knock

We don't have to open it

It's our house

we only open the door to whom we want

*(HE puts his elbows on the kitchen table, pressing his hands to his face.)*

We don't have to open it do we

*(Pause.)*

We open the door to whom we like  
*(HE takes away his hands from his eyes, lays them on the table, looks at her.)*

HE

We'll never be allowed to be with one another  
And you knew  
that someone had to come  
*(There is another knock on the door.)*

SHE

*(Questioning.)*  
Must we open it

HE

You would much rather we opened it  
You really want to  
*(Interrupts himself.)*

SHE

We don't have to open it  
*(They sit looking at each other.)*  
Do you think he's gone

HE

Maybe  
*(Pause.)*  
Or maybe he's just standing outside waiting  
Standing in the garden  
Maybe he's standing  
outside the door

SHE

I think he's gone  
*(Enthusiastically.)*  
And he won't  
come back  
He won't come back  
before many days have passed  
and then he won't come  
here ever again

HE

*(Happy.)*

Do you think so

*(SHE nods.)*

SHE

*(A bit pleased.)*

Come, let's go into the other room

Because he's gone now

He knocked on the door

but we didn't open it

and now he has gone

He has gone

HE

Perhaps he's gone

SHE

I know he's gone

And we can go into the other room

*(SHE takes him by the arm. HE stands up. SHE pulls him with her to the door to the other room.)*

## IV

*They go, with her leading him by the arm into an old living room with faded wood paneling on the walls*

SHE

And now we shall go around

and look at everything

that's here in the room

HE

*(A little dejected.)*

But he's standing there

outside the door

standing there waiting

soon he's going to knock again

SHE

I think he's gone



HE

*(Bravely.)*

But he can just stand there  
because the door is locked

SHE

He can just stand there

*(She looks about her in the room.)*

And it's quite nice here

The room is nice

And then all the pictures hanging on the walls

*(They both look about them in the room.)*

Nearly everything here

is how it must have been

for many many years

*(SHE looks about interestedly, her attention is caught by a portrait of a young woman, it hangs on the long wall opposite.)*

That picture

on the wall there

*(Points.)*

It must be of the woman

who lived here before us

of grandma

*(Interrupts herself, looks at him, then quickly.)*

There, over there

*(Points.)*

over there

her you can see on the wall there

the young woman

in the picture there

It must be her

the grandmother

in the days when she was young

*(SHE lets go of his arm, goes over to the portrait, stands before it. HE remains standing on the floor. SHE looks at the portrait. Pause.)*

She must have been beautiful

HE

*(A bit dejected.)*

And now he's probably standing outside the door

He's going to knock on the door

*(Despairing.)*

And why didn't you say before  
that someone had to come

*(SHE turns towards him.)*

SHE

He can just stand there

*(HE looks down.)*

HE

I suppose you think

he's beautiful too

I suppose he resembles his grandma

SHE

He doesn't resemble her

that much

*(HE laughs. SHE turns to the portrait again.)*

HE

You remember I suppose pretty well

what he looked like

*(HE goes over to the portrait, looks at it. HE looks at her.*

*Ironic.)*

I think perhaps he does rather resemble

his grandmother in the days when she was young

*(Pause.)*

And now he's walking around the garden

*(SHE walks back to the middle of the room. HE turns around  
after her.)*

What do you think

Does he resemble her

SHE

I don't know

HE

You looked at his face so closely

*(SHE pretends not to hear, continues looking about the room.)*

SHE

There

*(Looks at a wedding photograph, which hangs on the short wall to the left.)*

there's the wedding photo

*(Points.)*

there

that must be the wedding photo

*(Spontaneously.)*

And the husband is goodlooking too

*(SHE goes over to the wedding photo, goes close up to it, looks carefully. Then SHE turns it towards him. As if to confirm.)*

They were both goodlooking

*(HE nods, goes and stands next to her.)*

They were a beautiful pair

And quite young when they married

HE

*(A bit interested.)*

I think he resembles

both his grandmother and grandfather a little

But both of them are younger

in this picture

SHE

Yes they are quite young

*(Hesitates somewhat.)*

perhaps not more than twenty

HE

She's perhaps even younger

SHE

It's not the same with them

as it is with us

HE

You're not that old

SHE

Not all that young  
either anymore

*(SHE puts her arm around his back, presses herself to his side.  
Pause. SHE looks up at him.)*

But I am so happy  
that we

have met each other

It took a long time before I met  
someone I could  
stay together with

*(Pause.)*

To find rest in each other  
alone together  
in each other

It is exactly that

It is exactly that we want

We want to rest  
in each other

HE

And we do rest  
in each other

*(SHE nods. Pause. HE breaks free from her, goes over to the  
long wall, next to the portrait hangs a confirmation photo of a  
boy, HE stops before it. HE looks at her. Somewhat ironic.)*

Here is a picture of him  
dressed in a suit and tie

*(Pause. Hesitantly.)*

Strange that he doesn't  
remove such pictures  
of himself at any rate  
before he sells the house

SHE

Yes it is quite strange

*(HE goes and opens a door, which is in the right-hand short wall, HE looks briefly into a room.)*

HE

*(Looks at her.)*

And here is the room where she

*(Hesitates.)*

where

the old women slept

It smells old

Smells of old piss

filthy and closed in

And the paint it has peeled

The bed is unmade

*(HE goes into the room. SHE goes and stands before the confirmation photo. Calls from the room.)*

And under the bed there is a chamber pot

half full of old rotten piss

That won't do

*(SHE continues looking at the confirmation photo. Shocked.)*

Well if there isn't a chamber pot

half full of old piss

under the bed

That won't do

SHE

*(Somewhat distractedly.)*

A chamber pot half full

of old piss

HE

*(From the room.)*

We shall have to get that emptied

SHE

There's so much that has to be done

here

with this house

HE

*(From the room.)*

We should never  
have bought this house

SHE

Oh I don't know

*(HE comes back into the room, closes the door of the bedroom behind him, he looks at her. SHE still stands looking at the confirmation photo. SHE looks away from the picture at him. SHE looks at the picture again. Absent-minded.)*

A chamber pot full of old piss under the bed

*(HE nods, goes over to a sofa, it stands beside the short wall on the left hand side, beneath the wedding photo. HE lies down on the sofa, on his back, looking straight ahead. SHE goes and opens the door to the bedroom, goes inside. From the bedroom.)*

O yes

no

that won't do

And it smells of ingrained age

And the bed is still unmade

It seems as if the sheets

haven't been changed

since

*(Hesitates.)*

she lay sleeping there

HE

She very probably died there

in that bed

in those bedclothes

*(SHE comes back into the room, closes the bedroom door behind her.)*

SHE

Do you think so

HE

You knew someone

had to come

You knew it

*(SHE goes over to the window, which is slightly to the right on the long wall and to the right of the confirmation photo. SHE stands looking out through the window, towards the sea.)*

SHE

*(Almost as if SHE is bored.)*

And there we have the sea

Just the sea

And there isn't anyone here

I can only see the sea

Nothing else

HE

You don't see anyone?

SHE

Only the sea

HE

Yes only the sea

*(Somewhat solemnly.)*

It's so good

just to look at the sea

You can feel secure

You and I

and out there the sea

That's how it really ought to be

You and I and the sea

And no-one else shall be here

Just you and I and the sea

No-one else

SHE

But the sea is so big

And there is no-one to be seen

Not a house

Only the sea

*(HE turns over on the sofa, turning his back to her, HE lies looking at the wall. Pause.)*

Don't be sad

I'll comfort you

*(SHE goes over to the sofa, lies on it, behind him, SHE puts her arms around him, presses herself against his back. Comforting.)*

Just you and I  
And then the sea  
You and I and the sea  
And you mustn't be sad  
Because I will take care of you  
You mustn't be afraid  
You'll see that everything  
will be fine  
Nothing bad  
shall happen  
You and I shall be together  
Now we're going to be together  
all the time  
You and I  
shall be together  
No-one else of course will be there  
Only you and I  
And the house is old  
and beautiful  
And we have come away from everyone else  
And now we shall be together  
We shall be  
alone together won't we  
you and I  
alone together  
We shall take rest in one another  
now we're going to be together  
only you and I  
You and I  
alone together  
*(Pause. HE turns on the sofa, towards her, looks at her.)*

HE

*(Afraid.)*

Do you hear something  
I can hear someone outside



He is outside  
he is there  
outside the window

SHE

*(Calmly.)*

I don't hear anything  
I only hear your heart  
beating  
I can hear just now that you are afraid

HE

I can hear  
footsteps so clearly  
I can hear that someone  
is outside  
He didn't go it seems  
no  
He is outside walking round and round the house  
*(Both lie there listening.)*

SHE

*(Somewhat resigned.)*

There is someone outside  
So he didn't go  
And now he's walking round about the house  
walking round and round the house

*(Pause.)*

But that doesn't have to matter

It isn't

so terrible

if he is out there

If he is walking round and round the house

*(Stubborn.)*

That's not so terrible

*(Mildly.)*

Because now you and I  
are alone with each other

*(Despairing.)*

Now we are together

alone  
in each other

HE

*(Afraid.)*

He's walking round and round the house

I can hear how he keeps walking

And soon he'll stop in the garden

He's not going to go

he's just going to come

again and again

he's going to come

*(HE sits up on the edge of the sofa. SHE sits up by his side.*

*SHE look at him horrified.)*

SHE

*(Despairing.)*

Is he always going

to come

He's always going to come

How can you say such a thing

HE

He said he was going to go

but he didn't go

He just stayed

He's always going to come

SHE

But that just won't do

He said he was going to

let us get accustomed alone

He was going to go

Not until later

was he going to come back

We were to get accustomed

HE

Yes but now he's come back

*(With something of a bold show.)*

But the door is locked

SHE

Are you sure there is someone  
there  
outside the house  
(*HE nods.*)

HE

(*With bold show.*)  
I can go out and look  
(*HE stands, goes out into the kitchen, comes back again, HE looks dejectedly at her.*)  
(*Quietly.*)  
He's standing out there in the garden  
I saw him  
from the kitchen window

SHE

He said he was going to go  
(*SHE looks at him afraid. Pause.*)  
Are you sure that  
there is someone there  
(*HE nods. HE goes over to the sofa, sits down beside her, looks at her.*)

HE

(*Accusing.*)  
Now he's there again  
And just the very  
moment that we arrived  
you found yourself a friend  
You got it settled  
I saw you didn't I  
(*Despairing.*)  
I saw you didn't I  
look into his eyes  
While you thought  
I didn't see you  
you looked into  
his eyes  
And I heard didn't I  
how you asked him if he lived

JON FOSSE

far from here  
I heard you

SHE

Where is he

HE

I said  
he's standing out there in the garden

SHE

*(Hastily.)*  
Just let him stand there  
He can just  
stand there can't he  
He can just stand there

HE

It was you asked him to come  
back again to us

SHE

No  
He said himself  
that he would come  
I didn't say anything  
He said himself he would come  
back  
in a while  
he said

HE

And now he's here already  
*(There is a knock on the door. HE stands up, looks frightenedly at her. SHE looks at him. Pale despair.)*  
I can't meet him  
I'm going  
*(HE looks towards the door to the bedroom.)*  
I'm going in to the bedroom  
*(Points to the bedroom door.)*  
I can't bear seeing him  
*(HE looks imploringly at her.)*

If anyone's going to open the door  
it will have to be you

SHE

*(Hesitatingly.)*

Are you sure

Are you sure we should open the door  
and that I should do it

*(HE nods.)*

HE

I couldn't now

I can't cope with seeing people

I can't cope now

with anyone coming

*(Short pause.)*

But we have to open it

You'll have to open the door

SHE

*(Questioningly.)*

Shall I open it

*(There is another knock on the door.)*

HE

If anyone's going to open it

you'll have to

go and open the door

I can't bear to open it

I can't bear to see him

I knew someone had to come

*(There is another knock on the door, harder this time.)*

SHE

*(Questioningly.)*

Do we have to open it

*(HE shrugs his shoulders. There is an even harder knock on the door. SHE looks at him.)*

Do you really mean

that we have to open it

Must we open it

*(There is another knock on the door.)*

HE

He doesn't stop knocking  
so we'll have to open it

SHE

*(Questioningly.)*

And I have to open the door to him

*(There is another knock on the door. SHE goes into the kitchen, leaving the kitchen door open behind her. HE goes into the bedroom, closes the door after him, opens the door again, comes back into the room again. HE lies down on the sofa, with his face to the wall, with his hands clasped behind his neck, his knees drawn up against the wall.)*

## V

*SHE stands holding the kitchen door open for the MAN who stands in the doorway looking in at the kitchen.*

MAN

I thought I might just as well  
show you the house  
straight away just as well

And so I brought

*(The MAN holds up a carrier bag in front of him, there is a clinking of bottles.)*

something

As you know I've got money now

*(The MAN laughs a little, smiles.)*

I don't think I've ever had so much money

*(The MAN laughs.)*

Yes I've got money now

You've seen to that

*(The MAN goes into the kitchen, looks at her. SHE closes the door. The MAN goes past her and sits down on the kitchen bench. Pause.)*

You know  
this house

is very familiar to me  
 I find my own way about here  
 I know every nook and cranny

*(Pause. The MAN puts down the carrier bag on the table. SHE goes and stands in front of the kitchen window, resting her weight on her right foot, so that her hip sticks out in a gentle arch towards him. SHE looks out through the window. He looks at her hips.)*

You know I was very often  
 in this house  
 I was

when I was little  
 Quite often I was here  
*(Pause.)*

You couldn't fetch  
 me a glass  
*(She looks at him.)*

SHE

I don't know  
 where the glasses are  
*(HE points towards the cupboard with a sliding door which sits on the wall behind the row of chairs. SHE looks at him.)*  
 Where

MAN

In the cupboard there  
*(Continues pointing. SHE goes and pulls the sliding door to one side, sees glasses and cups and other crockery standing there neatly piled in the cupboard.)*  
 Yes it was as well to  
 sell the house  
 with all the contents  
 I don't know what I  
 would have done  
 with it all  
 in any case  
 She wouldn't probably  
 have liked it  
 my old grandma

*(He laughs.)*

But that's the way it is  
in this life  
you accumulate things  
then you die  
and others have their things  
for them your things  
are almost worthless  
That's just the way it is

SHE

*(Questioning.)*

A glass

*(HE nods.)*

MAN

And one for you  
because you  
would like to have  
something to drink  
too wouldn't you  
*(SHE shakes her head.)*

So you don't want anything to drink  
*(HE takes out a beer bottle from the carrier bag, puts it in front of him on the kitchen table. He looks meaningfully at her.)*

Nothing to drink  
*(SHE shakes her head. He unscrews the cork from the bottle, puts it down again on the table. SHE takes out a glass from the cupboard, puts it down in front of him. SHE goes and stands before the window again, SHE looks out again. He looks at her.)*

Nothing for you  
*(SHE casts a glance at him, shakes her head. He pours out a little beer into his glass, it bubbles over. He looks at her.)*

You could sit down  
Can't you sit down  
and talk to me a bit  
*(HE takes a gulp of beer, the beer leaves a froth around his mouth, he is still looking at her.)*



Won't you have anything  
Won't you sit down  
*(He puts his glass down. Pause. Then with feeling.)*  
Yes here sat my grandmother  
every single morning  
There weren't many days  
that she wasn't here  
in this house  
And nearly always she was alone  
And now she's gone  
*(Pause.)*  
Ah yes  
*(Pause. He looks at her hips. SHE stands looking out through  
the window.)*  
She was alone  
in this house  
grandma  
for many many years  
It's a long time since  
my grandfather died  
She must have been quite lonely  
But she never complained  
no  
Lonely it must have been  
for there aren't exactly  
many people here  
*(He chuckles. Pause.)*  
What have you done with your husband  
*(SHE looks at him.)*

SHE

What have I done with my husband

MAN

You sit down  
have a glass of beer  
Here a little chat with me  
*(SHE goes and sits down opposite him, on the chair. He puts  
down the beer bottle in front of her. SHE shakes her head. He  
begins to muse. Quietly.)*

Yes Grandma

*(Sentimental.)*

She was kind

She was always kind to me

*(He takes a swig.)*

Yes my grandma

*(Pause. He looks at her.)*

You two got the house cheap

Really cheap

All she owned in this life

was this house

and what's inside it

And I inherited the house

You've much to thank me for

*(He smiles. Pause.)*

Or perhaps you paid

a lot for the house

It is rather isolated

and derelict of course this house is

Maybe you paid far too much for the house

*(He chuckles.)*

No I reckon you got it cheap

all too cheap

You ought to have thanked me

I'm just saying

you ought to have thanked me

*(SHE stands up.)*

Won't you sit down for a bit

and talk to me

Just a bit

*(SHE stands by the kitchen table and looks at him.)*

Not now

Another time perhaps

Perhaps we can meet somewhere

I do live nearby

We can easily meet

Or

*(He laughs.)*

I suppose we'll meet anyway  
 There aren't so many others  
 you could meet here  
 but you can meet me  
 So if you fancy some company  
 (*He takes a swig.*)

so if you fancy some company  
 well you can just come  
 anytime you like you can come  
 over to my house  
 And you can ring  
 Because there's a telephone in this house  
 and I've got a telephone

Here  
 (*He picks up a pen and a bit of paper from his jacket pocket.*)

Here  
 I'll just write down what number  
 you can ring

And you can just ring  
 When you want to you can just ring  
 whatever time it is

*(He puts the piece of paper on the table, leans forwards across the table, writes his number in a deliberate manner. SHE stands on the other side of the kitchen table and looks down at him. He looks up at her, picks up the paper and hands it to her. SHE takes it. SHE takes out a purse from her jacket pocket, opens it, puts the piece of paper inside the purse. HE smiles at her, nods at her.)*

Yes you can just phone  
 And now you've got the number  
 And you ought to have it in a safe place  
 like you have now

*(He smiles at her, then he looks down at the table top. SHE walks away to the kitchen window again, and just stands there resting her hands against the glass, looks out. He picks up the glass, drinks up, puts the glass down on the table. He picks up the beer bottle, screws the top back on and places the bottle in the carrier bag again. He stands up.)*

Yes you can just phone

Anytime at all

you can ring

And I tell you

I'm not really all that bad

*(He walks across the room, stands beside her, she is still standing looking out through the window. SHE looks straight ahead, out through the window. Pause.)*

No I just thought I'd

look in

You two must have a lot to do

I can come back later today

or I can come back another day

And then you can just ring up

Now you know how to get hold of me

And you'll probably ring

*(He goes towards the kitchen door. SHE turns around, looks after him. He turns round. Looks at her.)*

I'll be off then

and come back

later some time

*(SHE nods to him. He opens the kitchen door, goes out, closes the door behind him. SHE remains standing, looking out through the window.)*

## VI

*SHE goes into the living room. HE lies on the sofa, still with his face to the wall and his knees drawn up against the wall. SHE goes and sits down on the edge of the sofa. HE continues to just lie there looking at the wall. Long pause.*

SHE

*(Calmly.)*

He's gone now

*(Pause. Slightly louder.)*

Didn't you hear

He's gone now

*(Pause. Quietly.)*

Are you asleep

*(SHE lays her hand on his shoulder, shakes him by the shoulder.)*

He went

He's gone now

*(HE looks at her, with dark eyes. Afraid.)*

What's the matter with you

*(HE stares at the wall again.)*

What's the matter with you

He's gone now

You and I are alone

now

*(SHE shakes him by the shoulder again.)*

Say something then

What is it

*(SHE bends over him, puts her arms around him.)*

What's the matter with you

My dear friend

what's the matter with you

HE

*(Talking into the wall.)*

Are you satisfied

Now

Are you satisfied

SHE

*(Despairing.)*

What do you mean

You scare me

HE

You've got what you wanted

now

*(Pause. SHE takes her arms from about him, stands up, walks some way across the room. HE looks at her. Ironic.)*

You're clever

You're really clever

JON FOSSE

Of course its far too lonely and deserted here  
I get it  
I understand

SHE

Don't be like that  
It scares me

HE

I get it  
I understand all too well

SHE

What is it

HE

Do you have to

SHE

(*A bit angry.*)  
What

HE

When will you phone him

SHE

I'm not going to phone him

HE

Then why did you take  
his telephone number

SHE

I had to  
What else was I supposed to do  
He gave it to me

HE

Of course  
And you gladly took it  
I get it

SHE

What do you mean

HE

Why did you put the bit of paper  
with the telephone number in your purse

SHE

I didn't

HE

No sure

SHE

How can you know  
I did that

HE

I just know that kind of thing  
I can hear it in your voice  
I know that kind of thing  
*(SHE goes out to the kitchen, leaves the door open behind her.  
Pause.)*

*(HE sits up on the edge of the sofa, sits looking down at the  
floor. Totally calm.)*

I knew  
someone had to come  
*(HE stands up, goes over to the window, looks down at the  
sea.)*

And down there we have the sea  
With all its waves  
the sea  
is white and black  
with its waves  
with its soft dark  
depths

*(HE laughs to himself.)*

And we only wanted  
to be with each other  
*(HE laughs out loud. Pause. He walks across the room, out to  
the kitchen.)*

VII

*HE comes out through the front door, goes over to the right hand corner of the house, looks for her, goes over to the left hand corner, looks for her. Then HE walks backwards and forwards in the garden.*

HE

No she won't phone  
She'll be back soon  
And then we shall be alone  
We shall always be  
alone together  
be  
alone  
in each other

*(HE goes over to the bench, sits down. HE places his elbows on his knees, rests his head in his hands. Looks straight ahead.)*

Alone together  
alone in each other

*(HE laughs coarsely. Long pause. SHE comes walking around the left hand corner of the house, looks amicably at him. HE looks at her, looks down. SHE goes and sits down beside him on the bench. Long pause. Curtain.)*



THE NAME  
(Namnet)



# Characters

GIRL

BOY

SISTER

MOTHER

FATHER

BJARNE



*Lights up. A GIRL, quite young, and pregnant, sitting in a sofa.*

GIRL

Couldn't he have come along  
out here

No he can't be bothered

I could

*(Interrupts herself. She lies down, tries to find a good position to lie in, but it gets uncomfortable, and she sits up.)*

He can't be bothered

*(She gets up, goes over to a window, looks out into the semi-darkness.)*

He ought to be here soon now anyway

*(Short pause.)*

Couldn't we have come out  
together

I had to take the bus out here on my own  
just because he

*(Interrupts herself. Short pause.)*

And Mum just goes on and on

has to say everything

Can't sleep

she says

So now I'm going to be a grandma

she says

*(The GIRL looks about her in the room, she goes over to a sideboard, takes up a photo, looks at it.)*

I wasn't

a very pretty child

*(A short laugh.)*

All these stupid pictures

*(She puts the picture back, goes and stands by the window, looks out. Pause. A short knock on the door. She lays her hands on her stomach.)*

That must be him I suppose

*(Pause. Another knock on the door.)*

And he doesn't of course want to be seen together  
with me

*(Short pause. The GIRL just stays standing by the window looking out. Another knock on the door, harder this time. Then she goes out through the hall door to the right and from the hall we hear that the front door is opened. She comes into the room again, goes and sits down in the sofa. Just her. A BOY comes in, about the same age as her, he carries a bag and a suitcase. He puts the bag and the suitcase on the floor, takes off his jacket, puts it over the back of an armchair. He looks at her.)*

BOY

*(Cautiously, strained.)*  
I couldn't find the house  
*(Short pause.)*  
And when at last I did  
find it  
and knocked on the door  
no-one opened it  
*(Short laugh.)*  
I started

GIRL

*(Interrupts him.)*  
Yes  
*(Pause.)*

BOY

*(Nods, walks about the room a bit, looks about him, pause.)*  
So this is where you grew up

GIRL

Yes yes  
*(Pause, the BOY goes and sits down in an armchair. Another pause.)*

BOY

It's nice here

GIRL

Yes  
*(Another pause.)*

But you could have come out here  
together with me  
if it's so nice  
(*Short pause.*)

BOY

But I haven't

GIRL

(*Interrupts him.*)

You didn't want to be seen with me  
(*Short pause.*)

BOY

Aren't either of your parents home

GIRL

Yes Mum

But she's gone out shopping

BOY

(*Stands up, looks about the room.*)

So you grew up out here eh

GIRL

I don't want to be here

It really upsets me to be here

BOY

It was

(*Interrupts himself.*)

GIRL

If only you could have bothered

a bit more about me

I could give birth

any minute

And I have to come out here all alone

while you

(*Interrupts herself. The BOY walks about a bit and looks at all the things in the room.*)

I don't want to be here

JON FOSSE

BOY

Did you phone your mother before you came

GIRL

I can't stand being here  
And I'm going to give birth  
and you couldn't least care a bit

BOY

It's quite nice out here  
Everything's so cold  
All the rocks  
The heather  
And the wind  
And out beyond the islands is open sea

GIRL

Yes

BOY

And your parent's house is beautifully situated  
in the lee of a cliff

GIRL

*(A little pleased.)*  
We call it the Hill

BOY

Yes

GIRL

And when there was a big storm  
we used to go up there  
And the wind blew so hard it was difficult  
to stay on your feet

BOY

Maybe we can go up there later

GIRL

Yes why not  
*(Pause. The BOY goes and stands in front of the sideboard and  
picks up the picture of the GIRL as a child.)*



BOY

*(Looks questioningly at the GIRL.)*

You

*(The GIRL nods.)*

GIRL

I wasn't a very pretty child

*(She gives a short laugh. The BOY puts the card down, goes to the window, looks out. Pause.)*

And I suppose it won't be

*(Stops herself.)*

BOY

*(Looks at the GIRL.)*

So your mother's out shopping

*(Questioningly.)*

In the shop down here

*(The GIRL nods. Questioningly.)*

Does your mother use a crutch

GIRL

I've told you that

so many times

But you never listen

whatever I say

BOY

Then it was her I saw

I drove past her

She went down the street

I drove up the street

GIRL

Probably

BOY

*(Questioningly.)*

And your father

GIRL

He's at work as usual

*(Short pause.)*

But he'll be home soon

*(The BOY goes over to the wedding picture hanging on the wall, above the sideboard, looks at it.)*

BOY

*(Questioningly.)*

Your parents

*(The GIRL nods.)*

GIRL

*(Dejected.)*

I don't understand

why they have their wedding pictures out

All they ever did was argue

I can't remember it hanging there before either

*(Short pause.)*

Probably my sister hung it up

She's wants everything to be so perfect

BOY

Yes

*(Pause. He stands looking at another card hanging on the wall.*

*Questioningly.)*

Your sister

GIRL

The oldest

BOY

Not the one that lives at home

*(The GIRL shakes her head. Pause.)*

And your father

he's at work

GIRL

Yes

*(Pause.)*

But he'll be home soon

He has a long day

And when he comes home

he's always tired

*(The BOY nods.)*

BOY

Yes

*(Pause.)*

And your mother

*(Stops himself.)*

Yes she

*(Stops himself again.)*

GIRL

*(Dejected.)*

You never listen

You just stand there

Never when I tell you something

do you ever listen

BOY

Yes I do

*(Draws it out. Pause.)*

Your sister

Is she coming home soon

GIRL

How should I know

*(Short pause.)*

She'll be here soon I suppose

BOY

Your mother seems nice

she does

GIRL

How can you know

BOY

If it was her I saw

then

GIRL

Yes there's no bad in her

*(Clutches at her stomach.)*

JON FOSSE

BOY

Is he kicking  
(*She nods.*)

GIRL

He

BOY

Yes, the kid

GIRL

Do you think it's a boy  
(*He shrugs his shoulders.*)  
I think it's a boy

BOY

I've never met your family have I

GIRL

Nor I yours

BOY

(*Laughs.*)  
No no

GIRL

(*Short pause. Irritated.*)  
But I don't want to be here

BOY

It's only until  
(*Stops himself.*)  
Is your mother coming soon

GIRL

How should I know  
She's down the shops  
standing talking to someone  
She's always talking to someone

BOY

I'm a bit hungry

GIRL

We'll eat when Dad gets home

BOY

Will it be long

GIRL

No

*(The front door opens, steps are heard.)*

BOY

*(Looks at the GIRL, a bit afraid.)*

Someone's coming

*(The GIRL nods. Questioning.)*

Your father

*(The GIRL shrugs her shoulders, both look towards the hall door which opens and a slightly younger girl, the SISTER, comes in, she nods at the BOY.)*

SISTER

*(Looks at the GIRL, surprised.)*

Are you here?

That's nice

How big you've grown

*(She goes over and throws her arms around the GIRL's neck. She sits down beside her.)*

You're so big

Mum told me you were going to have a baby

But she didn't say how big you were

*(She laughs. Questioningly.)*

So you're just about to give birth

*(The GIRL nods. Questioningly.)*

And you've just arrived

I didn't know you were coming

*(Questioningly.)*

You just came did you

*(The GIRL nods.)*

Gosh your stomach's big

*(Questioningly.)*

Can I feel it

*(The GIRL nods. The SISTER lays her hand on the GIRL's stomach. Short pause.)*

I can't feel anything

GIRL

*(A bit cheerful.)*

When he's kicking  
you can feel it  
But he's not kicking now

SISTER

Does he often kick

GIRL

Quite

SISTER

And you've grown so big  
You look at any rate, as if you're going to give birth  
any minute  
Bjarne said hello by the way

GIRL

*(A bit reserved.)*

Bjarne

SISTER

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

I met him down by the burger kiosk  
He told me to say hello  
He said you should look in  
if you were home sometime  
You must go down and see him  
he said

GIRL

Yes

SISTER

I told him you were going to have a baby  
*(Giggles a bit.)*

I didn't know if I should  
 Since Dad doesn't know  
 Well you don't know that I suppose  
 but Mum hasn't told Dad  
 that you're having a baby  
 She said she didn't want to

GIRL

He didn't say

SISTER

*(A bit confused.)*

What didn't he say

GIRL

That I was pregnant

SISTER

*(Questioningly.)*

Bjarne

No of course he didn't

*(Laughs a bit. Short pause.)*

He said something like that you'd been at it again

*(The GIRL and the SISTER laugh a little.)*

GIRL

*(Nods in the BOY's direction.)*

Anyway, so that's the father

*(Short laugh. The BOY and the SISTER get up, shake hands, sit down again.)*

He's just arrived

He hasn't met Mum yet either

BOY

Yes I have

GIRL

*(Looks at the SISTER. Laughs.)*

Yes, he drove past her apparently  
 on the road

JON FOSSE

SISTER

*(Suddenly.)*

Shall we play cards

GIRL

I'm too tired

SISTER

*(Looks at the BOY. Questioningly.)*

You and me

*(He shrugs his shoulders. Pause. She laughs briefly, looks at the BOY.)*

I think it's so stupid

that Mum hasn't told Dad

that you're having a baby

He's going to be surprised

And Dad's so quiet these days

And you can hardly talk to Mum

She's completely mad

*(Starts laughing.)*

She does one dreadful thing after another

Says such stupid things

She's crazy

GIRL

She's always been like that

SISTER

And Dad as usual says

almost nothing

And he sleeps so little at nights

Has to get up at dawn

But of course he goes to bed early

He says he just lies in bed

Can't sleep

he says

GIRL

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

So Bjarne hasn't changed



SISTER

He's just the same

GIRL

*(Looks at the BOY.)*

A childhood friend

I used to be down there with him a lot before

With him and his brother

*(Interrupts herself.)*

I've told you about him

*(The BOY nods, she laughs a little.)*

But you never listen

whatever I say

*(Short pause.)*

BOY

Ages since you saw him

GIRL

A couple of years maybe

SISTER

*(Starts laughing.)*

They're completely mad

Bjarne and his brother

*(The front door opens, steps are heard. The BOY looks at the GIRL.)*

GIRL

*(To the BOY.)*

Don't worry

SISTER

It's probably Mum coming

GIRL

*(Looks at the SISTER.)*

She's been shopping

*(The SISTER nods, the hall door opens and an older woman comes into the room. One of her feet is almost completely stiff and she drags herself about on a crutch.)*

MOTHER

Ah so there you are

Do you know what

*(She starts laughing. She nods to the BOY, then looks at the GIRL.)*

Do you know what I heard  
down at the shops

SISTER

*(Nods to the BOY, looks at the MOTHER.)*

This is Beate's<sup>1</sup> boyfriend

*(She nods to the BOY again.)*

MOTHER

Do you know what I heard

*(She slaps her thigh with her free hand.)*

GIRL

*(Resignedly.)*

Yes, yes

*(Pause.)*

Aren't you going to say hello to

*(Interrupts herself.)*

You haven't met him before

*(The MOTHER looks at the BOY, he gets up, they shake hands, the BOY remains standing by the MOTHER.)*

MOTHER

I heard

GIRL

*(Gets up.)*

I know what you're going to say

*(The MOTHER looks at the GIRL, somewhat hurt, then she looks at the BOY, shakes her head, then she turns round slowly and then goes out through the kitchen door to the left, closing the door behind her. Pause.)*

1 Pronounced Bey-ah-te

SISTER

*(A bit worried.)*

Shall we play cards

GIRL

Give it a rest

SISTER

*(A little angry.)*

What's the matter with you

It was only a question

*(Pause. The BOY gets up, goes and opens his bag, takes out a book.)*

It was only a question

I must be allowed to speak

*(The BOY sits down upon the sofa, opens the book.)*

It was only a question

What's the matter with you

Why are you like that

GIRL

Alright alright

SISTER

*(Gets up. The BOY looks up from his book.)*

Well if you're going to be like that

I only asked

*(The SISTER goes out into the hall, closes the door with a bang. The BOY looks at the GIRL, then begins to read again. Short pause.)*

GIRL

So now you can start getting to know my family

*(The BOY looks up from the book, nods, continues reading.)*

Are they how you imagined

*(She laughs briefly.)*

BOY

*(Still reading.)*

Yes

*(Draws it out.)*

GIRL

It's all just a mess

Dad works

Can't sleep

Mum goes around babbling  
talking to people in the shops  
trying to be funny

*(The GIRL looks at the BOY.)*

Can't you listen

*(The BOY looks up from his book.)*

You don't care

You never listen when I'm talking to you

You

*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

What time does your father get home

GIRL

He'll be here soon

*(Short pause.)*

He's probably

*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

They seem nice

GIRL

You don't care

*(The MOTHER comes into the room again, from the kitchen, she goes to the other armchair, sits down with difficulty, she looks at the GIRL.)*

MOTHER

Now you going to be a mother too, soon

GIRL

*(Short.)*

Yes

MOTHER

It's a long time since I saw you last  
*(The GIRL nods.)*

GIRL

And not without reason

MOTHER

And now you're soon to be a mother  
*(The MOTHER lifts up her crutch, pokes the GIRL in the shoulder.)*

GIRL

Funny

What a laugh

*(The MOTHER retracts her crutch, sighs.)*

Weren't you going to tell us something  
 something or other you heard in the shop

*(MOTHER sighs again.)*

Something you can laugh about

*(The MOTHER looks resignedly at the BOY, shakes her head. Pause. The BOY looks down at his book again. The GIRL is nearly in tears.)*

No-one cares

*(The MOTHER struggles out of the chair, she goes out into the hall, closes the door behind her, we can hear a door opening and closing. Pause. The GIRL looks at the BOY.)*

Are you going to just sit there reading

You really care a lot don't you

*(The GIRL tries to get up, but it hurts and she sits down again.)*

BOY

*(Sighs.)*

Yes yes

GIRL

You don't care

BOY

No alright

*(Short pause. He is suddenly angry.)*

But you can just  
*(Interrupts himself.)*

GIRL

*(As if questioning.)*  
Go down to Bjarne  
*(The BOY shrugs his shoulders.)*  
Anyway, he cares about me just as much  
as you do  
You just sit there reading  
*(Almost in tears.)*  
You just sit there

BOY

Yes yes  
*(The GIRL gets up, she walks about in the room a little, while the BOY sits looking down at his book, then she goes out through the hall door, the BOY gets up, he too walks about the room a little, steps are heard going up the stairs, the BOY then goes and sits down on the sofa, sits and looks down at his book, after a moment the SISTER comes in from the hall. The BOY looks up at the SISTER, from his book.)*

SISTER

She's gone  
*(The BOY nods.)*  
She's like that  
Every now and again she's just like that  
She's like that sometimes  
*(The SISTER shakes her head again, she goes and sits down beside the BOY on the sofa. Pause.)*  
I don't understand why she's like that  
She's always been like that  
It's not just that she's going to have a baby  
She's like that  
*(Short pause.)*  
But then later she's nice again  
and then she's really nice  
*(Looks at the BOY.)*  
She can be really nice too

BOY

*(Nods.)*

Yes

SISTER

I don't know why she gets like that

BOY

No

SISTER

Now and again she's just like that

*(The BOY nods.)*

You know that of course

*(Short pause.)*

I don't think I'd like to have children with her

*(She laughs briefly.)*

BOY

Me neither

*(The SISTER starts laughing.)*

But she is often nice too

SISTER

Yes

BOY

You know her better than I do

SISTER

She's quite nice

BOY

Yes

*(Pause. The outer door opens, steps are heard. The BOY looks at the SISTER.)*

SISTER

Dad's coming now

I can hear that it's him

*(The BOY looks down at his book. Pause. The hall door opens and the FATHER comes in, he is about fifty to sixty years old,*

*he looks strong and healthy, but tired and withdrawn. The BOY stands up, but the FATHER pretends not to see him, nods however at the SISTER before going to sit down in an armchair, still ignoring the BOY, then he picks up a newspaper from the table, looks at it a bit, sighs, the BOY sits down in the sofa again, opens his book.)*

FATHER

*(Turns to the SISTER.)*

That's that day over with

*(He sighs. Questioningly.)*

Mother resting

SISTER

Think so

BOY

*(Trying to say something.)*

Maybe she's

SISTER

*(Interrupts him.)*

No she's resting

*(To the FATHER.)*

She was up just now

*(A bit enthusiastic.)*

But Beate has come home

FATHER

*(Looks at the SISTER.)*

Beate

SISTER

*(Nods.)*

She came today

Suddenly

FATHER

Yes

Is she out

SISTER

I don't know



*(The FATHER nods. The SISTER looks towards the BOY.)*

He's Beate's boyfriend

*(The FATHER nods again, looks at the BOY, looks back at his paper. Pause. The FATHER gets up, stretches himself, walks about a bit across the floor. The BOY starts to read his book.)*

FATHER

Yes indeed

*(Looks at the SISTER.)*

So Beate has come home

It was a long time since she was out here

*(Short pause.)*

But I'd better get some food inside me

*(He goes over to the window again, looks out. Pause. He walks about the room a bit, shakes his head resignedly.)*

SISTER

It seems something happened to her today  
when she was out shopping

FATHER

Probably

SISTER

She went to bed just now

FATHER

Probably

*(Short pause.)*

No I'd better go and get some food inside me

*(The FATHER goes into the kitchen, closes the door behind him.)*

SISTER

*(Looks at the BOY.)*

Have you met before

*(He looks up from his book, shakes his head.)*

You hadn't

*(He shakes his head again. Pause.)*

BOY

First time

JON FOSSE

SISTER

It's all one big mess here

It's hopeless

*(She takes out a box of sweets from her pocket.)*

Want one

*(The BOY nods, she hands the box of sweets towards him and he takes a sweet.)*

What are you reading

BOY

Oh it's just

*(Interrupts himself.)*

SISTER

Yes

*(Laughs a bit.)*

That sounds boring

BOY

*(Smiles.)*

Yes

SISTER

I never read

BOY

I never used to either

SISTER

I was bad at school

BOY

Me too

SISTER

But you read books anyway

BOY

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

SISTER

What are you going to be

BOY

Nothing

*(He laughs briefly.)*

SISTER

I don't know what I'm going to be either

*(Short pause.)*

And now you're going to be a father

*(She laughs briefly.)*

BOY

Yes

SISTER

Are you pleased

*(He shakes his head.)*

You aren't pleased

*(He shakes his head again.)*

Well you are quite young

*(He nods.)*

You're both young

BOY

Yes

SISTER

It'll be fun

to have children

BOY

Yes I'm sure

But

*(Interrupts himself.)*

SISTER

And I don't know what I'm going to be

What schools to go to and so on

I mean

BOY

Do what you fancy

SISTER

But I don't know what I fancy  
*(She laughs.)*

BOY

Must be something  
*(The kitchen door opens and the FATHER comes in. The BOY looks down at his book.)*

FATHER

*(To the SISTER.)*  
It's good to get a bit of food inside you  
Working makes you hungry  
*(Short pause.)*  
So Beate came home today  
*(Looks at SISTER. Questioningly.)*  
And now she's out having a walk around  
She'll be in soon I expect  
It's a long time since I saw her last  
Yes indeed  
It will be fun to see her again  
*(The FATHER goes and sits down in the armchair again, he takes out a newspaper again, picks up his spectacle case from the table, puts on his glasses, leafs through the paper.)*

SISTER

*(Takes out the box of sweets.)*  
Want one

FATHER

No thanks  
*(Short pause, he looks at the SISTER.)*  
Do you know where Beate is

SISTER

No  
*(Short pause. The SISTER looks at the BOY, she gets up, goes over to the window, stands and looks out, the BOY looks up from his book, looks at the FATHER who sits looking down at the paper.)*

FATHER

*(While he still sits looking at the paper.)*  
Yes indeed

*(The BOY looks back at his book again.)*

Yes yes indeed

*(He puts the paper to one side, stands up, the BOY still sits looking down at his book and the FATHER begins to walk about the room. Then to the SISTER.)*

So she went to bed

She had pains today again

SISTER

Think so

FATHER

Yes indeed

*(The FATHER stops and looks down at the BOY who sits reading.)*

Who's this then

*(The BOY looks up.)*

SISTER

It's Beate's boyfriend

I just told you

FATHER

He's reading

SISTER

Yes

FATHER

I see

Has he had any food

SISTER

Have you eaten

*(The BOY nods.)*

FATHER

*(To the SISTER.)*

So Beate came today  
together with him

SISTER

Think so

*(Pause. The FATHER goes and sits down in the sofa again, takes up the newspaper again, leafs through it a bit, the SISTER comes and sits down in the sofa next to the BOY, who is still sitting reading. The FATHER looks at the SISTER.)*

FATHER

Is that his suitcase

BOY

*(Looks at the FATHER, nods.)*

Yes

SISTER

I can put the suitcase out in the hall

FATHER

Not for my sake

BOY

I can do it

FATHER

*(Looks at the SISTER.)*

You don't know where Beate is

*(She shakes her head.)*

SISTER

No I said no

*(The FATHER folds up the paper, stands up, walks over to the window and looks out. Pause. The hall door is opened and the MOTHER comes in, hobbling forwards on her crutch. The FATHER sees her.)*

MOTHER

*(To the BOY.)*

I had to go and lie down for a bit

My foot hurts so much

I get tired so quickly

*(The BOY nods.)*

Isn't Beate here

SISTER

She went

FATHER

*(To the MOTHER.)*

I found a bit of food

MOTHER

*(To the BOY.)*

It's dreadful to get old

I was going to say

But I'm not that old

actually

*(She laughs.)*

It's just my health that's dodgy

*(Short pause.)*

But you're so thin

You could really do with a bit of food

BOY

Yes

MOTHER

Yes all thin like that

*(Pause.)*

I can make something nice for supper

FATHER

*(To the MOTHER.)*

I met Sverre

MOTHER

In town

FATHER

Yes

I don't think he was quite sober

He looked dreadful

MOTHER

Well so do you

*(She laughs.)*

JON FOSSE

FATHER

I don't think he's got any work

MOTHER

Wasn't he away at sea  
then

FATHER

Yes that's right he was

MOTHER

*(To the BOY questioningly.)*  
Do you have brothers and sisters  
*(The BOY shakes his head.)*  
Parents

BOY

Yes

MOTHER

You really are thin  
*(She laughs, turns to the SISTER.)*  
Where is Beate

SISTER

I don't know  
You've asked several times now

MOTHER

*(Looks knowingly at the FATHER.)*  
She wasn't very nice today  
Beate

SISTER

Completely awful  
*(Short pause. The BOY closes the book, puts it on the coffee table, he stands up, takes his coat and puts it over his arm, lifts up his suitcase and bag, goes out into the hall, he closes the door carefully behind him. Short pause.)*

FATHER

Who was that



SISTER

Beate's boyfriend

MOTHER

Yes I must tell you

*(Interrupts herself. The FATHER turns and looks out of the window. Short pause. The MOTHER begins to laugh.)*

Well

FATHER

*(Looks at the MOTHER.)*

Out with it

MOTHER

No it'll have to wait

FATHER

When did he arrive

MOTHER

He and Beate came today

FATHER

That much I have understood  
Are they going to be here long

MOTHER

I don't know

FATHER

What does he do

SISTER

I don't know

FATHER

No he probably doesn't do anything at all

*(Short pause. He looks at the MOTHER.)*

Where is he from

MOTHER

I don't know

*(She starts laughing.)*

JON FOSSE

FATHER

Yes I know the type

MOTHER

He seems very nice

FATHER

Nice yes

MOTHER

Oh well

FATHER

Is he going to live here as well

MOTHER

I suppose so

FATHER

He doesn't have any work

MOTHER

I don't know

SISTER

He seems nice

FATHER

*(Ironic.)*

Yes he's probably very nice

SISTER

*(Looks at the FATHER.)*

Dad

FATHER

Yes

*(Short pause. He goes out into the kitchen.)*

MOTHER

*(To the SISTER.)*

Do you know anything about him

SISTER

*(Shakes her head.)*

I've just talked to him a bit

MOTHER

He doesn't talk much

SISTER

No

MOTHER

*(Quietly.)*

But he is the child's father

SISTER

Think so

MOTHER

That's good

SISTER

I think so

*(Pause.)*

MOTHER

I'm too tired to make dinner

*(Short pause. She makes a grimace.)*

Now it's beginning to hurt again

I suppose I'd better go to bed

again

*(Heavy steps are heard in the hall, going up the stairs.)*

Father seems to have had to go and lie down for a bit now

*(She laughs, short pause.)*

I think I must go and lie down a little more

You can go and get a bit of food yourself

SISTER

I can make something for myself

But you don't want anything

MOTHER

I'm not very hungry

Have something to eat

JON FOSSE

yourself  
You can fry yourself something

SISTER

Yes I can I suppose  
*(Short pause.)*  
But I'm not all that hungry  
either

MOTHER

*(Laughs.)*  
No you've eaten so many sweets

SISTER

I can cook something nice for supper  
instead

MOTHER

Yes let's do that  
*(Short pause. Questioningly.)*  
Beate went to bed

SISTER

I think so  
*(The SISTER goes out into the kitchen. The MOTHER stays sitting a little while, then gets to her feet and stumbles out into the hall, the door can be heard opening and closing again. Pause. Lights down.)*

II

*Lights up. Pause. The BOY comes into the room again, he looks about him, it looks as if he wants to apologise for coming. He goes and sits down in the sofa, picks up a newspaper, look at it a bit, looks about the room. He gets up, goes over to the window, looks out, where it has now become completely dark, then he goes and has a look at the pictures on the sideboard and on the wall again. He listens to see if anyone is coming. He goes and sits down on the sofa, takes out his book, leafs through it. He looks up again, looks about the room. Steps are heard, the hall door opens and the GIRL comes in.*

GIRL

*(Smiles somewhat shamefacedly at him.)*

I don't seem to be on very good form  
today

*(The BOY looks at her.)*

It's going to

*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

Yes

GIRL

Where are the others

BOY

I don't know

*(Pause.)*

I just went out for a walk

When I got back there was no-one here

GIRL

I suppose they're lying down having a rest

*(Short pause.)*

And my sister has probably gone down to the kiosk

*(Laughs a bit. The BOY nods. The GIRL looks at him, smiles.)*

I'm better now

*(The BOY nods again, the GIRL goes and sits down beside him. He looks down into his book. Pause.)*

JON FOSSE

BOY

Your father has come home

GIRL

You've talked to him

BOY

*(Nods.)*

Depends what you call talked

I don't think he likes me

Neither do you

You want me to go

*(The GIRL looks at him.)*

Just say

If you want me to go

just let me know

GIRL

No

*(Calmly.)*

That's just what I don't want

*(A bit dejectedly.)*

But you don't care about me

For you it's all the same

whether you're here or not

For you it's all the same

*(Short pause.)*

You've never cared about me

I had to come out here on my own

Even though you knew how I dreaded

coming out here to my parents

I can't stand being here

*(Short pause.)*

And I was going along alright

and now we're starting again

*(She sighs.)*

BOY

Your father doesn't like me

GIRL

He's got nothing against you either  
He's just like that

BOY

I could just go

GIRL

*(Breathing in deeply.)*

If that's what you want

*(Quickly.)*

What are you waiting for

You don't care about me

and you aren't going to care about the child  
either

Just go

BOY

*(Resignedly, calm.)*

Do we have to carry on like this

GIRL

It's you that's like this

I was quite cheerful I was

BOY

Oh yes you're just sweetness and light

GIRL

Well I care about you anyway

BOY

Can't we stop

GIRL

You've never cared about me

BOY

Alright I haven't then

*(Pause.)*

And now we have to be here

And I don't exactly think

*(Interrupts himself.)*

JON FOSSE

GIRL

Go on say it

BOY

Alright alright

GIRL

It was you who thought

*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

Well we have to put ourselves somewhere

GIRL

Exactly

*(Ironic.)*

And now you've met my parents too

*(Laughs briefly. Pause.)*

Were they how you imagined?

BOY

I don't know

GIRL

You always say you don't know

*(Pause. She looks at the BOY. A bit pleased.)*

He's kicking again

*(She puts her hand over her stomach, keeps looking at the BOY, he nods at her.)*

He's kicking a real lot

Do you want to feel

*(She sits as before, disappointed.)*

You don't care

BOY

*(Sits closer to her, puts his arm about her shoulders.)*

Can't we

*(She looks at him, and he presses her close. She leans against him.)*

GIRL

Yes

*(Short pause.)*



It's just so difficult  
 I can't bear being in this house  
 To come back  
 Everything gets like before  
 I can't be here  
*(Steps are heard, the GIRL looks up, waits.)*  
 No there's no-one there

BOY

*(Presses her close.)*  
 Just someone walking  
*(Pause. Comfortingly.)*  
 We won't be here so long  
 We just have to be here  
 until we can get  
 our own place to live

GIRL

But we won't get somewhere  
 We haven't got any money

BOY

We'll manage  
*(Laughs a bit.)*  
 We can't very well  
*(Interrupts himself.)*

GIRL

Yes  
*(Short pause. The GIRL looks up at him.)*  
 But have you thought what the child will be called  
*(He shakes his head. She leans up against him, then struggles to her feet, she goes away to the window, stands and looks out, some steps are heard, they look at each other. Pause. Then the GIRL goes over to a bag that stands in a corner, gets a few children's clothes out of the bag.)*  
 We have got  
*(Interrupts herself. She takes a look at the clothes.)*  
 We have got some things for the child  
*(She holds up the baby clothes for the BOY to see.)*

JON FOSSE

BOY

*(Nods.)*

Yes

GIRL

*(Looks at the baby clothes.)*

Quite nice

*(Pause.)*

And not so long to go now

*(She thinks.)*

Perhaps just one day

*(Suddenly a bit pleased.)*

Perhaps even less

*(Enthusiastic.)*

Perhaps it will happen today already

*(Even more enthusiastic.)*

Perhaps the baby will be born today

*(She feels.)*

The waters

Maybe my waters have gone

*(Draws it out.)*

in this second

Right now

Now

*(Pause.)*

No, not just now

*(Pause. She holds up the baby clothes in front of her, starts walking about the room. Laughs a little.)*

BOY

*(A little perturbed, mystified by the way her mood changes so quickly, at the same time pleased.)*

It'll be fun

GIRL

Yes

BOY

But you haven't given birth yet

GIRL

No but soon

*(A bit afraid.)*

And you have to be there  
 You do realise  
*(She goes towards him, sits down beside him.)*  
 that I don't want to give birth alone  
 of course  
 You  
 have to be there  
*(She gets up again, walks backwards a little across the floor.)*

BOY

*(Laughs a bit.)*  
 But I can't bear the sight of blood

GIRL

But you will be there anyway

BOY

Yes  
 I'll be there

GIRL

*(A bit accusingly.)*  
 I could have given birth today  
 while you were away  
*(He nods. She looks rather worriedly at him, accusing again, but also conciliatory.)*  
 I could have  
*(He nods again. Short pause.)*  
 And why couldn't we  
 come out here together today  
 I had to take the bus on my own  
 I can't bear being here  
 And I had to come out here on my own  
 talk to mum  
 Be here alone with my mum

BOY

But I had to  
*(Interrupts himself.)*

GIRL

Yeah yeah

*(She folds up the baby clothes, goes and puts them in the bag again. He goes over to the window, stands there, looks out.*

*Pause.)*

Hey em

*(He turns towards her.)*

Hey em

BOY

Yes

GIRL

No nothing

BOY

Go on say

GIRL

No

*(Draws it out somewhat.)*

BOY

Shall I say it

*(She nods.)*

Have you thought anymore  
about what the child shall be called

Is that what you were going to ask

*(She nods, looks at the BOY, he shakes his head.)*

Your father

GIRL

*(Interrupts him.)*

But the child has to be called something

The child has to have a name

It's got to be called something

You do realise

The child has to be called something

We can't just

*(Laughs a bit.)*

not call it anything

*(The BOY starts laughing a bit too. She is a little irritated.)*

So

BOY

No of course

GIRL

I've thought of loads of names

I've written down

*(Takes a scrap of paper out of her pocket.)*

some names on a piece of paper

*(She goes over to him.)*

Boys' names on the left

*(She hands the paper over to him.)*

Because I think it's going to be a boy

And girls' names on the right

*(She looks at him.)*

You see

*(He nods. Short pause.)*

What do you think

BOY

I don't know

GIRL

Well say something then

The child has got to have a name

Everyone has to have a name

We have to think of a name

BOY

Yes

GIRL

A nice name

*(He nods.)*

BOY

And your mother hasn't told your father  
you're going to have a baby

GIRL

Of course she has

It's only my sister thinks she hasn't

JON FOSSE

BOY

Yes

GIRL

She has

BOY

Yes

GIRL

I'd rather the child wasn't  
called something everyone is called  
But it shouldn't have an unusual name  
either

BOY

Well I don't know

GIRL

*(A bit upset.)*  
I see  
But you could say something  
even you  
Something or other  
Just say a name

BOY

Gunnar<sup>2</sup>

GIRL

*(Smiles.)*  
You can't seriously  
be suggesting we call our son Gunnar  
*(He shrugs his shoulders. A bit sad again.)*  
You're just saying any old thing  
you are  
just say the first name you think of  
*(Short pause.)*

BOY

*(Trying to be interested.)*  
But we could call the child after someone

2 Pronounced Gun-nar (the 'u' sound is like the 'oo' of 'good')

GIRL

*(Ironic.)*

Yes I suppose we'll call the child  
 after my mother or my father  
 That's what you mean I suppose

BOY

No I don't know

*(Short pause.)*

Maybe my grandmother  
 Me and my grandmother were such good friends

GIRL

But then it has to be a girl

BOY

Yeah

GIRL

*(Draws it out.)*Anna<sup>3</sup>

Wasn't that what your grandmother was called

No I don't know

It's so kind of

*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

It's a nice name

GIRL

Yes it is quite nice

but

BOY

It was just something I thought

GIRL

Yes it's quite nice

But what about Kristina

BOY

No

3 Pronounced An-nah

GIRL

But that's my grandmother's name  
I've only heard about her  
I never met her  
She died when I was very little  
But Mum says she was nice  
It was  
(*Interrupts herself.*)

BOY

It's so sort of  
(*Interrupts himself.*)

GIRL

What about Liv<sup>4</sup>

BOY

(*Questioningly.*)  
Liv  
(*The GIRL nods.*)  
No I don't know  
(*Short pause.*)

GIRL

Besides it's bound to be a boy

BOY

Yes

GIRL

Have you any other suggestions

BOY

Not yet anyway  
But I'm sure I can think of something  
There's no rush is there

GIRL

But we have to think of a name

BOY

The child isn't born yet

4 Pronounced Leave



## GIRL

No but we have to decide  
 on a name  
 before the child is born

## BOY

Let's see the child first  
 It will have to have a name that suits it  
*(Pause.)*  
 It will have to be Bjarne

## GIRL

Don't joke  
*(Pause.)*  
 But we can narrow it down to some names  
 that we can chose from later  
 I've written down loads of names  
*(She points to the scrap of paper which he is sitting holding in  
 front of him.)*  
 I've written down those girls names  
 Hanne<sup>5</sup>  
 That will almost be like calling it after your grandmother  
 Anna  
 Anne<sup>6</sup> would be even more similar  
 But I don't really  
 like that name  
 But Hanne  
 Marie I think is nice  
 Johanne<sup>7</sup> too  
 But its so old fashioned  
 Sina<sup>8</sup>  
 Perhaps that's a more unusual type of name  
 But I have written it down  
*(She looks at the BOY.)*  
 Well look then  
 You can read it yourself

5 Pronounced Han-neh

7 Pronounced Yo-han-neh

6 Pronounced An-neh

8 Pronounced See-nah

*(He reads through the note.)*

BOY

But you haven't included Anna

GIRL

*(Comes and sits down next to him.)*

No I don't really like it

BOY

What's so wrong with that name

GIRL

No

*(Draws it out.)*

BOY

It's what my grandmother was called

*(Short pause. He looks at the list.)*

Not so many names that I like

GIRL

Not amongst the boys names either

BOY

No

Kristian<sup>9</sup>

Maybe I quite like Kristian

GIRL

You don't seem to like anything

BOY

Alright then

Ådne<sup>10</sup>

Or what do you think of Olav

GIRL

Olav eh

9 Pronounce Kriss-tjan

10 Pronounce Ord-neh

BOY

It's what my grandfather was called

GIRL

You don't mean that our son should be called Olav

You're just joking

*(Dejected.)*

You don't care

BOY

Olav's a nice name isn't it

GIRL

You don't mean it

*(Sad again.)*

Can't you care just a bit

BOY

Why not

What's so wrong with Olav

GIRL

Don't be stupid

*(Enthusiastic.)*

He's kicking again now

*(She holds her stomach.)*

Feel

Come and feel it

You must feel too

*(He hesitates.)*

Feel

Come

Come on then feel

*(He puts a hand on her stomach. She moves his hand.)*

Can you feel anything

*(She looks at him.)*

No

Press a little harder

*(He nods. She looks at him.)*

You feel it

*(He nods again.)*

You feel how he's kicking

*(He nods, smiles. They sit for a while without saying anything.)*

BOY

But listen

*(He retrieves his hand.)*

GIRL

Yes

BOY

I don't think your father likes me

GIRL

He neither likes nor dislikes you

BOY

But

*(Interrupts himself.)*

He doesn't talk to me

GIRL

He's like that

He's just tired

BOY

He doesn't talk to me

He says He

Is He hungry

he says

And he hasn't asked my name

GIRL

We won't be here very long

BOY

No

*(He looks at her.)*

Listen

GIRL

Yes

BOY

I've been thinking about children that aren't born yet  
*(Pause.)*

GIRL

*(Laughs a bit.)*  
 Yes I expect you have

BOY

Yes

GIRL

Yes

BOY

Yes  
 I've been thinking  
 that there's a place where the children  
 are gathered before they are born  
 where the children are in their souls  
 But they're talking to each other anyway  
 in their own way  
 with their angel language  
*(The BOY looks at the GIRL and smiles.)*  
 And they are thinking eagerly about  
 where they're going to end up  
 Because they don't decide that themselves of course  
 And then it's decided where they shall go  
 For one child after another  
 it's decided  
 I'm going to Norway  
 says one child

GIRL

You have been thinking

BOY

Yes I have  
 And then it's decided for another child  
 I'm going to India  
 says that child then

And one child who wanted to go to Sweden  
ends up in Finland

GIRL

Yeah yeah

BOY

A child who would like to live in a town  
ends up out in the country  
And finally when the child grows up  
it can at last live in a town  
And all the children are nervous  
about what their parents are going to be like  
Oh they're so nervous

GIRL

Then our child is going to be disappointed

BOY

And they all dread the birth  
Because it's not easy being born  
It's really difficult  
it is  
And whatever are the parents  
going to be like

GIRL

No choice in the matter

BOY

And whatever is the child going to look like

GIRL

Yeah with me as its mother

BOY

And a child can be poor  
or rich  
Beautiful or ugly  
Oh they're so nervous  
And already there inside the womb the child notices  
what the parents are like

GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

Poor child

BOY

Yes the child notices  
if it likes the parents or not  
if the parents have voices and souls  
which it can like  
or not

*(Short pause.)*

That's how it is

And I think

*(Interrupts himself.)*

GIRL

Stop it now will you  
It's just because you don't like me  
that you're thinking like that

BOY

The child is very tense  
I can see how tense this child is  
About seeing what we look like  
About seeing  
what this world

GIRL

Yes

BOY

*(Continues.)*

That it's coming to look like

GIRL

Yes

BOY

It's tense about seeing  
exactly where we live  
What we look like and are like

JON FOSSE

GIRL

Don't talk like that  
It makes me feel sad

BOY

You can tell how tense this child is

GIRL

*(Angry.)*  
Are you saying this to be nasty  
*(She looks at him, and he nods.)*  
Leave off now

BOY

All the unborn are in a heaven  
where all the unborn are  
Where the unborn are tense and still  
Oh how tense they are

GIRL

Stop it  
You sound like a book  
Do you have to  
*(Interrupts herself.)*

BOY

Because the unborn are people too of course  
Just as the dead are people  
If you want to be human  
you have to imagine humanity  
as being all the dead  
and all the unborn  
and all those who are living now

GIRL

Where did you read that  
*(The BOY looks at her, a bit wounded.)*

BOY

Don't you think it was nice

GIRL

Yeah



BOY

I get so  
*(Interrupts himself.)*

GIRL

*(Ironic.)*  
You're so clever  
Oh how clever you are

BOY

I don't think we're welcome here  
At least not me

BOY

Yeah yeah

BOY

But

GIRL

Where else are we going to go

BOY

Yeah no

GIRL

*(To cheer him up.)*  
Shall we go out  
Up on The Hill perhaps  
Then you'll feel the wind alright  
*(Short pause.)*  
We did mention it  
Shall we do it

BOY

But it's dark and it's raining

GIRL

We can go there anyway

BOY

Yes

GIRL

And if I walk  
it could just happen  
that the birth  
begins  
*(She laughs a bit. Steps are heard.)*

BOY

*(Looks at her.)*  
Someone's coming  
*(The GIRL nods. The hall door opens and the MOTHER comes in. She looks at the BOY.)*

MOTHER

This pain is dreadful  
But lying down doesn't help  
either

GIRL

We thought we'd go over to The Hill

MOTHER

*(Smiles.)*  
In this weather  
You really will get some fresh air  
*(She laughs a bit.)*

GIRL

Yes

MOTHER

And from The Hill maybe you can see  
a boat or two out at sea  
*(Looks at the GIRL questioningly.)*  
Have you talked to your father  
*(The GIRL shakes her head.)*  
No he's lying down resting now  
*(Questioningly.)*  
Your sister  
do you know where she is

GIRL

*(Shakes her head.)*

She's probably gone down to the kiosk

*(The MOTHER nods. She goes over to an armchair, sits down in it, she picks up the newspaper.)*

We'll go out for a bit then

Over to The Hill

MOTHER

Yes you do that

*(The GIRL and the BOY go out through the hall door, closing it behind them. Pause. Lights down.)*

### III

*Lights up. Pause. The MOTHER tries to get up out of the chair.*

MOTHER

It's absolutely dreadful this pain  
To think that I should be like this  
and there be no-one to help  
either

*(She lets herself fall back into the chair again.)*

No it's no good

*(Pause. She leans forwards over the table, gets a hold of the book the BOY has left behind him there, she looks at the book, leafs through it a bit, lays it back on the table. Steps are heard, the kitchen door opens and the FATHER comes in.)*

FATHER

*(Looks at the MOTHER.)*

I had a bit of a lie down

I seem to have fallen asleep for a bit too

MOTHER

That's more than I managed

It hurts terribly today

*(The FATHER goes out to the kitchen again, comes back with a coffee cup, he goes and sits down in the sofa, picks up the book the BOY has put on the table, leafs through it a bit, reads a little, then puts it back down on the table.)*

FATHER

Yes indeed

MOTHER

Could you sleep last night

FATHER

It was a bit

*(He shakes his head.)*

No I can't sleep

It's almost so that one dreads  
going to bed

MOTHER

Well I can't sleep either  
I just lie there in pain  
And if I'm lucky  
I get a few winks

FATHER

Yes  
*(Pause.)*  
So Beate has come home today  
I haven't talked to her yet

MOTHER

Yes she just stood there in the door suddenly  
*(She laughs a little.)*  
She didn't ring first  
just came  
*(Short pause.)*

FATHER

*(Questioningly.)*  
Do you know what he's called  
*(The MOTHER shakes her head.)*  
You haven't asked  
*(She shakes her head again.)*

MOTHER

He seems nice

FATHER

Oh yes  
*(Pause.)*  
Is Beate still upstairs resting

MOTHER

She went for a walk over to The Hill  
The two of them over there

FATHER

Yes there's a good wind up there now  
*(Pause. The MOTHER sighs.)*

JON FOSSE

MOTHER

No I'd better go back to bed again  
(*New pause.*)

FATHER

Did Beate go out long ago  
I'm tired too  
I ought to have got  
(*Interrupts himself.*)

MOTHER

Yes yes  
(*Pause. She looks at the FATHER.*)  
You know she's having a baby  
(*Short pause.*)

FATHER

No

MOTHER

Yep  
There's not long to go either

FATHER

So she's going to have a baby

MOTHER

(*Laughs.*)  
You're going to be a grandad

FATHER

And you've known for a long time

MOTHER

(*Laughs again.*)  
She could give birth any day now

FATHER

(*Questioning.*)  
And it's him who's the father

MOTHER

*(Laughs.)*

Yes I think so

FATHER

I see

MOTHER

It's good she's got a father for the child

FATHER

Yes

MOTHER

Things haven't been very easy for Beate

FATHER

But

MOTHER

No they haven't

MOTHER

But he

*(Interrupts himself.)*

MOTHER

Yes yes

FATHER

Are they going to be here long

I saw he had a suitcase with him

MOTHER

I don't know

They came today

First Beate

A few hours later he came

*(She looks at the FATHER.)*

I think it's him who's got the old car

*(The FATHER nods.)*

You saw it

*(He nods again.)*

JON FOSSE

FATHER

Yes yes

*(Pause.)*

But you don't know

MOTHER

*(Interrupts him.)*

No

She'll give birth to her child

And then they'll probably

*(Interrupts herself.)*

FATHER

And I suppose they're short of money

MOTHER

Very likely

*(The FATHER gets out his wallet, takes out a few notes.)*

FATHER

Yes yes

MOTHER

No Beate isn't very easy

FATHER

Beate

*(MOTHER nods.)*

No she isn't

Not at all

MOTHER

You were the one who fetched her  
that time

When they phoned

FATHER

Yes

*(Says it slowly.)*

MOTHER

What was it happened actually



FATHER

No don't talk about it

MOTHER

But wasn't it

FATHER

Yes yes

MOTHER

No you never want to tell me anything

FATHER

There's nothing to tell

MOTHER

Well you didn't help much  
bringing up the children  
(*The FATHER sighs.*)

FATHER

I'm tired

MOTHER

(*Interrupts him.*)  
Yes yes

FATHER

I think he  
(*Interrupts himself.*)

MOTHER

He

FATHER

Oh well  
(*The FATHER gets up, starts pacing the floor.*)  
No I'm going to have to go to bed  
(*Steps are heard, the hall door opens and the GIRL comes in,  
her hair wet. The FATHER looks at her, rather pleased.*)  
So you're looking in on us  
That's nice

*(Short pause.)*

But you'd better dry your hair

I can fetch a towel

*(FATHER goes out into the hall.)*

GIRL

*(To her MOTHER.)*

Terrible weather

*(The FATHER comes in again with a towel, passes it to the GIRL, she starts drying her hair. The BOY comes in, his hair is also wet. The FATHER looks at the BOY and goes out into the kitchen.)*

MOTHER

Well you'd better come and sit down

*(She points to the sofa with her crutch.)*

GIRL

*(To the BOY.)*

You'd better dry your hair too

*(The GIRL passes the towel to the BOY and he dries his hair. To the MOTHER.)*

Yes the weather was terrible

*(The BOY goes and sits down in the sofa, puts the towel on the sofa. The GIRL goes over to the window, and stands looking out into the darkness. Short pause.)*

Yes my God what a wind

BOY

*(Nods.)*

Yes

*(Pause. To the MOTHER.)*

The weather's rough out there

MOTHER

*(Starts laughing.)*

Yes its always windy out here

Wind and storm

BOY

Yes

MOTHER

And now you're to be a father  
*(The BOY nods and looks down.)*

GIRL

*(Comes and sits down in the sofa, looks at the MOTHER, slightly contemptuously, but also a little teasing.)*  
 And you're going to be a grandmother

MOTHER

Yes I am aren't I  
*(She laughs.)*

GIRL

Where's my sister

MOTHER

*(Laughs.)*  
 No I don't know  
 She's gone down to the kiosk  
*(She looks at the GIRL.)*  
 It's ages since you were home last

GIRL

You've said that often enough today

MOTHER

Yeah yeah

GIRL

*(Looks at the MOTHER.)*  
 Do you want me to go

MOTHER

*(Laughs.)*  
 Looking like that  
 No no  
*(She looks at the BOY.)*  
 Yes it's always windy out here

BOY

Yes  
*(Pause. He takes his book from the table, opens it.)*

JON FOSSE

MOTHER

Yes it's always bad weather out here

BOY

*(Looks up from his book.)*

Yes

MOTHER

Yes indeed

*(The BOY nods. The FATHER comes in from the kitchen, goes over to the window, looks out. To the BOY.)*

He

*(Nods towards the FATHER.)*

ought to have done a bit of reading

*(Laughs.)*

as well

FATHER

*(Breathes out, looks at the GIRL.)*

Yes it's raining properly now

*(The FATHER goes and sits down in the vacant armchair, the BOY begins to read his book again. The FATHER looks at the GIRL.)*

Yes it's a good while since

you were home last

I suppose you're going to be here some while  
now

GIRL

I don't know

FATHER

But you have money

GIRL

A bit

FATHER

And then of course he's going to

MOTHER

*(Interrupts the FATHER.)*

Yes yes

FATHER

*(To the GIRL.)*

And he's the same age

as you

*(The GIRL nods.)*

GIRL

But he has got a name

*(The MOTHER starts to laugh. Pause.)*

FATHER

No I'd better get to bed

It's going to be a long day tomorrow too

*(The BOY puts down the book in the GIRL's lap, points to something in the book, she reads, smiles.)*

MOTHER

What is it

GIRL

No it's nothing

*(The GIRL passes the book back to the BOY, he continues reading.)*

FATHER

*(Looks at the GIRL, kind of hesitates.)*

I think I'll go to bed

GIRL

Yes good night then

*(The FATHER stands up, goes over to the window, looks out, he goes and fetches the coffee cup which stands on the table, carries it out into the kitchen, comes back into the room.)*

FATHER

It's been a long day today

And it will be a long day tomorrow as well

*(Pause.)*

Good night then

*(The FATHER goes out into the hall, closes the door behind him, steps can be heard on the stairs. Pause. The hall door opens and the FATHER comes in again.)*

Beate

Can you come here a minute

*(She stands up, goes over to her FATHER. He puts his hand in hers, gives her something.)*

This is for you

*(She looks at the FATHER.)*

You probably don't have very much

GIRL

*(A bit embarrassed.)*

Thanks very much

*(The FATHER goes out again, leaving the door open behind him, the GIRL puts the money she has received in her back pocket, goes and sits back on the sofa.)*

MOTHER

Yep that's the way it is

*(The outer door opens and from the hall steps are heard.)*

It must be your sister

She's probably been down to the kiosk again

*(The SISTER comes in. The MOTHER looks at her, laughs, shakes her head.)*

You've been down to the kiosk again

SISTER

Yes do you want anything

*(She hands out a bag of sweets to her mother, who shakes her head, then the SISTER looks at the GIRL.)*

I met Bjarne

He said he was going to come up

It was so long ago he saw you

he said

*(The GIRL nods.)*

MOTHER

Yes it's a long time now since Bjarne was here

It was years ago

*(The GIRL clutches her stomach.)*

Is he kicking

GIRL

*(Nods.)*

He's kicking really hard

MOTHER

You're so big

it can't be very long before you give birth

no

GIRL

*(Looks at SISTER.)*

Do you want to feel it

*(The SISTER goes and sits down beside the GIRL, lays a hand on her stomach. The GIRL looks at the SISTER.)*

Can you feel anything

*(The SISTER nods. Short pause.)*

SISTER

I think it's a boy

GIRL

Me too

MOTHER

Since you're only girls

Three girls

GIRL

Have you heard anything from Anny

MOTHER

We had a card

I can fetch the card

*(The MOTHER gets onto her crutches, goes across the room, over to the sideboard, pulls out a drawer, rummages around to find the card.)*

GIRL

It would have been nice to see her again

SISTER

Yes

Let's hope she comes home soon

*(The MOTHER takes the card with her, goes and passes it to the GIRL, she looks at the card, reads, passes it to the BOY, he looks at the card, reads.)*

GIRL

*(Questioningly.)*

A long time since she was home

MOTHER

Yes it's a long time ago

I think she's coming home in the summer

SISTER

Did she say she was

*(The MOTHER shakes her head. Irritated.)*

You just think so

GIRL

You can't just think things like that

*(The BOY passes the card to the SISTER, but she shakes her head, he lays the card on the table.)*

MOTHER

Well maybe she said so

on the telephone once

I don't remember

*(There is a long knock on the door.)*

SISTER

*(Gets up.)*

Must be Bjarne

GIRL

*(She gets up too.)*

I can get it

SISTER

No I'll go

*(The MOTHER laughs. The BOY looks back at his book. The GIRL goes towards the hall door, the SISTER going after her.)*



GIRL

*(To the SISTER.)*

No I want to open it

You sit down

*(The SISTER stays standing in the room. The GIRL opens the hall door.)*

SISTER

Don't be silly

GIRL

No I want to go

*(Starts laughing.)*

SISTER

*(Laughs too.)*

No I'll go

GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

We can both go

*(The SISTER takes the GIRL by the arm, they open the hall door and go out.)*

MOTHER

*(Explaining to the BOY.)*

Bjarne and Beate were childhood friends

*(He looks up from his book, nods.)*

It was a long time since they last saw each other

*(Pause.)*

GIRL

*(From the hall.)*

So is it you

How nice to see you

*(Short pause. The MOTHER gets up onto her crutches, goes over to the window, looks out.)*

MOTHER

*(To the BOY.)*

Yes it's really raining now

Dark and cold

it is

JON FOSSE

BJARNE

*(From the hall.)*

Long time

GIRL

*(From the hall.)*

Give us a hug

*(Short pause.)*

MOTHER

*(To the BOY.)*

Yes the rain's terrible

SISTER

*(From the hall.)*

Don't start snogging now

MOTHER

*(Quickly.)*

Raining and raining

*(The MOTHER looks at the BOY, shakes her head, drags herself across the floor on her crutch again, sits down in the armchair again. She looks at the BOY. Short pause.)*

My daughters have grown really big now

Now one of them's even going to be a mother

And you're to be a father

*(She laughs a bit. Questioningly.)*

Are you pleased

*(He shrugs his shoulders.)*

It's going to be fun

*(The SISTER comes in.)*

SISTER

*(Laughs.)*

They're out there snogging

She's mad

GIRL

*(From the hall.)*

No we are not

*(BJARNE and the GIRL come in, he is somewhat older than the others, she has taken his arm. The BOY and BJARNE nod to each other.)*

MOTHER

*(Claps her hands together.)*  
 Well now if it isn't Bjarne  
 Long time no see  
 Lovely to see you again

BJARNE

Yes  
 It's a long time since we were little

MOTHER

*(Laughs.)*  
 Yes you're right there

GIRL

*(Looks at the BOY, explains.)*  
 Bjarne and I were best friends

SISTER

But that wasn't until you were a little older  
*(Interrupts herself.)*

GIRL

We've known each other since we were small  
*(BJARNE goes and sits in the empty armchair, the GIRL goes and sits down on the armrest of his chair, she looks at BJARNE. Pause.)*  
 You still live out here

BJARNE

When I'm home  
*(The GIRL nods.)*

MOTHER

It's nice that you've looked in Bjarne  
 You're not home very often

JON FOSSE

BJARNE

Pretty rare

*(Short pause.)*

But it's nice to be home again

MOTHER

Oh I've got a terrible pain

BJARNE

*(To the MOTHER questioningly.)*

You're not well

MOTHER

*(With a loud voice.)*

Well?

No

*(She gets to her feet.)*

GIRL

*(To BJARNE.)*

And now you're home

do you still stay up in your room

BJARNE

Yes

*(Draws it out, he looks up at the GIRL.)*

I suppose I do yeah

GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

It hurts a bit sitting here

*(Looks at BJARNE, smiles.)*

Can I sit on your knee for a bit

BJARNE

*(A bit flirtatiously.)*

Of course you can

but

*(He nods over at the BOY. The GIRL sits on his knee. He puts his arm around her back.)*

You alright there?

*(The GIRL nods.)*

MOTHER

*(Somewhat embarrassed.)*

No I'd better

*(Interrupts herself. To BJARNE.)*

It's nice to see you again

but I'd better get to bed

BJARNE

*(Looks at the MOTHER.)*

Yes it was nice to see you again

*(He looks at the GIRL, puts his hand lightly on her stomach.)*

And you're going to be a mother already

GIRL

Yes

*(He strokes her stomach a little.)*

stop it

BJARNE

*(Looks over at the BOY.)*

And you

BOY

Yes

BJARNE

You're not so old either

GIRL

Almost as old as me

*(She looks at the BOY.)*

Bjarne and I spent a lot of time together

*(She laughs.)*

MOTHER

No I'd better go

*(Pause. She looks at the BOY.)*

Maybe I can show you the room

where you two are going to sleep

*(The BOY nods.)*

SISTER

*(Hastily.)*

I can do it

MOTHER

Yes so I don't have to drag myself up the stairs

*(The BOY nods again. The MOTHER gets to her feet with difficulty, she goes towards the hall door.)*

Well goodnight then

*(She looks at the GIRL.)*

No it's not every day I get to see you

no

*(She looks at BJARNE.)*

Nor you either

for that matter

*(She laughs a bit.)*

Well goodnight then

*(She nods to the BOY, then goes out, leaves the hall door open behind her, we can hear a door opening and then closing again.)*

GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

I'm glad she's gone to bed

BJARNE

There's nothing wrong with your mother

GIRL

I didn't mean it like that

SISTER

*(Looks at the BOY.)*

I can show you the room

*(He nods, gets up, takes the book with him, walks to the middle of the room. The GIRL puts her arm around BJARNE's neck, she looks at the BOY.)*

GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

Then Bjarne and I can

*(Interrupts herself.)*

while you two are upstairs

SISTER

We'll bear it in mind

*(Looks at the BOY, laughs.)*

Won't we

BOY

Yes yes

GIRL

*(Tauntingly.)*

Have a nice time then

*(To BJARNE.)*

Because we're going to anyway

Aren't we

BJARNE

Us yeah

BOY

*(Looks at BJARNE.)*

That's fine

GIRL

*(To BJARNE.)*

How are you

BJARNE

Pretty good

*(Short pause.)*

SISTER

*(Takes the BOY by the arm, laughs.)*

Lets go

*(The BOY nods.)*

Let them sit there talking

or whatever it is they want to do

*(The BOY remains standing there a moment, hesitates.)*

Come on then

*(The BOY and the SISTER go out by the hall door, closing it behind them, we can hear them go up the stairs. BJARNE and the GIRL look at each other, a bit embarrassed.)*

BJARNE

So you're going to be a mother

*(The GIRL nods.)*

You came out here today

*(She nods again.)*

GIRL

I don't really like it much out here

But

We haven't got hold of anywhere else to live and

*(Interrupts herself.)*

Well you know

*(The GIRL gets up from his knees, goes and sits on the sofa.*

*Short pause.)*

I'd told my mum I was going to have a baby

BJARNE

Yes

GIRL

But she hadn't told Dad

At least my sister says she hadn't

But I think she must have done anyway

BJARNE

Maybe

*(Pause.)*

Alright otherwise?

GIRL

Yes

*(Draws it out.)*

BJARNE

*(Points to the ceiling, laughs.)*

They're taking their time



GIRL

*(Laughs.)*

Yes I hope so

*(BJARNE gets up and goes over to the sofa, sits down beside the GIRL, she lies down, with her head in his lap. Silence.**After a while we hear the SISTER coming and the hall door opens, she comes into the room.)*

SISTER

He said he wants to go to bed

Wanted to read

*(The SISTER goes and sits in the armchair. Silence.)*

Shall we play cards

GIRL

No I can't be bothered

SISTER

I just asked

BJARNE

He likes reading

GIRL

He's always reading

SISTER

*(Laughs.)*

He's been sitting reading all day

BJARNE

Huh reading

*(The GIRL and the SISTER laugh.)*

SISTER

But can't we play cards

GIRL

Let it drop will you

SISTER

I don't know what you're so miserable for

*(Pause. Silence.)*

Well then I'll just go to bed

JON FOSSE

BJARNE

We could have played a bit of cards

GIRL

No I can't be bothered

SISTER

I'll go to bed then

*(The GIRL gets up.)*

Well goodnight then

*(She goes out through the hall door, closes it behind her. Long pause.)*

GIRL

I'm a bit tired too

BJARNE

*(Gets up, goes over to the window, looks out.)*

It's raining and it's windy

as usual

*(Pause.)*

GIRL

Come here

*(He looks at the GIRL, goes and sits down in the armchair again. Steps are heard, a door opens, after a while the kitchen door opens and the FATHER comes in, half dressed. The GIRL sits down on the sofa.)*

FATHER

*(A bit embarrassed.)*

Oh look it's Bjarne

I lay there unable to sleep

I had to come and get a drink

So you're paying a little home visit as well

Yes indeed

BJARNE

Well you have to don't you

FATHER

Yes that's right

*(Pause.)*

It's very nice of you to drop by

BJARNE

Have to don't you

FATHER

Yes indeed

*(Looks at BJARNE.)*

You going to be home for a bit now

BJARNE

Oh yeah

FATHER

You have to don't you yes

*(Short pause.)*

But I'd better be getting to bed

We can speak another time

We'll meet I expect

BJARNE

Oh yes

I'll be home for a bit now

FATHER

Well then

No tomorrow's another day

*(The FATHER nods to BJARNE, goes out again, closes the kitchen door behind him. Pause.)*

GIRL

I'm a bit tired

BJARNE

Well I can stay sitting here

if you go to bed

*(He laughs a little.)*

GIRL

But I don't want to go to bed

BJARNE

No just say

if you want me to go

*(Pause.)*

Odd though that your mother  
didn't tell your father you were going to have a baby  
*(The GIRL nods. BJARNE gets up and goes over and sits next  
to her in the sofa, he puts his arm around her shoulders and  
squeezes her close. The GIRL lays her head on his shoulder,  
they sit like that, staring straight ahead. Pause. He takes his  
hand down and lays it on her breast.)*

GIRL

Stop it  
*(He just leaves his hand there.)*  
Don't

BJARNE

Just like the old days  
*(She laughs briefly. They lie down on the sofa, and lay facing  
one another, they lay there and hold onto one another. Pause.  
Steps are heard.  
They sit up. The GIRL straightens her hair. They look at each  
other. The hall door opens and the BOY comes in, he has his  
overcoat on, goes and sits down in one of the armchairs. Pause.)*

GIRL

*(Carefully.)*  
You've been in bed reading

BOY

Yeah I tried to read a bit  
*(Pause. To the GIRL questioningly.)*  
Have the others gone to bed  
*(She nods.)*

BJARNE

Yes it looks like it  
*(Pause.)*  
What's the book you're reading

BOY

Just a book  
*(The BOY gets up.)*

GIRL

Are you going to bed again

BOY

Yes

*(He draws it out. The BOY goes into the hall, closing the door behind him. BJARNE looks at the GIRL, questioningly. The GIRL shrugs her shoulders. BJARNE gets up and goes over to the window. The front door opens and closes again.)*

BJARNE

He's gone out

GIRL

I don't think my father likes him

BJARNE

No

*(BJARNE goes and sits down beside the GIRL on the sofa.)*

GIRL

I think I'd like to go to bed

BJARNE

Yes

GIRL

I'm sure he'll come back

*(She gets up, goes over to the window, stands looking out into the darkness.)*

BJARNE

I

*(Interrupts himself. Stands up.)*

GIRL

*(A bit afraid, looks at BJARNE.)*

Where are you going

BJARNE

No well I'd better think about getting home

*(The GIRL nods.)*

But

*(Interrupts himself. He goes and opens the hall door.)*

GIRL

I'm sure he'll come back

*(Laughs.)*

And if he's gone for good I can call my son Bjarne

*(Laughs. Pause.)*

BJARNE

*(From the door.)*

I think perhaps I'd better see about getting home

*(The GIRL nods.)*

GIRL

I'll see you to the door

BJARNE

No need

GIRL

You go then

*(BJARNE nods.)*

BJARNE

Yes

*(BJARNE goes out into the hall. We can hear the front door open and then close. The GIRL remains standing and looking out into the darkness. Pause. Lights down. Curtain.)*

*The End.*

THE GUITAR MAN  
(Gitarmannen)





# Characters

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A MAN  
with a guitar



*A middle-aged man in an old overcoat comes walking slowly in. He sways as he walks. His hair is wet and uncombed. On his hands he has grey woollen gloves without fingers. He carries a worn-out guitar case. He brushes his free hand over his hair, looks around.*

MAN: Oh well

Inside at last

Aye it's cold today

Terribly cold

*(He walks back and forth a bit.)*

But it's warm here

Good and warm

*(He stops. Sets his guitar case on the floor, supports himself against it. Pause.)*

Here it's good and warm

*(He looks around.)*

But for me I guess it's

always the same

If only it doesn't get too cold

Because it's not

*(He shakes his head.)*

good to be freezing

Otherwise of course there's

no difference any more

for me

Everything goes the same way

Day out and day in

I stand there in my subway

and play my guitar

sing my songs

the same songs over and over again

And people they walk past me

all day long people walk past me

some walk in towards town

some walk out from town

The whole day people walk past me

*(He gestures with his free arm, moves it back and forth, shows how people walk past him all day.)*

Towards me

Past me

The whole day people walk past me

In my subway

they all walk by

They walk past me

The whole time while I stand there playing

people come towards me

people walk away from me

Every single day they walk past me

And a lot of the same ones walk past me

every single day

And I sing for them every single day

And they usually bow their heads down

when they walk past me

It's as if they're ashamed

about always having to walk past me

and hear me sing

and now in the winter they have to see me

standing there freezing

and strumming chord after chord on my guitar

and singing the same songs

Day after day they see me standing there singing

and every single day I sing them the same songs

while they

as usual

walk past me

Come towards me

Walk away from me

And they're ashamed

when they walk past me

Because the ones who walk past me every single day

they almost never give me any money

Only if they walk past me on a special day

Independence Day

for instance

or a day when they've had something to drink  
 do they give me a few bob  
 On such days too somebody can  
 give me a good deal of money  
 But on ordinary days they just walk past me  
 with their heads bowed  
 They walk past me and feel ashamed  
 They walk past me with their heads bowed  
 while I stand there singing  
 and strumming the best known chords  
 on my guitar  
 They walk past me and feel ashamed  
 (*Questioningly.*)  
 And is it me they're ashamed of  
 Or are they ashamed of themselves  
 Why are they ashamed like that  
 In long lines  
 they walk past me every single day  
 and they hear me sing  
 Men  
 Women  
 Children  
 Old folks  
 While I stand there in my subway  
 and play my guitar  
 they walk past me  
 And at my feet  
 my guitar case stands open  
 And some of them drop some coins down  
 into my guitar case  
 But most of them don't  
 I stand there singing  
 I can stand there singing by the hour  
 Not that I know so many songs  
 And actually I guess I don't like singing  
 on the whole  
 And actually I guess  
 I don't like music either

*(Pause.)*

Not any more

But earlier on I guess I liked music

Then there wasn't anything else

I liked as well as music

*(Laughs a bit dejectedly.)*

And now I guess I don't like music any more  
not anything special

Not now

any more

*(Enthusiastically.)*

But I sing every single day  
and earn a few bob

at it

I sing my songs

I sing my songs for those who will hear

*(Laughs a bit.)*

but also for those who won't hear

And I'm grateful

if anybody will give me  
a few bob

Some coins from his pocket

If anybody will reach down in his pocket  
and take out some coins

and fling them

down in my guitar case

then I'm grateful for it

I sing my songs for money

That's the way I am

*(Short pause.)*

Of course it could have gone different for me

And that I'd end up

in just this town

so far up in the north

that I'd probably never have believed

But then that's what I did

*(He laughs.)*

I came here because of a woman

and I stayed here because of a son  
*(He laughs and shakes his head.)*  
That's how it is all right  
And I guess there's nothing wrong with that  
Because that's how it is  
You come because of a woman  
You stay because of a child  
*(Thinks it over.)*  
And of course because of a fear  
I can't put my finger on  
*(Pause.)*  
But somehow it sounds so important  
So  
It sounds almost beautiful  
*(He laughs a little.)*  
And not a word is true  
in a song lyric like that  
*(New pause.)*  
And so I'm a street musician  
Street singer  
they say  
They call me most often I guess  
just The Man with the Guitar  
My mother already called me that  
Whatever she  
may have meant by it  
*(Short pause.)*  
But anyway it was my mother who started  
calling me  
The Man with the Guitar  
Because when I was young I guess I was always playing  
the guitar  
I played before I went to school  
I played after I came  
home from school  
I played and played  
But did I get good  
at playing the guitar even if I practiced and practiced

No far from it  
*(He laughs, shakes his head a bit dejectedly.)*  
I've never been good at anything at all  
I've played a lot of guitar  
But good at guitar playing  
I guess I've never been  
I'm a lousy guitarist  
*(Short pause.)*  
despite the fact that I've played and played  
from the time I was a little kid  
nobody can claim I've become  
any kind of a good guitarist  
I'm a lousy guitarist  
*(Laughs a bit.)*  
And I'm a still lousier singer  
And the kids shout at me  
Guitar Man  
rattles like a can  
they shout  
Go back home  
where you came from  
Go on then  
That's how they shout  
at me  
the kids do  
And in the winter it can be they  
throw snowballs  
at me  
They throw snowballs I guess  
both at me  
and at my guitar  
And they shout at me  
And it can be too that they try to steal  
my money from me  
*(He slaps his hand against his coat pocket and coins jingle.)*  
I never got to be any big-time musician  
And I never managed to write my own songs  
I just play and sing



other people's songs

I stand in a subway

and play the guitar

And I sing with the voice I've got

*(He nods, laughs, picks up the guitar case, then walks around the room, still slowly and with swaying movements.)*

No I never got to be one of the big ones

I am and will remain The Guitar Man

A man with his guitar

A man who sings some songs

*(He walks over and places the guitar case against a bar counter, he pulls off his woollen gloves, puts them on the counter, he lifts his hands to his mouth, blows on his hands. Then he sits down on a bar stool, a glass of beer already stands on the counter. He takes a handful of coins from his coat pocket, lays them on the counter. He feels to see if there are more coins in his pocket, finds a couple more, lays them on the counter too.)*

Of course there are a few bob every day

If the weather's hot and sunny

the money's good

If it's cold and grey

it's not so good

And today

it was godawful cold

*(He blows on his hands again, then begins counting the money.)*

Four pounds

*(He counts on.)*

Five

*(He counts on.)*

Six pounds fifty

Not so bad

Not so bad on a day with weather like that

Because today it was

really cold

But anyway I played for a few hours

in spite of the cold

And today there was one man who gave me three pounds

Yes that happens too so it does  
And he's walked past me  
every single day  
for many years  
without giving me a penny  
Never before did he give me a single penny  
but today he stopped and stood there staring  
at me with round bright eyes  
I was there when my old lady was burned  
he said  
I nodded  
just kept on singing  
kept on strumming the usual chords on my guitar  
I saw my old lady put  
into the oven  
he said  
and he nodded to me  
Right in  
he said and flung his arm around  
(*He flings his own arm around.*)  
and he stared at me  
with big wet blue eyes  
that turned a bit grey then  
Right into the oven  
with her  
he said  
And out came some ashes  
That's all  
That's all that's left of my old lady  
and of her life  
he said  
and he flung his arms around  
(*He flings his own arms around.*)  
That's all  
the man said  
And I've heard you singing  
for so many years  
You can have some money

he said  
and then he pulled out his money  
and gave me three pounds  
No more than that  
and not less either  
Three pounds  
neither more nor less  
Here  
he said  
and dropped the money in my guitar case  
And I was finished with the song  
I've burnt my old lady up today  
and afterwards I had to have something to drink  
That's why I'm a bit drunk  
the man said  
and I nodded  
and I started one more song  
and I saw the man walk along my subway  
as I'd so often seen him walk before  
along my subway  
Often alone  
I saw him walking there  
And often with his wife  
(*He takes a swallow of beer.*)  
Yes that's how it is  
That's how a life is  
(*He begins singing, cautiously.*)  
Maybe he came  
to this town  
one time  
because  
of his wife  
And he stayed here  
because of her  
And now his wife's gone  
Now she's turned to ashes  
And I too came to this town  
one time

because of a woman

That's how it is

*(He stops singing.)*

But it's

*(Breaks off.)*

I'm no old man

Just almost

*(He laughs briefly.)*

Yes sir

I guess I'm mostly an old man

And definitely not a youngster

in any case

And one time I came to this town

because of a woman

Once upon a time

But now that's long ago

*(He gets down from the stool, bends and opens the guitar case, takes out the guitar. He sits down again on the stool, strums some chords, sings cautiously.)*

I came here because of a woman

Once upon a time I came to this town

Once upon a time

I came

to this very town

so far up north

And we lived our lives together

she and I

So far up north

And got ourselves a son from God

Our God gave us a son

*(He stops singing, still strums some chords on the guitar, then he strums the open strings, laughs a bit.)*

Yes sir

Well it went the way it went

And there's probably not much

to talk about

No

*(Draws it out.)*

Nothing to make a fuss about

*(Pause. He puts his hand on the counter, moves the pile of coins a little back and forth.)*

And there was some money  
today too

Though it was so cold

Not so much

but a bit

*(He fiddles around a bit with the coins. Then he strums a couple of chords more on the guitar, then strums the open strings again.)*

Everything turns out the way it turns out

And everything has its time

as he says

the wise man

in the Bible

*(He nods.)*

Yes that's how it is

*(Pause.)*

There is

a time for everything

A time for being together

A time for being alone

A time for living

A time for giving up

*(Short pause.)*

And sometime a man's got to give up you know

Everything can't just go on

A man must begin

A man must give up

*(He begins to fumble with the coins again.)*

And then two pounds fifteen for the beer

*(He lifts the glass, drinks, he runs his hand through his hair, shakes his head a little, then counts up two-fifteen in coins, pushes them across the bar-top, the coins he pushes over the edge of the bar, receives them in his other hand and then puts the coins into his coat pocket. He drinks a little more beer.)*

Not bad with the money today

in spite of the cold  
But it was cold playing  
Today it was damned cold  
*(He gets up, walks around a bit, carries the guitar in one hand.)*

The winters are cold  
for the man who plays outside  
But after all I live off  
this money

I gather in by playing  
So if it's cold  
of course I have to play  
It's hardly enough as it is  
I have to play in any case

But  
*(He looks up suddenly, as if he had thought of something. He stands there a moment looking up, his face slightly transfigured.)*

Yes  
I guess that's how it is  
Everything must  
*(Breaks off. He smiles to himself, takes up the guitar, strums some chords, begins to sing, cheerfully.)*

I came here because of a woman  
From a land with another language  
I was here because of a son  
*(He stops playing the guitar, short pause, goes on singing.)*

A son with another language  
And I hear the music come  
And I hear the music go  
I live here because of a child I had  
I live here and play and believe  
Every single day I play outside  
I play outside my oldest song  
And get some coins for it  
I live here in an old shed  
And get along with it in a way  
I get some money for my singing

And am satisfied with it

*(He stops singing. He begins to walk back and forth, with the guitar in one hand, he laughs briefly to himself.)*

It didn't turn out to be a lot

But well it turned out

the way it turned out

It could have turned out to be a lot

but well it just turned out

exactly

the way it turned out

*(He walks over to the bar, drinks more beer. Then he walks around carrying his guitar, he holds it up in position, is going to begin playing, but he changes his mind.)*

No I won't play any more

I've strummed the same chords

far too many times

*(He looks at the guitar, shakes his head.)*

No

Oh no

And what then

*(Quotes himself.)*

What then

What then

*(He begins to sing.)*

Everything turns out the way it turns out

What happens happens

There's no more to say

No I'm not so much

There's just what you see

A little hair

some old clothes

A beat-up face

Hair that soon will be thin and grey

A weary man

I guess is what you usually see

I guess I'm a weary man

I guess I'm not

much more than you see

*(He stops singing. Pause. He starts talking.)*

And I don't have anything special

Some clothes

A guitar

A kind of guts

maybe not the greatest

but I guess I do have guts

when I sing my songs

for the ones who want to hear

*(Short pause, adds smiling.)*

but also for the ones who don't want to hear

*(He begins singing again.)*

I'm no more than you see

And I know some songs

but not so many

Most that I knew I've forgotten

I'm no more than you see

I'm just what you can see

I'm just slow movements

I'm just wind and rain

I'm just deep despair and

*(Breaks off, stops singing.)*

No I'm not deep despair

That's just a

*(Short pause.)*

well just a pretty phrase

*(Short pause. He begins to sing again.)*

But I'm an old-fashioned song

A song I've never sung

I'm in my own despair

and I sing my song where I go

I sing of the day growing blue

I sing of the weary day

I sing of the best day

I sing of the greatest joy

I sing of the smallest need

I sing of the sorrow I feel

I sing of the coming day



*(He stops singing, begins to speak.)*

when I'll finally carry myself  
 away in somebody else's song  
 The day when I finally breathe  
 in the tongue that speaks my life  
 The song we're all going to hear  
 Me and the others and you

*(He goes and sits down in a corner, with his guitar on his lap, he sits there like that for a while. He gets up, then walks around a bit, walks over to the bar, sets down the guitar, which he leans against the bar, he takes off his coat, coins rattle in it, he lays the coat across the bar top, then walks around a little.)*

That's how it is I guess

*(Short pause, he nods to himself.)*

But everything has its time  
 as it says in the Bible  
 in the Book of Ecclesiastes  
 in the Bible  
 Everything has its time  
 A man

And a piece of music

*(He goes over and picks up the guitar, strums the open strings, then begins to unscrew one string, sounds the string with his thumb at the same time, he unscrews the string completely, sounds it and the string strikes against the guitar.)*

No I guess I can't stay there  
 I guess I can't keep standing  
 there in my subway  
 singing the old songs  
 Year out and year in  
 I came here

*(Thinks about it.)*

Well

it's a long time ago now  
 I came here from another country  
 And I stayed here  
 I lived with

a woman

but then

*(He laughs.)*

she didn't want to have any more to do with me

*(He laughs again, shakes his head.)*

And by that time we'd got ourselves a son

And we'd got ourselves

a little house

on the edge of the woods

down by the shore

But then she didn't want to have

any more to do with me

*(He shakes his head, laughs.)*

Any more to do with me

*(He begins to sing, tries to play the guitar some more, with the one string loose.)*

She didn't want to have any more to do with me

She said I just sat there

with my guitar

and I'd probably never

get anywhere

I was probably just going to sit there

with my guitar

I was never going to earn money

enough for me to

contribute my share

*(He finishes singing and playing. Pause. He speaks.)*

She herself was a teacher

*(Explaining.)*

She'd intended to paint pictures

but then she couldn't sell

a single picture

so she started as a teacher

She didn't earn so much

But enough to live on

*(He begins to sing again, a little bitterly.)*

But enough to live on

To live on

To live on  
 She went to work every single day  
 She came home from work  
 every single day  
 I was there at home  
 with our son  
 I sat there I guess with my guitar  
 She went  
 She came  
 She went  
 She came  
 She went to work  
 every single day  
 and then came home  
 to me and my guitar  
 and to our son  
*(Speaks again, explaining.)*  
 And she stopped painting her pictures  
 Not that it mattered so much  
*(He laughs.)*  
 No I probably shouldn't say a thing like that  
 But they weren't anything especially good  
 the pictures she painted  
 She painted pictures  
 indeed she did  
 And she had enough training  
 the kind they have in this country  
 so far  
 up north  
 But were the pictures good  
*(He shakes his head.)*  
 They were clear  
 her pictures  
 No more than that  
 They were clear pure and simple  
 but any art to speak of  
 indeed there was not  
*(Short pause.)*

And for that matter there was  
nobody who claimed there was either  
*(He laughs briefly. Pause. He looks down, he unscrews the  
string still more, unscrews it completely from its peg and it  
hangs there dangling.)*

She was

*(Corrects himself.)*

she is

a failed artist

That's how it is

But I guess they're needed

they too

*(Questioning.)*

If somebody's going to succeed

somebody has to fail too

I guess that's how it is

Maybe

Maybe that's how it is

*(He begins to sing, tries to play the guitar some more, with the  
one string dangling down.)*

I guess that's how it is

that if some are going to succeed

others must try

but not manage it

She was a failed artist

One day she asked me to go

I sing my songs for money

And I'm a lonesome man

I'm a very lonesome man

with his guitar

*(He stops singing and playing.)*

But someday a man has to give up

And I guess I can

gladly give up

I guess I can gladly give up

I guess I don't need to stay here

*(He looks at the guitar, laughs.)*

I'd rather

*(Breaks off.)*

Well what would I  
rather  
Go on say it  
I'd rather

*(He strikes another string on the guitar, then begins to unscrew that string too.)*

*Somewhat confidentially.)*

And I think my son  
has started to feel embarrassed  
over having me as his father  
Think of having a father who just stands there  
in his subway  
and plays  
on his guitar

*(He screws the string quite loose, plinks a bit on the loose string.)*

Well I guess I must just give up

*(He unscrews the string still farther, loosens it from its peg, so that it too hangs there dangling.)*

I have to give up  
I guess I've been  
of no use

and now I guess I have to give up

*(He stands there looking at the guitar, begins to sing, tries to play the guitar some more, with four strings.)*

I guess I just have to give up

I never should have come  
to this country I guess  
so far up north

But I did you know

And then I had my son

And then I stayed

And now my son's so much  
ashamed of me

*(He finishes singing and playing. He shakes his head, laughs, speaks.)*

I'm a failed man

Yes that's it exactly

*(He puts down the guitar. Walks out on the floor a bit, looks at the guitar. He stands there looking at the guitar. He walks over to the guitar again, he picks it up, he strums the open strings and then unscrews one string more, strums the strings again, he unscrews the string completely, loosens it too from its peg. He pulls on the next string, pulls and pulls, and the string snaps. He begins to laugh. He sets the guitar down against the bar, sits down on the stool, picks up the beer glass, drinks a bit. He supports his head in his hands. He sits there with his head in his hands. He looks up. Speaks consolingly.)*

Well there must be a way out

I don't need to stay

in this town

so far up north

*(Pause.)*

And God

he'll help me

all right

*(He laughs briefly, then suddenly walks out on the floor, begins to walk back and forth. Begins to sing.)*

Now I put my humble trust

in God in heaven

If God won't see to me

then I can

*(Breaks off, short pause, then continues singing.)*

I know a fortress

in heaven's kingdom

as grand as the shining sun

Folks there aren't poor or rich

*(He stops singing, laughs loudly.)*

Fine

Yes not the worst at all

Quite fine

Or

I've got a good relationship with My Lord

Well no not that but

I guess I have

I guess I believe I have a very good relationship  
with Our Lord

I don't know

*(Pause. Confidingly.)*

I pray a lot to Our Lord

And I believe that I'm in his grace

*(Pause.)*

When I stand there singing

well then I guess I also believe it has something  
to do with Our Lord

*(Laughs.)*

That's how

it is

I believe I've got a very  
good relationship with Our Lord

*(He walks over to the bar, picks up the beer glass, drinks a bit.  
He takes a tobacco pack from his back pocket, rolls himself a  
smoke, lights up.)*

Well then I guess I'll travel on

I guess it'll work out

*(He seats himself on the stool, sits there smoking.)*

I guess it'll work out

*(He looks at the guitar.)*

I've been trying long enough now

*(He stubs out the cigarette, rises, walks out on the floor. He  
stands there looking down at his shoes.)*

Yes well

That's that then

Enough's enough

as the saying goes

*(He sighs. Pause. Then he begins to walk around, he begins to  
sing.)*

I've travelled round in the lands of the world  
and sought a place to be

I've travelled round in others' tracks  
to many lands on earth

I've sought people and peace  
in many lands and towns

I've sought friendship  
shelter and rest  
in many lands and worlds  
Now I'm tired and long for  
an unknown place to be  
There I can get  
a little peace in my heart  
and a life to bear  
I move my foot  
I sing my song  
I open up  
my window  
I see my sorrow  
I see your sorrow  
I see we have to go away  
to an unknown town  
I see we have to travel off  
to an eternal town  
*(He stops singing, stands looking around him shamefaced.  
Pause. Then he begins to sing again.)*  
I'm a failed attempt  
made once at a better life  
I'm a failed idea  
filled with my own strange sorrow  
I was a man with a guitar  
who froze and sang  
in his long-drawn  
night  
I'm a man and  
all I have left  
is not worth remembering  
I walked and lay  
I stood and saw  
And soon then I'll have to travel off  
I'm travelling now  
to another place  
where you don't need money anymore  
I pray to my God



and know he will  
 give me his eternal rest  
*(He laughs, shakes his head. Sings on.)*  
 I pray to you God  
 come take my hand  
 and take me to your border  
 I pray to you  
 God  
 let me stay there  
 in your great mercy  
 Let me stay there  
 so heavy and free  
 in your great movement  
 Let me stay there  
 the way I once was  
 a nothing filled with something  
 Let me become  
 nothing  
 and let that song be heard  
 Let me become  
 an unknown sign  
 the others have to figure out  
 Let me become  
 a star-song  
 that the angels can sing  
 Let me rest this time  
 and let me meet again  
 my friend  
 that dog I lost  
 and let me stand and look around me  
 and not see a thing  
 He stops singing, shakes his head dejectedly  
*(Ironically.)*  
 Not see a thing  
 in the sky's blue ring  
 Feet take wing  
*(He walks over and drinks a little beer, lifts up the guitar, he  
 unscrews the last two strings, releases them from their pegs,  
 they too hang there dangling, he lays the guitar on the bar top,*

*he takes his coat, pulls it on, he puts on his gloves, he lifts the guitar case, walks around a little. He composes himself, leaning on the guitar case.)*

That's how it is

*(He begins to sing.)*

I haven't anything to lose

I haven't anything to win

I haven't anything left

of what gave me a future

But I'm my own night

And I guess I'm a language

nobody else understands

*(He stops singing, shakes his head.)*

Think of saying something like that

a language nobody else understands

*(Dejected about himself.)*

And why should anybody else

have to understand

the language

perhaps I had to be

*(He sighs.)*

No

No I guess it doesn't make any difference

I guess it doesn't

*(Breaks off.)*

But money

I've sure earned money today

*(He puts his hand down in his coat pocket, jingles the coins.)*

But not so much money

for a grown man to get by on

I've just earned a few pounds

Some coins

*(He takes his fist with some coins in it from his coat pocket. He drops a couple of them on the floor.)*

Some coins

hardly enough for a couple of glasses of beer

Just enough for a little food

*(He drops a couple more coins on the floor.)*

No I guess this won't do

*(He goes down on his knees, picks up the coins, puts them back in his coat pocket. He looks up.)*

It had to end like this

Anything else wouldn't have made sense

*(He smiles to himself.)*

But it's probably the likes of me  
who will inherit God's kingdom

*(He laughs, shakes his head.)*

That's what I'll believe

It's probably not the fine people

It's probably the likes of me

Or maybe

Maybe not

*(He laughs again and shakes his head, he rises, begins to walk around. He begins to sing.)*

And I'm always walking off

through towns and streets

I see people come and go

They're always walking off

through my subway

They come and go

They look at me

They always walk on

They go their way

They come and go

They always walk on

They

*(Breaks off, stops singing.)*

They

*(He looks around himself, walks over and sits down in the corner, with the guitar case between his knees. Pause. He looks at the guitar case.)*

What'll I do with this I wonder

I don't have a guitar anymore

So I guess I don't need

a guitar case anymore either

*(Pause.)*

But this is a fine guitar case

Old and fine

Maybe I should

*(He rises, places the guitar case against the wall.)*

No I don't need it

*(He walks around a little.)*

No what would I do with a guitar case

when I don't have a guitar

*(He laughs.)*

Everything has its time

A guitar case too

That's right

*(He walks, slowly and swaying, across the floor, he sees that a coin is left lying on the floor, he goes down on his knees, picks up the coin, puts it in his coat pocket. He rises, sees that there is a little beer left in the glass, he goes over then and drinks it down. He stands up straight, pulls his tobacco pack out of his back pocket, rolls himself a smoke, lights it, then walks slowly out. Curtain.)*

THE CHILD  
(Barnet)



# Characters

FREDRICK

ARVID

AGNES

EVELYN

DOCTOR

NURSE





## ACT ONE

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*Evening. A bus-shelter to the left, slightly set forward. A broad flight of stone steps to the right, set back a bit, leads up to some stone paving before a large, old double wooden door that needs painting, set in a cracked stone wall, a short distance up the wall to the left hangs a small, rusty iron cross. FREDRICK, in his thirties, enters from the left, he walks bent slightly forward, in a coat heavy with rain. His hair is also wet. He is carrying a white plastic bag containing empty and full beer bottles. He walks into the bus-shelter, places the plastic bag on the bench. He dries his face on his coat-sleeve. He runs his hand through his hair. Then he steps forward in the shelter and peers out at the rain. He goes back into the shelter, picks up the bag, the bottles clink. He sits down on the bench, places the bag on his lap. He looks aside thoughtfully, then begins to laugh. He rises, puts the bag on the bench, stands there looking at the bag. He nods contentedly, walks forward in the shelter, peers out. He shakes his head in resignation. He rummages around in his coat pockets and produces a packet of cigarettes, extracts a cigarette, puts it in his mouth. He looks down, a trifle shamefaced. He feels for his lighter in his coat pockets, but can't find it. He slaps his trouser pockets and then looks at the bag. He walks around in the shelter a bit, then he stops, looks out again. He again gropes in his coat pockets, thrusts his hands in his trouser pockets, feels about in all his pockets, but doesn't find the lighter. He looks at the bag again, walks over and sits down on the bench, lifts the bag, puts it on his lap, the bottles clink, he throws away his cigarette, takes out a bottle of beer, opens it by forcing the cap off on the edge of the bench. He takes a swig. He puts the bag back on the bench, gets up, takes the bottle with him and again walks forward in the shelter, he looks around, then he goes back into the shelter, sits down, places the bottle on the bench, stretches out his legs, leans back, pulls his coat around him, holds it close against his body. He sighs. He puts a hand up before his eyes, presses his head against the hand. He wipes his hand hard across his mouth and chin. He stares directly in front of himself. ARVID, a man in his fifties, wearing a large blue quilted jacket, with a closed umbrella in one hand, a*

*black satchel slung over his shoulder, comes walking in from the right and leans against the right-hand outer wall of the shelter. He stands there looking down.*

FREDRICK

Are you there

*(FREDERICK sits up.)*

I heard you were there

Do you have a light

*(ARVID continues standing as before.)*

Maybe I can get a light from you

*(FREDRICK rises, walks from the shelter, extends his hand palm-up.)*

Well it certainly hasn't stopped raining

*(FREDRICK sees ARVID leaning against the shelter.)*

Better come and sit down

*(FREDRICK points into the shelter.)*

There's lots of room

ARVID

*(Nods.)*

Right

FREDRICK

Do you have a light

ARVID

I don't smoke

FREDRICK

What do you do then

*(ARVID shrugs his shoulders, then he walks into the shelter, places his umbrella in a corner, sits down on the bench beside the plastic bag. FREDRICK comes into the shelter again, he sits down between ARVID and the beer bottle, takes a drink from the bottle.)*

ARVID

So you drink beer

FREDRICK

Terrible how it's rained this evening

ARVID

Yes it is

FREDRICK

*(Looks at ARVID, holds out the bottle to him.)*

Will you have a bit

*(ARVID shakes his head.)*

You don't drink beer

*(ARVID shakes his head again.)*

ARVID

No

*(Pause.)*

But you can get a light from me

*(He looks at FREDRICK.)*

FREDRICK

You have a light

*(ARVID nods.)*

But you said you didn't

ARVID

Yes well

FREDRICK

*(Puts the bottle down on the bench, fumbles for his cigarette packet in his coat pocket. He rises, feels carefully in both pockets, he looks at ARVID. He keeps on searching in his coat pockets.)*

Now what have I done with my cigarettes

Well

*(He looks at ARVID, who points to the cigarette lying in the wet. FREDRICK finds his cigarette packet, goes and sits down again on the bench, takes out a fresh cigarette. He looks at ARVID.)*

So you don't smoke

*(ARVID still looks straight in front of himself, shakes his head.)*

ARVID

No

FREDRICK

Strange that it should stop raining  
so suddenly

*(ARVID pulls on the zipper of his satchel and opens it, he puts his hand down inside and roots around, bottles clink.)*

And you don't drink

*(ARVID just goes on rooting around in his satchel, then he finds his lighter, takes it out.)*

ARVID

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

They're empty bottles

FREDRICK

So you collect bottles

ARVID

That's right

*(ARVID lights the lighter, extends it to FREDRICK, he puts the cigarette in his mouth, gets it lit, inhales.)*

FREDRICK

Have you found many bottles today  
then

ARVID

*(With a little enthusiasm.)*

A fair few

FREDRICK

It's good to have a smoke

ARVID

*(Suddenly.)*

I think I have to go

FREDRICK

I see

*(ARVID remains sitting there. Pause. Steps are heard and AGNES, a woman in her thirties, with long black hair, enters from the left, she walks into the shelter, goes over to one wall*

*and stands there, looks at the bus schedule, then she leans against the wall and looks at FREDRICK and ARVID.)*

ARVID

*(Seemingly surprised.)*

Oh is it you

*(AGNES nods.)*

I didn't notice you come

You're out and about too

*(AGNES nods. FREDRICK looks up at AGNES, nods to her, she nods to him.)*

FREDRICK

*(To ARVID.)*

You know each other

*(AGNES turns again towards the bus schedule.)*

ARVID

You might say that

FREDRICK

*(Picks up the bottle. Pause. Suddenly.)*

You can have it

*(He holds out the beer bottle to ARVID.)*

ARVID

Thanks a lot

*(He takes the bottle eagerly.)*

But it isn't empty

FREDRICK

Just empty the rest out

ARVID

You mean that

FREDRICK

I do

ARVID

*(Looks at AGNES, raises the beer bottle.)*

You won't have a bit

AGNES

*(Embarrassed.)*

No thanks

*(ARVID empties out the rest of the beer, puts the bottle in his satchel.)*

ARVID

*(To AGNES.)*

I've been lucky

*(Laughs.)*

Say

*(AGNES just stands leaning against the shelter wall, looks down obliquely. FREDRICK sits looking blankly in front of himself, then rises. Suddenly, slightly troubled.)*

Are you going

FREDRICK

Will you watch my bag a minute

*(ARVID nods.)*

I just have to

*(ARVID nods again. FREDRICK opens his coat and as he leaves the shelter he undoes his trousers, he walks behind the shelter.)*

ARVID

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

Well then

*(Short pause.)*

It's a while now since I saw you

*(FREDRICK can be heard pissing.)*

I guess he had to piss

that chap

AGNES

Yes

*(Pause.)*

ARVID

We shouldn't

AGNES

I'm going home

ARVID

I can't

AGNES

No not this evening

*(ARVID looks at the plastic bag. He bends to the side and opens it cautiously, closes it again. He sits looking straight ahead.)*

ARVID

No

*(FREDRICK comes back buttoning his trousers.)*

FREDRICK

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

That did good

ARVID

Yes I guess it did

FREDRICK

*(Looking straight ahead.)*

The best thing about all the beer is probably pissing it back out

It's good to piss

*(Looks at ARVID.)*

Or don't you think so

*(ARVID nods. FREDRICK looks at AGNES.)*

And then it's good to sleep

*(Both AGNES and ARVID nod again. FREDRICK goes over and sits down on the bench. Pause.)*

ARVID

Those empty bottles

FREDRICK

Have you taken a look in my bag

*(ARVID nods.)*

What are you called

*(Pause.)*

ARVID

Can I have your empty bottles

FREDRICK

*(Sits as if thinking about it.)*

I guess so

*(ARVID pulls the zipper across his satchel, as far as it will go, rises, slings the satchel over his shoulder. AGNES looks at her watch, goes out of the shelter, keeps on walking, exits left.*

*FREDRICK looks at ARVID.)*

Yes you can have them

*(Short pause.)*

Do you know her

*(Nods towards the place where AGNES stood. ARVID shakes his head. Pause.)*

Are you going

*(ARVID nods.)*

But what about the empty bottles

*(ARVID goes and sits down again, places the satchel again on his lap.)*

I have a full bottle left

You can have that too

if you wait a bit

*(ARVID nods. Pause.)*

ARVID

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

I can have your empty bottles

*(FREDRICK nods. ARVID smiles a bit to himself.)*

Thanks very much

*(Pause. ARVID looks at FREDRICK.)*

Right away

Can I have them right away

I mean

FREDRICK

Is it that urgent

*(ARVID looks down.)*

Yes I guess you can have them right away

ARVID

Thanks very much

'Cause I think I have to go



*(ARVID is going to lift the bag over to himself, but FREDRICK grasps it.)*

FREDRICK

Wait a bit

ARVID

But

*(FREDRICK takes out a bottle, holds it out to ARVID, he takes it, lays the bottle on his lap while he unzips and opens his satchel, then he puts the bottle into the satchel.)*

FREDRICK

You've got a lot of bottles

*(FREDRICK holds out still another bottle. Questioning.)*

Do you collect bottles every day

ARVID

If I can just find any

I do

FREDRICK

You need the money

ARVID

That's right

*(While ARVID sits waiting to receive more bottles, FREDRICK takes the full bottle from the bag. He sits looking at the bottle.)*

ARVID

You mustn't drink it now

FREDRICK

No I'll wait a bit

*(Short pause.)*

But you can have the full bottle

*(FREDRICK holds the bottle out to ARVID.)*

ARVID

No

*(FREDRICK puts the full beer bottle into his coat pocket.)*

FREDRICK

And now it's stopped raining too

ARVID

*(Suddenly.)*

Do you believe in God

FREDRICK

What a question to ask

ARVID

Oh well

FREDRICK

In fact I neither believe nor don't believe

ARVID

But sure there's something

*(Eagerly.)*

The first shall be last

The last shall be first

The poor

FREDRICK

*(Interrupts him.)*

Yes I know

*(FREDRICK takes the very last empty bottle from the bag, holds it out to ARVID, who puts it in his satchel. ARVID zips up the satchel, rises, walks from the shelter and disappears off left. FREDRICK rises, walks to one front corner of the shelter, stands leaning against the shelter wall and looks for ARVID. Then FREDRICK walks to the other corner, looks in the opposite direction, he then walks back and sits down again on the bench. He pulls the cigarette packet from his coat pocket, takes out a cigarette, puts it into his mouth, feels in his coat pockets, but the lighter still isn't there, he gets up, feels in his trouser pockets, but the lighter still isn't there either, he goes into the shelter again, sits down again on the bench, with the cigarette in his mouth. He sinks farther down on the bench, with his feet thrust forward. He wraps his coat well around*

*him. He looks straight forward. He takes the empty bag from the bench, then puts it into his coat pocket. He smooths down his hair. Steps are heard. AGNES enters from the left and stops in front of the shelter. FREDRICK sits up on the bench, she turns and looks at him.)*

FREDRICK

Excuse me  
but you don't have a light  
*(AGNES shakes her head.)*

AGNES

*(Walks into the shelter, looks at FREDRICK.)*  
It's sure to start raining again soon  
Otherwise I'd just ask  
you for a light  
*(She laughs briefly.)*

FREDRICK

Yes I guess that's how it is  
*(They look at each other. Both look down. Long pause. AGNES goes and sits down on the bench.)*

AGNES

By the way  
*(Drags it out, she looks at FREDRICK.)*

FREDRICK

Yes  
*(He looks at her.)*

AGNES

Nothing

FREDRICK

*(Quickly.)*  
No just say it

AGNES

You don't know what the time is  
*(FREDRICK shakes his head.)*

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

You don't wear a watch

AGNES

*(Shakes her head.)*

Not you either

FREDRICK

No

AGNES

*(Laughs briefly.)*

And you don't have a light either

FREDRICK

No

But I usually do

AGNES

*(Nods.)*

Listen

FREDRICK

Yes

AGNES

Shall I tell you something

*(FREDRICK nods.)*

Do you know why I don't have a light

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

No how could I know that

AGNES

So that I can ask for a light

*(She laughs.)*

FREDRICK

*(Laughs.)*

I must have

*(Breaks off.)*

AGNES

I go around asking people for a light  
 I go out  
 go downtown  
 and then I ask people for a light  
 I sit in all day  
 often do  
 or then I go downtown  
 If I can't bear to be alone  
 then I go downtown  
 and then  
 (*Laughs briefly.*)  
 Well now and then I ask people for a light  
 (*She laughs again briefly.*)  
 That's the way it is  
 so it is

FREDRICK

I left my lighter  
 some place or other  
 I think it must have been  
 in the bar over there on the street  
 I was in there

AGNES

I go around asking people for a light  
 Lots of days I don't talk to anybody  
 Many days have passed  
 without me talking to anybody  
 (*FREDRICK nods.*)  
 But you don't have a light  
 (*FREDRICK shakes his head. Pause.*)

FREDRICK

But I'd fancy a smoke

AGNES

Me too  
 (*Short pause.*)

FREDRICK

Are you going home

AGNES

I don't know

*(Looks at him quickly.)*

He's gone

the man you were sitting with

*(FREDRICK nods again.)*

The man who goes about

collecting bottles

I'm always running into him

Always

FREDRICK

I haven't met him before

*(Pause.)*

AGNES

Every single day

I almost think I bump into him

every single day

FREDRICK

*(Considers it.)*

Well I think I've probably seen him

me too

Listen

AGNES

*(Interrupts him.)*

What are you called

FREDRICK

Do you want to know that

*(AGNES looks at him, nods.)*

I

*(Draws it out.)*

AGNES

Don't you want to tell me

I'm called Agnes

FREDRICK

Hi Agnes

AGNES

And you

FREDRICK

Well I'm called

*(Breaks off.)*

Well

AGNES

Sure of that

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Pause. Then FREDRICK gets up and walks to the opening in the shelter, looks out. Speaks looking directly ahead.)*

It'll probably start raining again soon

AGNES

I like rain

Rain and darkness

FREDRICK

Me too

*(He looks at her.)*

As long as I don't get wet

I don't like getting wet

*(AGNES laughs.)*

But I like rain too

Rain and darkness

I don't like summer

I don't know what to do with myself then

AGNES

*(Quickly.)*

Me neither

FREDRICK

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

Hot sitting inside in the summer

JON FOSSE

AGNES

And the streets full of people  
(*Short pause.*)

FREDRICK

(*Nods.*)  
That's right  
(*Pause.*)

AGNES

(*Looks at FREDRICK.*)  
You buy beer  
and go around drinking

FREDRICK

It happens

AGNES

Do you like it

FREDRICK

I guess so  
in a way

AGNES

'Cause one shouldn't do that sort of thing

FREDRICK

Maybe

AGNES

But lots of people feel nervous and scared  
when they see men sit drinking beer  
Me too  
a bit

FREDRICK

That's not the intention

AGNES

But it can seem  
a bit dangerous



FREDRICK

Maybe

*(FREDRICK looks to the left.)*

He's coming now

AGNES

*(Questioning.)*

Who

*(Slightly afraid, questioning.)*

The man who was here just now

FREDRICK

That's right

AGNES

*(Abruptly.)*

Shall we go

FREDRICK

Where to

AGNES

*(Shrugs her shoulders.)*

Some place or other

We might go look for your lighter

FREDRICK

We might indeed

*(AGNES rises. She walks out of the shelter and sees ARVID walking over towards the shelter and she turns, as if to hide herself, and goes back into the shelter and sits down again, she sits looking straight ahead. ARVID comes walking by the shelter.)*

Have you found some more bottles

*(Calls, a bit aggressively.)*

Not a one

Not a single bottle

*(ARVID stops midway in front of the shelter, turns towards FREDRICK, shakes his head. Short pause.)*

JON FOSSE

ARVID

The one you have there  
in your coat pocket  
*(Points to the coat pocket.)*

FREDRICK

It's full

ARVID

I can wait  
*(ARVID goes into the shelter, nods to AGNES, sits down next to her, places his satchel on his lap. He sits with his arms around the satchel. FREDRICK looks at ARVID, who sits looking at AGNES.)*  
So you're out walking  
I see  
*(AGNES sits looking down. FREDRICK goes and sits down on the other side of AGNES. He looks straight ahead. AGNES gets up, stands in front of FREDRICK.)*

AGNES

Listen  
Shall we  
*(Breaks off.)*  
We'll go  
*(FREDRICK nods.)*

ARVID

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*  
That bottle  
*(Suddenly looks at AGNES.)*  
Are you two going to your place

AGNES

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*  
Listen  
We'll go  
Come on

ARVID

*(Quickly.)*  
Where are you going

AGNES

*(To FREDRICK.)*

We'll go

FREDRICK

All right then

*(Looks at ARVID.)*

I'm not going to drink it yet

ARVID

But soon

*(FREDRICK shakes his head.)*

Well

*(He laughs.)*

All three of us are wet

FREDRICK

*(Looks at ARVID.)*

I'm not going to drink it yet

do you hear me

*(AGNES goes and sits down next to FREDRICK, on the opposite side of where ARVID is sitting, she puts her hand under his arm, she looks up at him.)*

AGNES

We'll go

*(FREDRICK nods, but remains sitting.)*

ARVID

*(To AGNES.)*

You two are going to your place

AGNES

*(Pleading, to FREDRICK.)*

Please

*(ARVID gets up.)*

FREDRICK

*(To ARVID, questioning.)*

You're going to be moving along

JON FOSSE

ARVID

Guess so

*(ARVID goes from the shelter, walks farther to the right.)*

AGNES

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

Hi

FREDRICK

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

Agnes

*(They smile at each other. Short pause. She presses herself against the sleeve of his coat and he then loosens his arm, puts it around her shoulder, presses her against himself.)*

AGNES

*(Laughs.)*

Me and you

*(She looks up at him, smiles.)*

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

Shall we go

*(AGNES nods. FREDRICK withdraws his arm, rises.*

*AGNES also rises. FREDRICK takes the full bottle out of his coat pocket.)*

AGNES

*(A little worried.)*

Are you going to drink it now

*(FREDRICK shakes his head, he sets the full bottle down in a corner of the bus shelter, then he pulls the white bag from his coat pocket, flings it over where the bottle is. He looks at AGNES.)*

FREDRICK

We'll go

AGNES

We'll go

*(FREDRICK and AGNES take each other by the hand and walk from the bus-shelter, over to the left, they stop and embrace each other, stand there clinging to each other, then they turn and walk back past the shelter, they stop and look up towards the church steps.)*

FREDRICK

Have you noticed that church before

AGNES

Never

FREDRICK

Me neither

*(Pause.)*

I must have seen it lots of times  
but I guess I've never noticed it before

AGNES

I must have seen it lots of times too  
I haven't noticed it either

FREDRICK

Shall we go in

AGNES

*(Astonished.)*

Go in

FREDRICK

It should be possible

AGNES

Why

FREDRICK

Why not

AGNES

I doubt that it's open

FREDRICK

Might be

JON FOSSE

AGNES

We can't go in

FREDRICK

Sure we can

AGNES

What business would we have there

FREDRICK

Maybe none really

AGNES

*(Quickly, with enthusiasm.)*

Of course we can go in

*(Pause.)*

Now that we two have joined together

*(She laughs.)*

I guess we can go into a church

Why it can almost be like a marriage  
you know

FREDRICK

*(Slightly embarrassed.)*

That's right

AGNES

We'll do it

*(She lets go of his hand and walks over to the steps, stops and looks at FREDRICK, who remains standing where they stopped.)*

Aren't you coming

*(Happy.)*

Oh do come

After all it was you who said it

FREDRICK

I can't remember the last time I was in a church

AGNES

Me neither

That doesn't matter

FREDRICK

*(Slightly ashamed.)*

But I pray to God

AGNES

I guess everyone does

I do too

*(Happy.)*

We can go into the church  
and then we can pray to God

We can pray together

I believe we should

Do come

FREDRICK

It doesn't seem right

AGNES

Why not

FREDRICK

A person should pray without anyone knowing

AGNES

*(A bit downcast.)*

But do come

It's the right day

this is

It's today we should pray to God  
in a church

Don't you understand that

*(She laughs.)*

Why it's our wedding day

We met today

And we're getting married today

In our very own way

*(A bit boisterous.)*

Come back

FREDRICK

*(Stands listening.)*

I thought I heard something

JON FOSSE

AGNES

*(Stands listening, she looks at him.)*

I don't hear anything

FREDRICK

*(Looks at her.)*

You don't see anything either

AGNES

Do you

*(Looks around herself. Questioning. Pause.)*

At least answer me

Do you see anything

What is it you see

FREDRICK

No it was probably nothing

AGNES

Now that we have found each other

we can go into the church

surely

FREDRICK

Strange that I've never noticed

this church before

AGNES

I haven't either

*(She takes hold of his coat sleeve.)*

Come and we'll go in

*(FREDRICK hesitates.)*

We'll do it

I've never felt that I believed in God before

But right now I do

Come

*(AGNES pulls FREDRICK with her up the steps, they stop on the pavement in front of the door.)*

FREDRICK

I don't think we can do such a thing



AGNES

Yes we can

FREDRICK

The door's sure to be locked

AGNES

*(Goes over and tries the door, makes it open a crack.)*

It's open

*(She looks at FREDRICK.)*

Shall we go in

FREDRICK

In that case there're two

AGNES

*(Interrupts him.)*

Come

*(She opens the door still farther, stands erect, stretches out her arm to FREDRICK, who takes her hand. They walk into the church. Close the door after themselves.)*

## ACT TWO

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*Afternoon. A sparsely furnished living-room, a door in the left wall leads to the hallway, a door on the right wall leads to the kitchen. An old worn-out sofa suite slightly to the left. An oblong table stands short-end-out a little to the right, somewhat forward. A window far to the left. From the window one can see the bus-shelter. FREDRICK stands looking out the window. He has now, some months later, shorter hair and he is dressed in velvet trousers and a suit jacket.*

FREDRICK

*(Calls in the direction of the kitchen door, a bit downcast.)*

He's there again now

He's sitting on the bench  
and looking straight ahead

He has his satchel on his lap  
And before long he'll probably  
take the bottles

out of his satchel

one at a time

Count them

Pack them up in his satchel again

He's there a few times every day

Why can't he leave us in peace

*(AGNES comes through the kitchen door, she is wearing a blue dress, and if one looks carefully, one can see that that she is going to have a child, her long hair is cut shorter, now it reaches to her shoulders.)*

AGNES

He's there again

FREDRICK

*(Walks over to her.)*

That's right

AGNES

*(As if to dismiss the matter.)*

Right

FREDRICK

Can't he leave us in peace

AGNES

*(Short pause.)*

He can just sit there I suppose

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

After all we can't

FREDRICK

*(Interrupts her.)*

No what can we do

*(Short pause.)*

But why must he stay there in the bus-shelter

Right outside our window

Why did we move

into this flat

He knows we live here

That's why he always sits there

AGNES

Well he certainly sat there before too

*(AGNES goes and sits down on the sofa. FREDRICK follows her, sits down next to her.)*

We mustn't bother about it

He can just sit there

What does it matter to us anyway

*(Short pause.)*

He must just sit there

*(Pause.)*

FREDRICK

Yes but

AGNES

*(Quickly.)*

And we can move you know

We don't need to live here

We've moved so much in life

both you and me

We don't need to live here

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

It's not so easy  
to get hold of a flat

AGNES

We can move out of town

FREDRICK

*(A little happy.)*  
Yes

AGNES

Yes we can do that  
We just have to live here for a while longer  
and then we can move  
We can rent an old house  
by the sea  
*(Stops herself.)*  
But now we must have a child and things  
*(A little happy.)*  
Even if I'm not far along  
I'll be having a baby all the same  
*(She places her hand on her stomach.)*  
But when the birth's over  
we can move

FREDRICK

*(More lightly.)*  
We'll do that  
*(Pause.)*

AGNES

*(Smiles at him.)*  
Nothing's  
so terrible

FREDRICK

No

AGNES

Not if we two  
stick together

*(FREDRICK nods. Pause.)*

We don't need to bother so much  
Nothing's so important

FREDRICK

*(A little more calmly.)*

No

AGNES

He can just sit there  
He can't do anything to us  
Not when we two stick together  
*(Pause. She smiles at him, puts her arm around his shoulders.)*  
It was good that we two  
met each other  
*(She laughs a bit, then cuddles up to him, looks up at him.)*  
Don't you be worrying  
Let him just sit there with his bottles  
It doesn't matter to us

FREDRICK

No

AGNES

Things will be fine  
you'll see  
*(AGNES stands up, stretches, pushes her stomach forward, but it is impossible to see anything special about it.)*  
And now you're going to be a father  
*(Enthusiastic.)*  
Aren't you happy  
Naturally you must be happy about becoming a father  
Just think that you'll be a father  
and I'll be a mother

FREDRICK

But

AGNES

Oh yes

FREDRICK

I get so restless when he's sitting there  
(*FREDRICK laughs briefly. Pause. He gets up, walks over to the window again, he looks out. He looks at AGNES.*)

He's got up now

(*Questioning.*)

Why does he have to hang around in the bus-shelter

AGNES

(*Slightly irritated.*)

How should I know

FREDRICK

But you knew him beforehand

AGNES

That's right

(*Short pause.*)

And so I must somehow

know all about him

because of that

FREDRICK

And after all he was at your place

AGNES

That's right

(*Pause.*)

(*Beseeching.*)

Now don't start again

(*Short pause.*)

We were the way we were you know

both you and me

And if I hadn't been the way I was

I probably wouldn't have met you

either

Then we wouldn't have been lovers

FREDRICK

(*With repressed desperation.*)

But

But he was at your place  
He spent the night there too  
(Pause. AGNES goes and sits down again on the sofa.)

AGNES

(Drags it out, speaks directly ahead.)  
Yes  
(A little dejected.)  
I said that  
What is it you want to know  
What do I have to say

FREDRICK

(In desperation.)  
I know it of course  
Just say it  
I know it

AGNES

Don't start now  
Not  
Not now

FREDRICK

(In desperation.)  
You can just say it  
(Short pause.)  
And you've probably been  
at his place  
you too  
(Ironically.)  
Slept with him

AGNES

No

FREDRICK

I know it  
Just say it  
(Pause.)

AGNES

All right then  
Once  
when  
*(Pause.)*  
Can't we  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

All right

AGNES

*(Dejected.)*  
Yes  
I was so lonely  
I didn't know anyone  
I went out without my watch  
just so I could ask someone  
what time it was  
*(Laughs briefly.)*  
I've already told you that  
*(FREDRICK begins to walk back and forth on the floor  
despondently, goes over to the window, looks out. Pause.)*  
Is he still there

FREDRICK

No

AGNES

Has he gone

FREDRICK

Yes he's gone now  
*(Looks at AGNES. Quickly.)*  
We can't live here  
Why should we just end up with  
a flat right here  
He sits there all the time.

AGNES

Not now  
Can't you wait



*(Despondent. She gets up from the sofa.)*

We must make some dinner

*(Pause.)*

FREDRICK

I'm not hungry

AGNES

Everything will be all right

*(FREDRICK nods. Long pause. She goes over and strokes his cheek.)*

And now it's you and me

Right

*(Slightly imploring.)*

It's

you and me

*(AGNES puts her arms around him and presses him close. He lays his head on her shoulder. They stand there like that for a while. They release each other, stand looking at each other.)*

FREDRICK

*(Smiles at her shyly.)*

Me and you

AGNES

Me and you

*(They smile at each other.)*

But now

*(Laughs. Short pause.)*

Shall we lie down on the sofa for a bit

Quiet down

And then pull ourselves together and make dinner

*(Slightly teasing.)*

We've become respectable people

both you and me

now

*(FREDRICK smiles, nods. AGNES takes his arm and leads him over to the sofa. She sits down in the left-hand corner and FREDRICK lies down on the sofa with his head in her lap. She puts her hands into his hair and rumples it about. Speaks looking directly ahead.)*

JON FOSSE

And my mother is going to be a granny  
*(Laughs a bit.)*  
But there'll be fewer grandpas

FREDRICK

Not a single one

AGNES

But they're there anyway

FREDRICK

Only nobody  
knows where they are

AGNES

It just turned out like that  
so it did

FREDRICK

My mother would probably never have believed it

AGNES

*(Questioning.)*  
that she'd become a granny

FREDRICK

Yes

AGNES

Not my mother  
either  
*(A little happy.)*  
But then things happen the way they happen

FREDRICK

Entirely by accident

AGNES

*(Laughs a bit.)*  
Must say I was impressed  
when you took my hand

down there outside the bus-shelter  
I don't suppose I'd ever have believed it  
(*Laughs.*)

FREDRICK

(*As if a bit embarrassed.*)  
Don't talk about it

AGNES

I don't suppose I'd ever have  
believed  
that you'd do that

FREDRICK

Me neither  
(*Laughs a bit.*)  
Well anyway  
Of course I've done that sort of thing many times

AGNES

I'm sure you have

FREDRICK

Yes  
(*Short pause.*)  
Many women in this man's life  
yes

AGNES

But not so many children  
(*A bit teasing.*)  
And now maybe you'll  
soon be getting married

FREDRICK

Don't talk

AGNES

But first I suppose we must have the child

FREDRICK

That's probably best

JON FOSSE

AGNES

Yes

*(Short pause. She gives a short laugh.)*

FREDRICK

That's right  
quite right

AGNES

Yes now we've become respectable people  
you and me

FREDRICK

*(Sits up on the sofa.)*

Yes no getting away from it

Soon parents and things to be done

No more beer drinking along the streets  
now

*(FREDRICK takes a packet of cigarettes and a lighter from the pocket of his suit jacket, extracts a cigarette.)*

AGNES

It would be great to have a smoke

But I've stopped

I won't smoke till after the child is born

FREDRICK

*(Lights his cigarette.)*

But I haven't  
stopped

AGNES

Well you can't stop doing everything  
after all

*(The doorbell rings briefly. FREDRICK and AGNES look at each, other slightly frightened.)*

Maybe Mother

There's nobody else who rings at our door  
surely

FREDRICK

Definitely

*(AGNES gets up, walks out the front door. FREDRICK gets up, walks over to the table, stubs his cigarette in the ashtray standing there, he then walks over to the window, peeks out, after that he walks out into the room, stands and looks down. Pause. AGNES comes through the front door.)*

AGNES

*(In a low voice.)*

Mother

*(Smiles.)*

And she has her hands full

*(Pause. EVELYN, about sixty, comes through the hallway door, she has a wrapped bouquet of flowers in one hand, two full white plastic bags in the other.)*

EVELYN

*(To AGNES.)*

Lord I'm knackered

Have I ever been shopping today

*(Explaining.)*

And I so wanted to visit

you

*(Short pause.)*

and yours

AGNES

Yes I see that

EVELYN

Don't say it

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

And there you are too

FREDRICK

Yes hello

*(EVELYN goes over and puts her bags by the table.)*

EVELYN

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

And you're in good shape

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

Yes thanks

EVELYN

*(Walks, with the wrapped bouquet of flowers in her hand, over to FREDRICK and strokes his cheek quickly, he looks down ashamed.)*

And now you're beginning

*(She looks around.)*

to get things in order

around here too

It's beginning to be nice

And of course you can take it little by little

You can buy new things gradually

as you have the money

That sort of thing must

*(Breaks off.)*

Well well

*(She looks at AGNES, questioning.)*

Have you got a flower vase

AGNES

I don't think so

EVELYN

Well then we'll use what we have

*(EVELYN goes over and holds out the wrapped bouquet to AGNES, who takes it, but remains standing there fumbling a bit with the paper.)*

Have to unwrap them

You like cut flowers

even if you don't

*(She points to the empty windowsill.)*

like potted plants

AGNES

Yes

But thanks a lot

It was kind of you

EVELYN

You can unwrap them  
and then I can go out to the kitchen and see  
if you don't have something we can put the flowers in

AGNES

*(Nods.)*

Right

EVELYN

*(Is a bit surprised.)*

You do like cut flowers

AGNES

Yes of course

EVELYN

I knew it

*(EVELYN walks through the kitchen door.)*

AGNES

*(To FREDRICK.)*

She flounders like that

And then she must always be so kind

And indeed she is so kind

But things get so sad

And then she just comes over here

without our

knowing anything

FREDRICK

It's certainly kind of her

to buy flowers for you

AGNES

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

But they're for us really

FREDRICK

Nothing to be sad about

I'd say

JON FOSSE

AGNES

No

But I get sad

anyway

*(FREDRICK nods. EVELYN enters from the kitchen, she is carrying two empty wine bottles.)*

EVELYN

These were the best I could find

But haven't you unwrapped your flowers yet

Have to unwrap them

*(AGNES walks over and sits down on the sofa, starts tearing the paper from the flowers. EVELYN places the empty wine bottles on the table, straightens up and looks at AGNES.)*

Yes I can see that your stomach has grown

AGNES

Well then you have good eyes

EVELYN

Oh but it's still so early on

*(Her mind shifting course.)*

And I'll be a grandmother

Well I'd hardly have believed it

*(AGNES gets part of the paper off and some yellow tulips come to view.)*

I know you like tulips

And that you like yellow

AGNES

*(Looks at her mother.)*

They're nice

Thanks a lot

*(The mother walks over to AGNES, takes the half-unwrapped bouquet, removes the rest of the paper, drops it on the floor, holds the flowers up.)*

EVELYN

Yes aren't they nice

AGNES

Yes they are



FREDRICK

Yes tulips are nice

EVELYN

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

Yes isn't that so

Agnes has always liked tulips  
so much

*(FREDRICK nods. EVELYN looks at AGNES.)*

But it was silly not having a vase

Maybe it isn't so nice

putting yellow tulips in green bottles

Or maybe it is nice

*(EVELYN laughs. Pause. She walks over to the table and places some tulips in one wine bottle and some in the other, and then she takes both wine bottles and walks over to the window and places them on the windowsill, she steps back a bit into the room, stands looking at the flowers.)*

Turned out quite nice

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

What do you think father-to-be

FREDRICK

Very nice

*(Short pause.)*

EVELYN

*(Looks at FREDRICK, somewhat suddenly.)*

It'll be great meeting your mother

FREDRICK

Yes you must

meet each other soon

EVELYN

*(A trifle theatrically.)*

Will be

really great

to meet your mother

FREDRICK

Yes we'll have to arrange that

EVELYN

*(To AGNES.)*

Well the flowers are nice  
But I have more things with me  
too

*(EVELYN walks over and picks up her bags, she places them on the table. A little excited.)*

And now

*(She takes milk, bread, other household commodities from the plastic bag, places everything on the table.)*

some ordinary provisions

I thought you might not  
have a lot of money

*(Laughs briefly. Unpacks the bag.)*

A bit of good sliced meat for sandwiches

*(Removes it from the bag.)*

And half a chicken

*(Removes it from the bag.)*

And a few shrimp

*(Removes it from the bag.)*

And mayonnaise

*(Removes it from the bag.)*

Lemon

*(Removes it from the bag.)*

And a small white loaf

*(Removes it from the bag too. Short pause.)*

AGNES

But you don't have a lot of money  
either

EVELYN

Do tell

*(Short pause.)*

And I've bought  
something for the house  
for your new flat

*(She takes a package from the bag, she walks to the sofa, holds it out to AGNES.)*

A kind of moving-in present

*(She looks at FREDRICK.)*

For you too

*(FREDRICK goes over and sits down beside AGNES on the sofa. AGNES sits there with the package in her lap.)*

*(In suspense.)*

You must open it

AGNES

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

You can open it

FREDRICK

No you

*(AGNES lays the package in FREDRICK's lap, he lifts it carefully, looks at AGNES.)*

You open it

*(He holds out the package to AGNES, she takes it, starts to tear the paper from the package, a small wooden presentation box comes into view, she opens the box, takes out something wrapped in paper and a glass candlestick emerges.)*

EVELYN

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

Do you like it

AGNES

Not bad at all

*(EVELYN, a bit disappointed, takes a plastic bag and begins to gather up the wrapping paper from the floor, puts it in the bag. Looks at FREDRICK.)*

What do you think

FREDRICK

She's right

EVELYN

*(Looks at them.)*

It's really cosy by candlelight

*(She goes through the kitchen door with the bag.)*

JON FOSSE

AGNES

*(Looks at the candlestick. In a low voice.)*

Of course it had to be ugly

*(She holds the candlestick out to FREDRICK.)*

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

But it's not too ugly

AGNES

*(Regretfully.)*

You can't think it's nice

FREDRICK

Well it isn't ugly

either

*(Short pause.)*

It's really a bit nice

AGNES

I get so sad

when I receive such things

But after all she's bought good food

FREDRICK

Yes indeed

*(EVELYN comes in again.)*

EVELYN

I've bought candles too

*(She fetches a package of white wax candles from the table, holds it up in front of her.)*

AGNES

But I have candles

EVELYN

Well I bought a pack

anyway

*(EVELYN walks over to the sofa. AGNES hands her the candlestick and EVELYN puts a candle in it, then she puts it over on the table.)*

We can wait a bit before we light the candle  
But where will it stand

*(She lifts up the candlestick, looks around the room.)*

Well there aren't so many places it can stand

*(She walks over to the windowsill, sets it down there, between the two wine bottles with the flowers in them, she stands there looking out the window. Pause.)*

A strange man sitting there in the bus shelter

AGNES

*(Questioning.)*

Yes

EVELYN

He's hanging about and putting  
some empty bottles  
into a satchel

*(Pause.)*

And now he's looking up here

*(FREDRICK looks down.)*

AGNES

Yes

EVELYN

And now he's getting up  
He's going to go off I think  
Well there are so many kinds of people  
I guess he goes around collecting bottles  
*(Short pause.)*

But that folks in our day should have to  
collect bottles

Well

*(FREDRICK rises.)*

AGNES

I suppose we can  
*(Breaks off.)*

EVELYN

*(To FREDRICK.)*

Yes it'll be great

JON FOSSE

sometime  
to meet your mother  
(*The doorbell rings.*)

AGNES

(*To FREDRICK.*)  
Will you go to the door

FREDRICK

Well it isn't certain  
(*Breaks off.*)

EVELYN

(*Looks out of the window again.*)  
Yes the man who was sitting in the shelter is gone  
Maybe it's him  
(*Explaining.*)  
I thought he was looking up here  
(*She laughs.*)

AGNES

(*Rises. To FREDRICK.*)  
You go to the door  
(*FREDRICK nods, goes out the hallway door.*)

EVELYN

(*In a low voice.*)  
Have you met his mother

AGNES

(*Nods.*)  
Quite ordinary  
so she is

EVELYN

I'm so eager to  
to meet her  
(*Looks at AGNES.*)  
I must do so  
before very long

AGNES

She's pleasant enough

*(EVELYN walks around in the flat a bit, moves the wine bottles slightly, looks at the hallway door. FREDRICK comes in. AGNES looks at him questioningly, and he shrugs his shoulders.)*

EVELYN

It was him I suppose

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

Just a boy selling lottery tickets

*(Pause.)*

EVELYN

*(Wants to surprise them a little.)*

But I've brought some more  
things  
with me

AGNES

*(Somewhat dejected.)*

You mustn't give us so much

*(EVELYN goes over to the table, picks up a package, walks over and gives it to AGNES, who takes the package and holds it in one arm, stretches out her other hand to her mother.)*

Thanks a lot

EVELYN

I thought I could buy something  
for the child  
even now

AGNES

*(A little happy.)*

Yes we've already bought a little something  
ourselves

*(Looks at her mother.)*

Shall I open it now

EVELYN

Yes by all means

JON FOSSE

*(AGNES unwraps a white blanket, drops the paper on the floor, she holds the blanket up before her.)*

AGNES

Nice

EVELYN

*(A little happy.)*

Yes I thought it was quite nice

AGNES

Thanks very much

*(She looks at FREDRICK.)*

Nice

*(FREDRICK nods. EVELYN looks around herself a bit in the flat.)*

FREDRICK

*(As if somewhat apologetically.)*

Well it was the only flat we could get hold of

EVELYN

The flat's quite all right

so it is

FREDRICK

Yes

EVELYN

But it's close to the street

FREDRICK

We probably won't be living  
here very long

EVELYN

Perhaps not  
a good place for a little child  
to grow up  
just now

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

No



*(Pause.)*

But we were lucky  
to get hold of a flat  
It's pretty difficult  
to find something to rent

EVELYN

Yes I'm sure it's difficult  
*(Pause. Her mind changing course.)*  
And how happy I'll be to become a grandmother  
*(Nods towards AGNES.)*  
I only have her you know

FREDRICK

Yes  
*(Pause.)*

EVELYN

*(Walks over to the window, takes the candlestick and walks over and places it on one end of the table, looks at FREDRICK.)*  
And you too  
were an only child  
*(FREDRICK nods.)*  
Yes there have only been the two of us  
Me and Agnes

FREDRICK

Yes

EVELYN

But you  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes  
*(Short pause.)*

EVELYN

And I'm  
so  
eager

JON FOSSE

to meet your mother  
(*Short pause.*)  
And I'm sure I will

FREDRICK

That must be arranged

EVELYN

Why we're going to meet  
many times  
now that we're both becoming grandparents  
(*She looks at him, laughs a bit.*)  
It hasn't been  
so easy

AGNES

(*Interrupts.*)  
to be alone  
with a child

EVELYN

(*A little sensitive.*)  
Yes  
(*Pause. EVELYN looks down at the floor.*)

AGNES

I'll take out the things  
you've bought  
and put them  
in the kitchen

EVELYN

There's not that big a hurry

AGNES

(*Dejected.*)  
Never a hurry about anything  
(*She sits down on the sofa.*)  
Everything can just stay there

EVELYN

(*Rises.*)  
I think maybe

AGNES

*(Interrupts her.)*

Yes you just go

I suppose that's what you were going to say

EVELYN

Well you probably want to be left in peace

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

I just wanted to drop by

*(Short pause.)*

We can have a talk

soon

AGNES

*(Is repentant.)*

Sure you can stay a bit longer

EVELYN

No I think I'll go home

*(AGNES nods. EVELYN walks to the hallway door.)*

AGNES

*(Rises, goes after her.)*

Suddenly you're just going

EVELYN

*(Turns, looks at FREDRICK.)*

We'll have a talk soon

FREDRICK

Yes

EVELYN

*(Quickly.)*

But you'll be all right

*(EVELYN leaves by the hallway door. AGNES goes after her.**FREDRICK rises and goes over to the window, stands there and looks out. Pause. AGNES comes through the hallway door.)*

FREDRICK

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

He's there again now  
And it was he who rang the bell  
*(AGNES walks right past him and sits down on the sofa.  
FREDRICK turns towards the window again. Pause.)*  
He's sitting there with his satchel  
and his umbrella

AGNES

*(Dejected.)*  
I guess he can just sit there  
*(Pause.)*

FREDRICK

*(Turns to AGNES.)*  
I guess you want him to be there

AGNES

Stop it

FREDRICK

*(To AGNES.)*  
And what did you do at his place  
*(Breaks off.)*  
Why did you have to go to his place  
*(AGNES rises, walks to the kitchen door.)*  
Don't go  
will you  
He's standing there

AGNES

*(Turns to FREDRICK.)*  
What do you want me to say

FREDRICK

Oh well  
*(FREDRICK goes and sits down on the sofa. AGNES exits  
through the kitchen door, closes the door after herself.  
FREDRICK lies down on the sofa, holds his arms crossed over  
his face.)*

AGNES

*(Comes in again, she goes over to FREDRICK, kneels beside  
him, puts her hand on his shoulder.)*

Listen  
please  
That doesn't matter  
Now there's just me and you  
*(Short pause.)*  
Don't be like that  
*(Pleading.)*  
You mustn't be like that  
Listen please

FREDRICK

And so that Arvid there

AGNES

No more now

FREDRICK

Why else did you hang about and live with each other

AGNES

We didn't live with each other

FREDRICK

Almost then

*(Short pause.)*

I knew it

And now you must somehow be together  
with both him and me

AGNES

Don't be like that

*(FREDRICK rises, walks through the hallway door, after a while AGNES goes after him.)*

## ACT THREE

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*A hospital room with a chair placed against the right wall. A door on the left wall, beside the door, to its right, is a washbasin with a mirror above it. A row of large windows on the rear wall. FREDRICK is sitting in the chair, he rises, walks around the room a bit, he retches, is on the verge of vomiting, but manages to settle down again. He walks over to the washbasin and spits phlegm into it, turns on the water, flushes the bowl clean, turns the water off again, he wipes his hand over his face, then goes over to the chair and sits down again, looks towards the door. Pause. After a while the door is opened and a DOCTOR, with untidy hair and an open doctor's coat, of about the same age as FREDRICK, comes into the room. FREDRICK looks at the DOCTOR.*

DOCTOR

*(A little out of breath.)*

It can be all right  
this sort of thing

But

Well to be frank  
the chances aren't so great

*(Short pause.)*

It's so early in the pregnancy

*(Breaks off.)*

Had

*(Hesitates slightly.)*

the child or the foetus  
been a little older  
just some days older

A week more

But

Well to be frank  
one can certainly hope  
But the chances aren't so great

*(FREDRICK nods.)*

It's on the borderline  
this case

Had the child  
*(Corrects himself.)*  
 well the foetus  
 been a little more developed  
 then  
 But now  
 Well it's on the borderline  
 She  
 well  
*(He looks questioningly at FREDRICK.)*  
 She

FREDICK

Yes  
 Agnes yes

DOCTOR

Well if your wife Agnes  
*(Looks at FREDRICK, who nods.)*  
 had been a bit farther along in her pregnancy  
 everything would have looked different  
*(Breaks off.)*  
 Well she'll just have to lie still  
 We'll ask time to help  
 then we'll see  
*(A little comforting.)*  
 It can be all right  
 You never know  
 But I just have to be frank

FREDRICK

*(Questioning.)*  
 But the chances aren't so great

DOCTOR

No  
*(FREDRICK nods.)*  
 You can just wait here  
*(Short pause.)*  
 Well I must examine her

And then we must make some tests  
That can take a while  
She'll be wheeled in here afterwards  
You can just wait here  
(*FREDRICK nods again.*)  
And by the way  
just one question  
Her waters broke just before you came to the hospital

FREDRICK

That's right

DOCTOR

And after her waters broke  
you rang for an ambulance  
and came here  
immediately  
(*FREDRICK nods again. The DOCTOR walks to the door.*)

FREDRICK

She  
(*Breaks off. The DOCTOR turns toward him.*)  
Well  
Will it be long before she's finished

DOCTOR

Just a little while  
She'll be wheeled in here afterwards  
It shouldn't take so long  
You can just wait here  
(*FREDRICK nods.*)  
But don't expect too much  
It  
(*Breaks off.*)  
Well you understand

FREDRICK

(*Nods again.*)  
Must she give birth to the child no matter what  
I mean  
whether it will live or die



DOCTOR

Yes it's best that way  
 She should give birth  
 yes

FREDRICK

It must  
*(Breaks off.)*

DOCTOR

Well unfortunately I must  
*(Breaks off, nods to FREDRICK. The DOCTOR goes out and closes the door after himself. FREDRICK rises from the chair, walks around the room a bit, goes over to the chair again, sits down. He gets up again, walks over to the window, looks out at the darkness, while he stands looking out the door opens and a NURSE, also in her thirties, enters.)*

NURSE

You're standing there looking out  
*(FREDRICK turns around, nods to the NURSE, smiles.)*

FREDRICK

That's right  
*(Pause.)*

NURSE

Well  
 it's sad when  
 something like this happens

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

*(Questioning.)*  
 Her waters simply broke  
*(FREDRICK nods.)*  
 In the middle of the night and everything

FREDRICK

*(Nods again.)*  
 That's right

JON FOSSE

NURSE

And then of course you know  
that the birth

is so to speak underway

*(FREDRICK nods.)*

And as far as we know

this is

*(Breaks off.)*

well this foetus is too little by some days

for it to be able to grow up

*(Pause.)*

But if we manage to hold the birth back

for a while

A week or two

FREDRICK

How is she

NURSE

She's in good spirits

And you

FREDRICK

All right

*(Pause.)*

NURSE

No something like this isn't

*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Pause.)*

What's happening to her

NURSE

She's being examined

It's this way

well if there's a danger of infection

then

well labour must be induced then

FREDRICK

She must give birth to the child

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

And the child is going to live  
when it's born

NURSE

*(Draws it out.)*

Yes

FREDRICK

But it will live  
when it's born

NURSE

No not for certain

*(Draws it out. FREDRICK nods. Comfortingly.)*

It can be all right

FREDRICK

But the chances aren't so great

NURSE

No

strictly speaking they're not

FREDRICK

*(Questioning.)*

There are almost none

NURSE

Not theoretically

But so much happens you know

Sometimes it's all right

even if it can't be

somehow

*(FREDRICK nods. With assumed optimism.)*

It can be all right

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

*(Looks at the NURSE.)*

Will it be long

NURSE

*(Questioning.)*

Till she comes in here

*(FREDRICK nods.)*

No not very long

I'd say

She's being examined

And then there are some tests that have to be made

*(Pause.)*

FREDRICK

*(Looks towards the window, then at the NURSE.)*

I think it's got a bit lighter

NURSE

*(Looks at her watch.)*

It's getting to be morning

yes

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Long pause.)*

NURSE

Do you want me to get you anything

A little food

or

*(FREDRICK shakes his head.)*

Coffee perhaps

*(He shakes his head again.)*

*(Questioning.)*

Nothing

FREDRICK

No

*(Pause. The NURSE looks at him sympathetically, she brings her hand up to her neck and absently begins to fiddle with a*

*cross she has hanging around her neck. FREDRICK looks at her, she becomes aware of what she is doing and lets go of the cross. They smile at each other. Pause.)*

NURSE

Well it isn't so easy for you  
either  
all this  
so I thought that maybe I'd  
stay with you  
a bit  
Chat a bit  
if you wish

FREDRICK

You don't need to

NURSE

No  
*(Short pause.)*  
You may need someone  
to talk with  
perhaps  
*(Laughs a little.)*  
We don't always have time  
But tonight things have been  
rather quiet  
*(Well-meaning in the usual sort of way.)*  
We should have had much more time  
to talk to  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

Or maybe you want to be left in peace

FREDRICK

I don't know  
*(Looks up at her.)*

JON FOSSE

NURSE

*(Cautious.)*

Do you have  
several children

*(FREDRICK shakes his head.)*

I see

Well I won't dig and ask questions

FREDRICK

We don't have any children

NURSE

But of course the two of you aren't so old

FREDRICK

Old enough

*(Laughs briefly.)*

NURSE

If it goes wrong one time  
it almost always goes right  
later

Luckily that's the way it is

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

And the two of you are still young  
Not so old anyway

FREDRICK

That's right

NURSE

You live here in town

*(Checks herself.)*

No I mustn't ask

FREDRICK

No

*(Pause.)*

We did  
but then we decided to move  
out of town  
And then we were able to rent an old house  
by the sea  
outside town  
And so we moved there  
(*Short pause.*)  
Only a few weeks since we moved

NURSE

I see

FREDRICK

So now we live a bit outside of town  
(*Pause.*)

NURSE

Just so

FREDRICK

Yes  
(*Short pause.*)  
Earlier we lived in a street with a lot of traffic  
But then  
Well we thought we'd move out of town  
a little  
(*Short pause.*)

NURSE

It sounds good  
Living a bit outside town  
I think

FREDRICK

Yes it's nice  
very nice  
(*A little happy.*)  
When we met each other  
well after a while  
we decided just to move out of town

JON FOSSE

And we did  
We were able to rent an old house  
Of course it may be a bit hard going sometimes  
But on the whole it's all right  
And the house has a nice location  
by the sea  
We were lucky to be able to rent it

NURSE

And you have each other

FREDRICK

That's right

NURSE

It's good you have each other  
Not everybody has somebody else

FREDRICK

That's right  
*(Laughs a little.)*  
I know about that

NURSE

You've been very much  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes I've been very much alone  
if that's what you were going to say  
But everyone has I guess

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

We  
*(Breaks off.)*

NURSE

And then you two



*(She nods towards the door.)*

got together

FREDRICK

*(Nods.)*

That's right

*(He laughs a bit to himself.)*

And then we wanted very much to have a child

*(He looks at the NURSE.)*

A child is somehow

*(Breaks off.)*

Well somehow

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

*(A bit excited.)*

And if you'd like to know it

we met each other in a bus-shelter

One evening it was raining

*(He and the NURSE smile at each other.)*

NURSE

You had to wait a long time

for the bus

I'll bet

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Short pause.)*

It was raining and the wind was blowing

And it was completely dark

And do you know

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

What we did afterwards

JON FOSSE

NURSE

No tell me

FREDRICK

We went into a church  
Into an empty church  
We went in there  
and sat down under the stairs  
that lead to the gallery  
We sat there in the darkness and the cold  
and listened to the rain  
and held  
each other  
close

NURSE

Really  
(*Pause.*)  
And then she became pregnant

FREDRICK

Yes  
(*Stands there in thought.*)  
A child is somehow  
(*Breaks off.*)

NURSE

Yes just say it

FREDRICK

No I don't know

NURSE

What was it you were going to say

FREDRICK

I was probably going to say something like  
it being a child  
who unites  
in a way  
Holds together

No that's said wrong  
 You understand  
 It's so difficult to get it said

## NURSE

Yes it's difficult  
 to get it said  
 but I understand  
*(Short pause.)*  
 It's somehow life  
 that's what it is  
 Or  
*(She looks at him, laughs.)*  
 Difficult to express  
 all this  
*(He laughs in return.)*

## FREDRICK

Yes it doesn't do somehow to say anything about  
 what's most important

## NURSE

No  
 But  
 Well it can be all right this time too  
 It often goes well  
*(Short pause.)*  
 But if not  
 Well the two of you aren't so old  
 It's going to be all right  
 Yes  
*(She looks at him.)*  
 Isn't that true  
 It's sure to be all right  
*(He nods. Pause.)*  
 Maybe you want to be alone  
*(The NURSE walks to the door.)*  
 Shall I get something for you  
 Something to drink  
 Or you might just go out

JON FOSSE

I don't suppose you've brought  
toothpaste or anything

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

Not a thing

NURSE

And I don't suppose she has either

FREDRICK

In the morning I can go get  
some clothes and the like for her

NURSE

Yes you can

*(Pause.)*

You probably want to lie down for a sleep  
The examination may take a little time  
You haven't slept tonight you know

FREDRICK

I'm not tired

NURSE

No

But if you want to sleep  
I can wheel in a bed for you  
You can sleep here in this room

FREDRICK

Do you live here in town

NURSE

Yes

*(Pause.)*

But I'm a new-comer  
*(She laughs a bit.)*

FREDRICK

I see

NURSE

But I'd love to live in a house  
by the sea  
That's how  
I grew up

FREDRICK

Yes it's nice  
living like that

NURSE

But it's difficult to get hold  
of a house by the sea

FREDRICK

Yes  
*(Short pause.)*  
We were lucky to be able to rent  
a house by the sea

NURSE

That was lucky  
yes  
*(Short pause. Wants to cheer him up.)*  
Do you have a boat too

FREDRICK

No but next summer we'll  
try to get hold of a boat

NURSE

You're happy on the fjord  
I'm sure

FREDRICK

That's right

NURSE

Yes we have to see the sea  
or we don't feel content

FREDRICK

Yes it's good to see water

JON FOSSE

NURSE

When you're used to it  
like that

FREDRICK

I suppose so

NURSE

Sea and water  
Living water  
as it's called

FREDRICK

*(Questioning.)*  
That from the Bible

NURSE

It probably is

FREDRICK

You believe in God

NURSE

What shall I say  
*(Short pause.)*  
Came up suddenly  
that question  
*(Laughs a bit. Pause.)*  
But there must be  
something

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

I  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

I don't know so much about something like that

FREDRICK

About living water  
you mean

NURSE

*(Laughs.)*  
No not about that  
either

FREDRICK

About God  
you mean

NURSE

Neither about that nor  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

No

NURSE

*(Seems to think of something.)*  
Maybe you'd like to talk  
to a priest

FREDRICK

*(Quickly.)*  
No not at all

NURSE

But we have a chaplain here at the hospital  
There are many who  
*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes  
*(Short pause.)*  
But you believe in God

NURSE

*(Draws it out.)*  
Yes

JON FOSSE

*(Then more definitely.)*

Yes I probably do

*(FREDRICK nods. She looks at FREDRICK.)*

But you don't

FREDRICK

*(Shrugs his shoulders, suddenly becomes sad.)*

I didn't

*(Dejected.)*

I had such a terrible life

*(Laughs dejectedly.)*

Yes well

It won't do saying something like that  
that you had a terrible life

NURSE

*(Understanding.)*

Oh yes it will do

FREDRICK

So I didn't believe in God

Not at all

NURSE

And then

*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Well

*(Short pause.)*

Oh why am I bothering you

NURSE

You aren't bothering me

*(Short pause.)*

Did you start to believe in God

FREDRICK

I guess so

NURSE

Well

*(Short pause.)*

Did something definite happen



FREDRICK

Yes it was

*(Draws it out.)*

Me and Agnes

It's too stupid

but that's the way it is

anyway

I met Agnes yes

and then

*(Looks at the NURSE.)*

I told you remember that we

went into a church

just after we had

met each other

the first time

Everything became different

somehow

Difficult to say

but

*(Breaks off.)*

NURSE

And then you started to believe in God

FREDRICK

Maybe

NURSE

*(Slightly embarrassed.)*

Usually I guess it's the other way around

That it's when something goes wrong

that people

somehow

turn to God

FREDRICK

That's for sure

NURSE

But not so with you

then

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

No

Or maybe

NURSE

It's probably

so different

FREDRICK

I felt something

and then somehow something happened to me

*(Laughs briefly.)*

Quite crazy

that's for sure

*(Short pause.)*

Before that I guess life hadn't been

anything special

*(He looks at the NURSE, laughs.)*

But I guess it seldom is

NURSE

Before you

*(Breaks off.)*

FREDRICK

Yes it's too stupid

*(Pause.)*

NURSE

Well I don't know

about that

*(Short pause. Wants to show interest.)*

So you started to believe in God

after you met each other

FREDRICK

It sounds

idiotic

But

*(Breaks off.)*

But I guess that's how it is  
*(Laughs a little.)*

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

*(Looks at the NURSE.)*

You're on your own

*(She nods.)*

I see

*(Pause.)*

NURSE

Shall I get you something

*(He shakes his head.)*

Nothing

*(Pause. She walks over to the window, turns toward him.)*

Well now it's getting light

Will soon be morning

now

FREDRICK

Yes

*(He looks at the NURSE, slightly frightened.)*

They're taking a long time

NURSE

Well there are different tests that have to be taken  
 and the like

Afterwards she'll be wheeled in here

If you want to lie down

I can wheel in a bed for you

*(He shakes his head.)*

But when she comes

the two of you will probably want to sleep a bit

Then you can have a bed

in here

FREDRICK

Thanks

*(Pause.)*

JON FOSSE

NURSE

Nothing you want

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*

No

*(Draws it out.)*

Nothing

*(Pause. He looks at her, suddenly.)*

The child's going to die

NURSE

Perhaps

If

*(Breaks off.)*

But you know it's

FREDRICK

*(Interrupts her.)*

not really a child

NURSE

No not yet

FREDRICK

*(A little ironically.)*

I guess it's a question  
of how you see it

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

*(With restrained despair.)*

But it has hands

a face

hair

*(The NURSE nods.)*

Feet and toes

*(She nods.)*

And it breathes

*(She nods again.)*

It breathes  
(*The NURSE sighs.*)  
And it has a beating heart  
A mouth and eyes

NURSE  
Yes

FREDRICK  
(*Suddenly.*)  
She's such a long time

NURSE  
She's sure to come  
soon now

FREDRICK  
(*Questioning.*)  
There are different tests being taken

NURSE  
It's especially infections they're afraid of

FREDRICK  
(*Frightened.*)  
Can it be dangerous for her

NURSE  
Yes it can  
But we do everything  
to see that it won't be  
dangerous for her

FREDRICK  
And you manage it

NURSE  
Yes

FREDRICK  
Always

JON FOSSE

NURSE

Yes

*(Pause.)*

It's for the mother's sake that now and then we  
have to induce a birth too soon

FREDRICK

I know

NURSE

We do it

if we have to

FREDRICK

But if the child is going to live  
it has to be longer in the womb

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

*(Looks at her.)*

You don't have a child yourself

*(She shakes her head.)*

But you want to have a child

NURSE

*(Nods.)*

I guess I do

FREDRICK

*(Quickly.)*

You like new-born children

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

But you don't want to be a midwife

NURSE

Later maybe

I guess that's what I've thought of being

FREDRICK

But then you have to have more training

NURSE

That's right

FREDRICK

*(Questioning.)*

Does something like this happen often

NURSE

It seems so anyway

FREDRICK

Because it's things like this they work  
on here

NURSE

Yes

FREDRICK

Yes it's like that I guess

*(Pause.)*

But won't she come soon

NURSE

*(Looks at her watch.)*

Yes she'll probably come  
soon now

FREDRICK

*(Troubled.)*

Is it taking a longer time than usual

NURSE

*(Draws it out.)*

No

FREDRICK

*(Looks at her sceptically.)*

You're certain

JON FOSSE

NURSE

Maybe it's taking a little longer  
It has taken a bit of time  
*(Short pause.)*  
But that isn't unusual  
These examinations  
can often take time  
You know  
the doctors are often busy

FREDRICK

I know

NURSE

But tonight  
it's been quiet so far  
She'll probably come soon  
*(Pause. She looks at him. Questioning.)*  
You don't need anything

FREDRICK

*(Shakes his head.)*  
No  
*(Long pause.)*  
But is it possible to smoke  
somewhere or other

NURSE

*(Laughs.)*  
Not so simple  
smoking

FREDRICK

Do I have to go out

NURSE

Yes you do  
and then there's a room on the second floor  
where it's possible to smoke  
But they say it's only for the patients



FREDRICK

I see

NURSE

That's how things have got

FREDRICK

Yes

NURSE

*(Seems to remember something.)*

But I must go

I'll look in later

*(FREDRICK nods. The NURSE walks to the door, opens it, goes out, closes the door after herself. FREDRICK walks over to the mirror, stands there looking at his own mirror image, he makes some grimaces, makes his eyes large, strokes his hair, then the door is opened and the NURSE sticks her head in.)*

She'll be coming soon now

They've finished the examination

FREDRICK

*(Tense.)*

Did it go all right

NURSE

Yes everything looks all right

*(Encouraging.)*

It can be all right

this sort of thing

FREDRICK

*(Relieved.)*

It could have looked worse

NURSE

Yes it looked better

than one might have feared

*(She looks at FREDRICK for a moment, then she turns, goes out again. FREDRICK walks over to the window, looks out, where it has now grown still lighter, then he draws the*

*curtains shut, then he goes and sits down on the chair, sits looking at the door. Pause. He gets up, walks over and adjusts the curtains a little, then the door is opened, he looks at the door, looks down a bit, then looks up again, and he sees the NURSE come through the door first, she is holding one end of a hospital bed, she looks at him, smiles.)*

Yes now we're coming

*(FREDRICK nods. The bed is wheeled into the room, and AGNES's face – she half sits in the bed, her hair is now cut still shorter – comes into view, behind her one sees the DOCTOR, he pushes the other end of the bed, where AGNES has her head. AGNES looks at FREDRICK wide-eyed, she smiles at him.)*

DOCTOR

Yes now we're here

*(The NURSE and the DOCTOR wheel the bed AGNES is lying in over to the side wall near the chair, position it there, to the right of the chair, set the brake on the bed's wheels. FREDRICK goes and sits down on the chair. The NURSE takes a cord that is connected to the wall and holds it out to AGNES.)*

NURSE

If there's anything  
you must just pull on this  
then I'll come

*(AGNES nods. The DOCTOR walks into the middle of the room.)*

DOCTOR

Well you're probably tired now  
the two of you  
You better try to get a little sleep

NURSE

*(To the DOCTOR.)*

I said that we could wheel in a bed for him  
*(Nods to FREDRICK.)*

DOCTOR

Fine

*(Short pause.)*

And now the tests have all gone to the laboratory  
 As soon as they come back  
 we'll know more

NURSE

*(Encouraging, looks at the DOCTOR.)*

It can be all right  
 this sort of thing

DOCTOR

Yes of course

*(Short pause. He looks at FREDRICK and AGNES.)*

But strictly speaking  
 the prospects are probably not the best  
*(Short pause.)*

Well you'd probably like to be left in peace a bit  
*(The DOCTOR walks to the door, exits, the NURSE follows him.)*

NURSE

*(Stops in the doorway, looks at FREDRICK.)*

When you want to lie down you can just look in  
 at the office at the end of the corridor  
 then we can wheel a bed in for you

FREDRICK

Yes thanks

NURSE

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

And if there's anything  
 you must just ring  
*(AGNES nods. The NURSE goes out the door, closes it after herself. FREDRICK gets up, stands there on the floor looking at AGNES, they smile to one another, are happy to see each other again, but also a little embarrassed, don't know entirely how they should behave. They look down. Pause.)*

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

*(Looks up, tries not to worry about it.)*

I guess there's always something

AGNES

*(As if a bit relieved.)*

In the middle of the night

FREDRICK

You in the ambulance

AGNES

*(Smiles.)*

Yes

FREDRICK

And me after you in our old car  
at a terrible speed

AGNES

And you probably weren't sober  
either

FREDRICK

Indeed I was sober

*(Pause. FREDRICK goes and sits down, she lays her hand upon the covers, he takes her hand, they sit there like that for a while, both look in front of themselves. Pause.)*

AGNES

*(As if to say something.)*

Have you had a smoke

*(He shakes his head.)*

Don't you want a smoke

FREDRICK

I do

AGNES

Do you have to go out to smoke

FREDRICK

Think so

Or I can smoke in the toilet

as I usually do  
*(Laughs a little.)*

AGNES

That's right  
*(Short pause.)*  
 But then you'll probably be thrown out

FREDRICK

Oh don't worry about that  
*(He loosens his hand, brings it up to her brow, strokes her face.  
 They look at each other. Pause.)*  
 It certainly doesn't look so bad

AGNES

If I have the baby now  
 it will be too early for  
 the child to live

FREDRICK

I know

AGNES

*(Quickly.)*  
 But I'll be lying here for days  
 Maybe weeks  
 The longer it is before the labour begins  
 the greater the chance  
 that it will go all right  
*(Suddenly afraid.)*  
 But if there's an infection  
 they say the labour has to be induced  
 then I have to give birth  
 and the child

FREDRICK

*(Breaks in.)*  
 They say the child won't live

AGNES

They probably have to say that  
 I have to give birth to the child  
 and then the child will die

JON FOSSE

FREDRICK

Yes

But it can go all right you know

The examination

AGNES

*(Breaks in.)*

Yes it certainly didn't look so bad

It could certainly have looked worse

*(FREDRICK lies with his upper body on the bed, embraces her, she embraces him and they lie like that and hold each other close, stroke each other's hair. Long pause. He sits up again, looks at her.)*

It can be all right

They said so

It was impossible to know

they said

I just have to lie here

then we'll see

FREDRICK

*(Nods.)*

That's right

AGNES

It can be all right

FREDRICK

Maybe so

AGNES

It can be all right

FREDRICK

But it

*(Breaks off.)*

Are you hungry

Thirsty

AGNES

Yes a bit

FREDRICK

Shall I get something for you

AGNES

I'm not allowed to eat

Tomorrow

for breakfast

I should get something to drink

I think it's best to keep off things

if something happens

*(He nods.)*

Go have a smoke

now

FREDRICK

I surely can't leave you

AGNES

Have a smoke

now

FREDRICK

That would have been nice

AGNES

Just do it

FREDRICK

I can wait a bit

*(Pause.)*

Tomorrow

*(Breaks off.)*

AGNES

I know you feel like smoking

FREDRICK

Yes

But I can't leave you

AGNES

Tomorrow you can probably drive out  
to our house

JON FOSSE

You can bring me some clothes  
Underwear  
anyway

FREDRICK

The lights are probably burning all over the house

AGNES

Yes

FREDRICK

I'll bring some clothes  
Toilet things

AGNES

And some books  
I'll be lying here you know  
day in day out  
for weeks  
so I must have something to read

FREDRICK

That's right  
*(Short pause.)*  
Yes maybe you'll be lying here for many weeks  
*(Short pause.)*  
Your knitting  
Shall I bring it  
*(AGNES smiles at him, shakes her head. He remembers that she is knitting for the child.)*  
I shouldn't have asked about that

AGNES

And then you must fold up the baby clothes  
They're on the table in the living room  
*(He looks down, nods.)*

FREDRICK

*(On the verge of tears.)*  
All right



AGNES

And if it goes wrong  
you must pack away all the baby clothes

FREDRICK

Yes

*(He looks down, gets up as if he must do something to hold himself in, looks at her. As if to say, to do something.)*

I think

I'll have a smoke

*(She nods. Short pause.)*

You don't want me to get you anything

A paper or anything

*(She shakes her head.)*

Nothing

*(She still shakes her head.)*

AGNES

*(Calmly.)*

Have a smoke

now

*(He nods, walks out in the room, stands there and looks at her.)*

FREDRICK

*(Wants to comfort her.)*

It can turn out well

AGNES

Yes

FREDRICK

*(Imploring.)*

It will be all right

AGNES

*(Nods.)*

It'll be all right

*(Short pause.)*

But now you must go  
and smoke

*(FREDRICK remains standing there.)*

Just do it

FREDRICK

All right

*(FREDRICK goes through the door. AGNES settles herself better in the bed, pulls the cover up to her face, lies looking at the drawn curtains. FREDRICK sticks his head in the door, looks at AGNES, but she doesn't see him, so he goes out again, closes the door after himself. AGNES looks at the door. Some cars are heard outside, then some voices can be heard in the distance. AGNES looks around herself in the empty room, then the door opens and the NURSE enters, she is holding the end of a bed.)*

NURSE

*(Smiles at AGNES.)*

Your husband's out for a walk

AGNES

He had to have a smoke

*(The NURSE and the DOCTOR wheel the bed into the room, they position it in the corner behind the bed in which AGNES is lying.)*

NURSE

He still smokes

*(AGNES nods.)*

Me too

for that matter

In case anyone mentions it

*(The NURSE laughs.)*

DOCTOR

Well it's good

to have a smoke

NURSE

*(Nods towards the DOCTOR, to AGNES.)*

He smokes too so he does

And he's a doctor

DOCTOR

*(Looks at the NURSE.)*

We smoke and smoke  
day in day out

NURSE

We do indeed

DOCTOR

But the patients aren't permitted to smoke

NURSE

They have to get healthy  
that's what they have to do

DOCTOR

And we don't have to

NURSE

Not  
us

DOCTOR

No we don't need to get healthy

NURSE

Very far from it  
*(Pause.)*

DOCTOR

*(Seriously, looks at AGNES.)*

I think we'll get the tests back  
tonight

NURSE

Yes things are unusually quiet here tonight

DOCTOR

And if the tests are good  
things can be all right  
Then you must just lie here  
and we'll hope for the best  
If on the other hand there's infection

Well

I'd say that then we'll  
have to induce labour  
tonight

Just so you know  
(*AGNES nods.*)

I'll be back as soon

as we've got the test results

(*The DOCTOR goes through the door, closes it after himself.  
The NURSE walks about in the room a little undecidedly,  
then looks at AGNES.*)

NURSE

(*Questioning.*)

But you don't smoke

AGNES

(*A bit embarrassed.*)

I stopped when I got pregnant

NURSE

(*Nods.*)

Maybe you should try  
to sleep a bit

AGNES

I don't think I can

NURSE

But it would do you good

AGNES

I'm not so tired  
(*Pause.*)

NURSE

You're tired all right  
You just aren't aware of it

AGNES

Yes I suppose

NURSE

Do you want to be alone

AGNES

*(Worried.)*

Is it long till those tests come

NURSE

The doctor said they'd surely come  
quite soon

AGNES

*(Afraid.)*

Yes

NURSE

*(More confident.)*

It'll probably be all right  
you'll see

AGNES

I'm afraid

NURSE

It will be all right

AGNES

Maybe

*(Pause.)*

Fancy the waters just breaking  
I was lying in bed  
lying there sleeping  
and then the waters just broke  
quite unexpectedly

NURSE

That's the sort of thing that happens

AGNES

And if they'd broken some days later  
the child could have lived no matter what

JON FOSSE

NURSE

I guess that's how it is

AGNES

Why is that how it is

NURSE

There's a lower limit  
for saving a child

AGNES

Why

NURSE

That's how it is

AGNES

I can die  
and then the child can live

NURSE

That's not how it is

AGNES

But if I lie here  
and try to hold the birth back  
even if there's infection  
as they say  
then surely the child can live

NURSE

*(Shakes her head.)*  
You don't want to sleep a bit

AGNES

No  
If the child dies I want to die too

NURSE

You should sleep a bit  
now

AGNES

I can't sleep

NURSE

You can try  
You can wait till your husband comes  
and then you can lie down and try to sleep

AGNES

All right

NURSE

He's sure to come  
soon now  
*(Pause. She tries to smile.)*  
He's probably smoking a few cigarettes  
now he has the chance

AGNES

He's stayed so long

NURSE

I guess he really  
wanted a smoke

AGNES

Yes but he's stayed so long  
Maybe he's locked out  
Maybe he had to go out  
and the door slammed shut

NURSE

He'll come all right  
and if he doesn't come  
if he is locked out  
I'll definitely get him in again

AGNES

*(Sits up in the bed.)*  
Yes but

NURSE

Just you lie down again  
now  
It's best if you lie there  
*(A car honks outside.)*

JON FOSSE

AGNES

Is it morning already

NURSE

It sounds like it

*(She looks at her watch.)*

But it's early

It's five o'clock

*(The door is opened, and AGNES looks towards the door.*

*FREDRICK comes in.*

*To FREDRICK.)*

It's good you've come

She was waiting for you so much

AGNES

Not at all

NURSE

*(Explaining.)*

Well not so much

FREDRICK

*(Tries to speak flippantly.)*

I smoked as much as I could

NURSE

*(Looks at AGNES.)*

Now wasn't that just what we thought

And she

*(Nods at AGNES.)*

was afraid that you'd been locked out

FREDRICK

Well I was

too

NURSE

*(Questioning.)*

Oh

FREDRICK

Yes the door slammed shut

*(Looks at AGNES, explaining.)*



It was supposed to you know  
 And then I was supposed to ring the bell  
 and the lady at the reception desk  
 was supposed to come and open it  
 when I wanted back in  
 But when I rang nobody came

NURSE

She was probably just away for a walk

FREDRICK

Yes

But she finally came

NURSE

*(Walks in the direction of the door.*

*To FREDRICK and AGNES.)*

Well now you can be alone for a while

You can try to sleep a bit

*(The NURSE exits, closes the door after herself. FREDRICK goes and sits down on the chair. He looks at AGNES, looks down again, they somehow don't know what to say.)*

AGNES

*(To say something.)*

Was good to have a smoke

FREDRICK

Yes

*(Pause.)*

Shall we try to sleep a bit

AGNES

I don't think I can

FREDRICK

No

*(AGNES places her hand on the cover, and FREDRICK holds her hand, he slides a little forward on the chair. AGNES closes her eyes. They sit like that for a while.)*

I think it'll be all right

JON FOSSE

AGNES

*(Seems to awaken.)*

I think I was dreaming  
About two cars that drove one after the other  
over the water  
Two blue cars  
I think I went to sleep a bit

FREDRICK

Yes  
They had it great  
those cars

AGNES

Yes

FREDRICK

Shall I turn off the light

AGNES

No

FREDRICK

Just so you can sleep  
now

AGNES

*(Sits up a little in the bed.)*

No I don't want to sleep  
I want to feel that the child  
is there inside my womb

*(The door opens, and the DOCTOR comes in. FREDRICK rises, walks towards the DOCTOR.)*

DOCTOR

Well now we have the tests back  
It doesn't look good  
We'll have to induce labour  
*(Pause. The DOCTOR looks at AGNES sympathetically. The NURSE comes into the room.)*  
There's nothing else to do

*(The DOCTOR walks over to AGNES, looks at her.)*

Yes we'll have to induce labour  
If we don't  
your life is in danger

AGNES

But

NURSE

*(Quickly.)*

There's nothing else to do

DOCTOR

Yes we have the tests back  
and labour must be induced immediately

*(FREDRICK nods. To the NURSE.)*

Perhaps you can go and arrange things

*(The NURSE nods, goes out the door.)*

Yes it's sad

but now there's nothing else to do

*(FREDRICK goes and sits down on the chair, he brings his hand up to AGNES, they hold each other's hands.)*

There's nothing else to do

*(Short pause.)*

Before very long we'll come and get you

*(To AGNES.)*

Then you have to be put on a drip for a while

We must speed things up

After that

*(Breaks off.)*

Well

*(The DOCTOR turns, walks through the door. FREDRICK and AGNES look at each other. Pause.)*

AGNES

When you go home you must pack away the baby  
clothes  
and then

FREDRICK

All right

JON FOSSE

AGNES

And now

FREDRICK

Yes it

*(Breaks off.)*

AGNES

When you go home you must pack away the baby  
clothes  
and then

FREDRICK

All right

AGNES

And the knitting  
You can pack it away in a nice box  
*(FREDERICK nods.)*  
and then you must  
put it up in the attic or something

FREDRICK

All right  
*(Short pause.)*

AGNES

And then you must ring Mother  
*(Short pause.)*

FREDRICK

*(Nods.)*  
All right  
*(Pause.)*

AGNES

And then you must remember to ring Mother  
*(Pause. They look down. AGNES looks at him. FREDRICK  
nods. The door is opened, the NURSE and the DOCTOR come  
in, FREDRICK rises. The DOCTOR and the NURSE walk  
over to the bed, take hold of its head and foot, release the  
brake, wheel the bed out into the room, out through the door.  
FREDRICK follows, leaves the door open behind him.)*

## ACT FOUR

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*Forenoon. Cold, clear weather. The bus-shelter to the left is now pulled back and in the foreground to the right the stone steps move upwards to the paved area that leads to the large old double wooden door in need of paint that stands in the cracked stone wall, a short way up the wall to the left still hangs a small rusty iron cross. ARVID comes walking in from the left, in his blue quilted jacket, with his black satchel slung over his shoulder. He goes into the bus-shelter, sits down with the satchel on his lap, he leans his umbrella against the edge of the bench. He sits looking straight in front of himself. FREDRICK, dressed in a suit and tie, opens the church door and comes out, he leaves the door open behind him, stops on the paved area, he stands looking around himself, he turns and looks towards the door through which AGNES comes, her large stomach is now completely gone, and she is nicely dressed, in her blue frock, and she closes the door after herself. FREDRICK goes to AGNES and they embrace each other, remain standing like that for a moment. Then they release each other, stand there looking at each other.*

FREDRICK

*(Smiles sadly.)*

I guess we'll just go

*(AGNES nods. They walk down several steps, stop, turn and look towards the door, then they look at each other, they sit down on the steps, remain sitting there looking straight in front of themselves. FREDRICK turns then and looks towards the door again, then he looks at AGNES.)*

Yes well

AGNES

Now it's over

*(Pause.)*

FREDRICK

And now again there's  
only us two

JON FOSSE

AGNES

Yes

*(He puts his arm around her shoulders. She looks at him frightened.)*

If we hadn't gone into the church that day  
then

Do you believe something like that has a meaning

FREDRICK

*(Draws it out.)*

No

AGNES

One can never know

*(Short pause.)*

And it isn't important  
either

FREDRICK

No

But after all there are so many connections

AGNES

And a priest has buried the child

FREDRICK

Yes

AGNES

It was a child you know

FREDRICK

That's right

*(Short pause.)*

It was a child

AGNES

Yes

FREDRICK

It was a child

And I'm always going to love that child

AGNES

Me too

FREDRICK

I'm always going to remember her face

Her hands

It's a child hardly anyone has seen

Us

The people in the hospital

A girl that was born and died

That's all

No more than that

And so I've seen her

And you

And we'll remember her

I guess I'll always remember her

Her hands

Her face

*(Short pause.)*

Her hands looked like mine

Her face looked like yours

*(FREDRICK rises, looks at AGNES.)*

Anyhow I'll remember

I'll remember until I die myself

till long after I'm dead

I'll remember

She'll live in me

I'll make her live

AGNES

*(Rises, a little afraid.)*

Can't we go

FREDRICK

*(Nods.)*

And why shouldn't she

be born

Why shouldn't she live

JON FOSSE

AGNES

We have to go

*(AGNES takes hold of his coat sleeve.)*

Come on

we'll go

FREDRICK

Yes we just have to go don't we

AGNES

We have to go

*(FREDRICK nods, but remains standing there. Pause.)*

Can't we go

*(FREDRICK nods, but still remains standing there.)*

FREDRICK

Yes we have to don't we

*(AGNES and FREDRICK remain standing there. ARVID gets up, slings his satchel over his shoulder, he walks out of the shelter, over to the right, he glances up at FREDRICK and AGNES, stops, stands there looking down. FREDRICK and AGNES start to walk down the steps. They stop in the middle of the flight, look at ARVID, he still stands looking down.)*

How's it going with you

ARVID

*(Looks at FREDRICK.)*

All right thanks

FREDRICK

Have you found many bottles

lately

*(ARVID shakes his head.*

*Questioning.)*

Not a single one

*(ARVID looks down again.)*

ARVID

*(Still looks down.)*

I've been wondering a bit



*(Draws it out.)*  
where you live  
*(He looks at them.)*

FREDRICK

*(Looks at AGNES.)*  
Ah where we live  
*(She looks at FREDRICK.)*  
Well we got hold of a house  
*(ARVID looks down. FREDRICK and AGNES hold each other by the hand, walk farther down the steps.)*

ARVID

*(Looks at them.)*  
No today I haven't found  
a single bottle  
*(FREDRICK and AGNES have walked down the steps, they stop.)*

FREDRICK

*(Looks at ARVID.)*  
Is that so  
*(ARVID shakes his head, he turns, then goes out to the right, disappears in the darkness. Pause. FREDRICK turns and looks up the steps, towards the door.)*

AGNES

*(To FREDRICK.)*  
We have to go  
*(FREDRICK nods.)*  
Yes we have to I guess

FREDRICK

We have to go  
*(Pause. AGNES and FREDRICK walk over to the right and as they walk it grows gradually brighter and brighter.)*

*The End.*











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JON FOSSE

# PLAYS ONE

In *Someone is Going to Come* the two of them want to be together, just the two of them, so they leave the city and buy a remote house by the sea. But is it possible to do what they want to do? Won't somebody come? Surely someone will come. *The Guitar Man* is a poignant monologue in which a busker sings songs to an audience that is always on the move, always passing him by. *The Name* (winner of the Ibsen Prize in Norway and the Nestroy Prize for Best Play in Austria) tells the story of an estranged family forced to live under one roof. When a pregnant girl and the father of the child have nowhere to live, they move into her parents' house. But the parents have never met the father-to-be, and don't yet know about the pregnancy. In *The Child* a man and a woman find each other in a bus stop on a rainy night. They hold each other close. They rent an old house out of town. The woman becomes pregnant. But the child is too small to survive.

In these four varied plays Jon Fosse's unique linguistic style, at once poetic and naturalistic, magnifies the love and pain of ordinary people seeking to live their lives.

Jon Fosse's work includes novels, poetry, essays and books for children. He is one of the most produced playwrights in Europe and his plays have been translated into more than forty languages. Oberon publishes *Plays Two* (*A Summer's Day, Dream of Autumn, Winter Three* (*Mother and Child, Sleep my Baby Sleep, Afternoon, Birth and Death Variations*), *Plays Four* (*And We'll Never Be Parted, The Song of the Sparrow, Meanwhile the Lights Go Down and Everything Becomes Black*), *Plays Five* (*Suzannah, Living Secretly, The Dead Dogs, A Red Butterfly's Wings, Telemakos, Sleep*), *Nightsongs, The Girl on the Sofa* and *I Am The Wind*. Fosse was made a Chevalier of the Ordre national du Mérite of France in 2007 and received The International Ibsen Award in 2010.



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