

Yggdrasil

A Journal Of The Poetic Arts

August 2018

VOL XXV!, Issue 8, Number 304

Editor: Klaus J. Gerken

European Editor: Mois Benarroch

Contributing Editor: Jack R. Wesdorp

*Previous Associate Editors: Igal Koshevoy; Evan Light; Pedro Sena; Oswald Le Winter;
Heather Ferguson; Patrick White*

ISSN 1480-6401

Table of Contents

The Pulsar

by Jack R. Wesdorp

The Pulsar

Caveant: The set for this play is designed for a front-of-the-house audience; it probably won't work for a theater-in-the-round stage.

All stage directions are from audience point of view.

[stage directions are in brackets]
(character motivations are in parentheses)

Lighting is largely from multiple overhead pinspots.

The chronology is highly compressed and speeds up towards the end.

Costumes reflect character realization.

The characters represent abstractions.

Set

The set is on a deep stage. A series of three nested semi-circular paths are open to the front. The back wall is also curved and is painted flat non-reflective black. The paths are separated from one another by diaphanous gauze curtains; therefore, the effect is of a de facto labyrinth accessible from stage front. Each gauze veil sports adhesive stars, spiral nebulae, etc., lit from overhead. This represents the depth of the universe.

Characters enter the labyrinth from SL and SR and dialog during their various passages to the center. Center stage is a round dias a foot high draped so you can't see under it. It seems to float above the floor. The dias is lit from overhead and spots from the house. There's a central doughnut hole through which rises the djed column, four feet high with a round capital plate that rotates on a motor, so like a microwave turntable. The column is adorned with a spiral of glass mosaic tiles, highly reflective. The column itself does not turn and its base is hidden down the hole.

The column represents the divine creative force of the universe. Each tile encodes the biome of a galaxy; indeed, all the information needed to make that galaxy. Atop the pedestal is a large cornucopia, gold, a foot wide at the flare, set on its large end, flare out, small end up; inside the horn are various artifacts used in the events, none visible to the audience. The horn rotates slowly and can be lit inside.

The gauze curtains can be raised en masse behind the horn to form an archway tunnel to a secret door in the back wall that connects to the unseen back stage; the tunnel is only used in the epilogue.

We are at the center and the end of the universe.

Time

Period between the end of one universe and the creation of the next in an everlasting continuum.

At this point, the Y chromosome no longer exists.

Characters in order of appearance

House

Manager: May be female or male. Wears formal attire.

The House Manager belongs to the audience and to our time.

Abis: Abis represents curiosity and exploration.

Female, 26, Hispanic, wears a black fishnet body stocking under a just-below-the-knee black skirt and short-sleeved T shirt. Both are trimmed in forest green at the collar, sleeves and hem. She wears a large crux ansata, emerald green, on a silver chain as a badge of office. She wears crepe-soled boat shoes. She professes her covenant with religious conviction. An Aquarius, she aims straight, travels true, with the accuracy of a Sagittarius. An explorer, first out, doesn't look back, completely comfortable in the abyss.

Shakti: Shakti represents vitality and ability.

Female, perennially 17, a well-endowed oriental, radiating glowing good health. She wears an orange gown down to the knees, trimmed in scarlet, a gold ribbon ties back her hair. Shearling moccasins on her feet. She carries a large wooden ring on a chain as her office emblem. She is the empath, capable of intuitive leaps, an industrious partner attentive to all. In this she is the ideal mediator. Completely Capricorn. Her lineage enables natural selection. A true bird of paradise.

Babel: Babel represents control and self-image.

Female, a four-square 40, Nordic blonde, close-cropped hair, a statuesque militante. She moves and speaks with precision, takes her time making decisions, always gets where she is going. She wears navy-blue cargo pants tucked into shank-high black boots. Belt loops carry a dagger, laser pointer, a flashlight. Garrison belt. Lots of pockets in her jacket. Full of paraphernalia (a communicator, minipad, weaponry). She's the translator with thousands of languages at her command. She hides her eyes behind a polaroid visor. She's not above twisting scripture to her current agenda. She's a Leo, with Scorpio as her minor aspect.

Croyne: Croyne represents knowledge and harmony.

Female, looks 60 but is much older. Of an ancient Melanesian lineage, expert seafarers who can dream their destination and pluck islands from the deep. A Pisces, she's good at the endgame, in terminal places, witnesses the lightning stroke that fells the towers of man. She bears spangles in her hair, wears the habit of her order, a simple ankle-length grey robe trimmed with lilac ribbon at the hem, sleeves and flare of the cowl. Her grey slippers are silent. In the mandarin sleeve pockets, she carries a glass ball and a glass tablet, like the ones on the djed column. Ordo Librorum curates knowledge, so she's a librarian and archivist. Their holdings are vast, yet always accrue more. The Order is non-judgmental and congenial. Croyne extends information to all impartial. No strings attached, divorced from her own opinion. She is oath-bound to do so; if she were to break her vows, the faculty will leave her. This is unthinkable. Thus the Order's reputation as a depository of truth is secure. As with Abis, in Croyne, curiosity rules. As with Shakti, empathy runs deep. As with Babel, in Croyne translation is altruistic, the means to dissemination, and as with Mem, Croyne is plugged into some divine law.

Mem: Mem represents service and precipitation; she has been at God's disposition since the beginning.

Female. Mem is timeless and ageless. It's possible that she's been all along. We don't know. She is a large woman, solidly hourglass, essentially feminine. Mem wears a one-piece body suit in silver spandex lamé. It clings, shows off what she's got, and that's a lot. She moves with a dancer's grace, insinuating herself through the intervening space. We believe she's an artifact, a construct, a cyborg with formidable intelligence. Her function is to serve; she does this with ease and expertise. Always one jump ahead of the curve. The handmaiden of divinity, she is conjunction and completion. She is the avatar and conduit of and for thought. As such, she mediates between as above so below, as in the macrocosm, so in the microcosm. Of them all, she is the most conversant with reality. Mem waits; her moment is now.

God: God represents intuitive competence.

Humans tend to anthropomorphize divinity. The theater isn't much different. After all, we have to show you something. For the sake of this play, God is a little old black lady who don't take no shit. She wears a robe of many colors that is the signature of her passage. She's just spent a long, hard epoque. Watch out.

The Pulsar The Pulsar is embodied in the pillar at center stage. It arises from nothing and vanishes into nothing. It represents evolution and potential.

Act 1

[Curtain is closed]

[House lights down]

[House Manager steps onto the proscenium. He/she carries a lit keroscene lantern and a hand bell, sets the lantern at his/her feet, rings bell once, the call to attention]

HM: Welcome. Hello out there. Thank you all for being here.

[gazes up for a while, waits a suitable vacuous moment]

There's no space. No mass to move through time. No light. Not even darkness. Only potential and it is infinite.

[another ponderous silence]

Then about 14 billion years ago, something happened, we don't really know what. We're not very good at infinity. Fourteen billion is like that. So the astronomers and mathematicians say that one two three many years ago, something weird happened. A singular event. Light sprang forth out of seemingly nothing from, perhaps, limitless negative light. Words don't do it justice. From that zero point, it grew inexorably, creating space for itself, making time through which to move, coalescing into mass, losing its heat, warming the void. All in less than an eye blink. So it is that the universe is born. Stars burn. Planets get heavy. Everything moves in spiral trajectory. Gravity works. Stuff loves other stuff. And all this promenade is in utter silence. Out there.

[another pause]

In here, for the sake of good theater, we provide you with subliminal cues. Sound and lights, smoke and mirrors. The smell of association.

[another pause]

This has happened many times. Continues to happen. Infinity dictates that the universe is endlessly reborn in chronological procession. That the distances are so vast as to accommodate all creation. It's truly magnificent. We love it. We are curious. We explore. Come along. Now is a good time. All of infinity is now. About 4 billion years ago, in a backwater of a rather nice spiral galaxy, our sun fired up. Yellowish, in the main sequence. Stuff from previous suns that went kabloojie. Elements like carbon, sulfur, silicon, chlorine, aluminum, they all went to school together. Met with hydrogen and nitrogen. Oxygen. Ha! Water. Ho! Crystal depositions. Organic muck from lightning strokes. Primordial soup. Hee! Now we're us. So far, so good. We share the place. Evolution rules, tentacles gather food. Ferns breathe, critters croak, learn what not to do, it's a long long long process. But it's inevitable. Given enough time, wherever stars shine, there is life. Call it miraculous.

[Pause. Rings bell once]

There's always a bell curve. Some critters are smarter. Some trees grow bigger. Some gain the ascendancy.

And then a crucial event happened. One of them looked up and saw the stars. A first. The first time for anything is magickal. That creature with the big eyes and prehensile hands wondered. Became aware. Decided to find out what that is. Worked it out because solving a problem feels really good. And from there it's a short leap to all sorts of superstitions. Knowledge. God becomes real in the eyes of the beholder. Religion flourishes, awesome suppositions. Order out of chaos. Black and white, up, down, more, less, our god is bigger than your god. Divinity lives

in the stars. Orion kills a lion. Fire belches from Olympus. Chariots course the firmament. Ships navigate the globe. There is war in heaven. As above, so below. Weapons. Leap to the heights. Irridium hulls pervade the solar system. There is cross-fertilization. We prosper, die, live long, and move on. Again, this happens all the time. Bigger. Better. Onwards.

[Pause. Rings bell.]

Eventually, we don't know how long, it runs its course. Mass devolves, ablates, succumbs to its own weight and speed. The light dims to red, fades to black, returns to its source. Potential smiles. The stage of nothing is set. We will show you this in a highly compressed 40 minutes. The past, present and future history of the universe.

We populate the stage with communal characters, the parliament of owls is convened. We've run this sequence many times and we like it. Each time something new pops up, understandable out of the most abstruse concepts, so we keep doing it. Liking it. Feels really good. We get it. We hope you do too.

[picks up lantern, leaves stage via the audience]

[cue audio on PA, a pure tone sine wave at 13K. This represents potential. It lasts 10 seconds]

[Curtain up on a dark stage]

[wait 10 more seconds, then a ripping sound of fabric being torn apart, then a massive strobe flash]

[start horn rotation]

[cue audio subsonics. A 30 Htz wave echoes through the void, long reverberations]

[overhead pinspots come on gradually, from in to out, central dias remains dark. Back wall is lit with blue light that shifts to red over the course of the play]

[enter Abis from audience SL. She makes a running straight arrow leap into the left outer path, then settles into a steady shuffle in cadence with her chant]

A: Hungry, hungry, gotta find some food,
hunter, wanderer, help me feed our kids,
runner, warrior, accumulate loot,
farther, faster, plunder the planets,
more shore, for sure, catalog that rock,
bigger, badder, better than we've got,
straight signs, curved lines, nothing doesn't lock
dark star, pulsar, what the frack is that?

[The central dias lights up. She pauses, takes a good look, points her crux ansata at it, nods, takes a deep breath, enters the second passage from the right side.]

[Shakti dances to the left outer path, where Abis entered, follows Abis]

S: For to dance the expanse

of everything there is,
travel far morning star,
you cannot look away,
pheromone chromosome,
left-handed eurcharist,
turn around, you have found
your tantric rondolay.

[Shakti and Abis meet in adjacent passages back center stage. Abis does a 360 degree turn, then continues, Shakti bows, smiles, moves on]

[Abis steps steady, holds the ansata before her as a compass needle. Shakti dips and weaves, holds the ring before her as a lodestone]

[The next two lines are spoken simultaneously by Abis and Shakti]

S: Captured by a sandal strap, the path is long, beware.

A: I am aware of your song, your hand is on my heart.

[separately, and ad lib]

S: Carnelian ambition,
I wear suns in my heart.

A: Our mistress yogini,
we are keening apart.

S+A: Auwe, auwe.

[Babel rises from the aisle, makes a dot and dash to stage left into the outer passage. Shakti makes her turn into the second passage at SR, waves and beckons to Babel. Abis holds back, then enters the third passage at stage left, well behind Babel so as not to interfere with Shakti's and Babel's interaction]

[Babel moves with military precision, her upper torso and arms almost robotic, short steps, feet planted carefully, all conscious aforethought]

B: Rosetta, demotic,
vendetta, despotic,
these are my stock in trade.

[She fingers her dagger, feels for the other accoutrements hanging from her belt. There seem to be some insecurity issues here.]

B: Prospectus, horizon, rejectus
Disguising my clock in retrograde.

[Babel and Shakti meet in the adjacent outer passages at back center stage. Abis, in the inner smaller semi-circle, has forged ahead]

B: [to Shakti] Hah! Who goes there.
Show me your face.

[Babel whips out her flashlight, tries to discern through the veil]

S: (coy) Oh, you're worth a curtsy. I'm the salt of your race, the rose in bloom. Would you know me?

B: What flower is this whose nectar beguiles?

S: I am the gist, the hex that smiles, I am your doom, I could be yours. Now.

[Babel returns the flashlight to sheath. Fingers her pockets with uncertainty. Decides to ask more questions]

B: Greetings. You will submit?

S: We do not submit. We share.

B: (nods slowly) Agreed. And where will we meet?

S: Wherever we fare, in the middle of it.

B: (quizzically) You speak in riddles.

[Abis has finished her final traverse, enters the inner sanctum, overhead lamps flood the dias. She circles it in awe]

S: No so, my dear.

A: Hey! It's in here.

[Croyne enters the outer semi-circle from stage left]

C: (easy, relaxed)

Mesozoic, Neolithic, genetic, systemic, mythic.

[Abis holds her ansata upright before her as if warding off evil, peers through the loop]

[Babel does a 180 degree turn, follows Shakti side by side, back to the stage left entrance, then both enter the third path, Shakti leads]

C: Feral, spatial, social, serial, racial.

[Croyne enters the second path at stage right]

C: Parallel, cellular, heavenly rings,
atomic, melodic.

All: Everything sings.

[Shakti and Babel enter the inner path. Croyne follows them right away]

C: Memory runs, it minds the shop,
until the suns grind to a halt.
When lightning wanes, then silence reigns.
We all will ask, Can we go back?
Light wears a mask, she fades to black.

All: The stars are moot, we are the old,
Where's the future, what does it hold?

[Shakti, Babel and Croyne enter into the inner sanctum, examine the horn, talk, in hushed churchland tones]

[Slowly, one by one, the overhead pinspots fade out from in to out. From here on the chant cadence stops. They speak in their natural voices, curious, perhaps fatalistic]

A: [to Shakti] Hello again, you've been on my mind. (There is blatant chemistry between them.)

B: (bristles) Who are you, what is this?

[indicates surroundings, points at horn]

A: I was first out, been doing that since we wore monkey faces. And this obviously isn't a pulsar. I thought it was.

B: (not to be put off) What's the meaning of this?

[looks from Abis to Shakti]

And that? [nods at the horn]

A: Back off, honey. You're not the queen bee here and you don't have a monopoly on the pollen.

[Babel strokes her dagger suggestively]

C: Don't do that. We outnumber you. [ever the realist, Croyne continues to mediate between Abis and Shakti]

[While they talk, the back wall slowly fades into dark red shift]

[Mem unobtrusively glides in from the audience center aisle, stands at the ready, far stage right]

B: [to Abis, sarcastic and confrontational] All right, first out, where are we?

A: (sweetly) I don't like your attitude. I'm not the enemy. I was the first to look up and wonder about the stars while you were howling in your cave burning bear bones. By the way, bears don't like that. They have long memories. As for this place, it's not a neutron star, or we'd be

smooshed. But there's a certain gravitas in here that I, and apparently you all, find really attractive. Yes?

[nods of agreement]

A: [to Croyne] You're the oldest, wear the cowl, what do you think, what's this about?

[points at the horn]

[Croyne takes the glass ball from her sleeve, looks through it at the horn, then applies it to the glass tablet from her other sleeve, reads from it]

C: Seems to be a transmitter and receiver, some sort of hysteresis feedback loop. Works across the entire spectrum. Could be radar. It for sure knows we're here. I read four, no, five individuals.

[They've not yet see Mem]

C: Four organic, about the same intensity, one, oh, creepy organic but maybe not, a lot, I mean a lot bigger in mass and mind. Who dat?

[Babel, temporarily distracted, pulls a concave compact mirror from a pocket, holds it palm out as a warding device]

A: [to Babel] That your vampire repeller?

[Babel sets her jaw, keeps scanning, ignores the ridicule]

C: (converses formally) I've seen those. Sometimes it works as a devastating weapon. [to Babel] Careful with that. Point, point it at ... at ... us. Definitely don't point it at her [indicates Shakti]. You'd be really sorry. If it goes off.

[Babel nods grudgingly. Croyne scans Abis.]

C: Ah. Here's something. This one resonates.

[scans Shakti some more]

And this one partakes of all of us. How's that feel?

S: Better. In tune. I hear many voices. In unison, yet poly, Polyhymnia. There's power in it. What'd you do?

C: Getting a line onto you. You're a focal point. Ha. You're telesmatic. What you've got reverberates through the deeps. Oh, my, De Profundis.

[Babel pulls out a red laser pointer, tries to zero in on Mem, who they still can't see. Using the pointer, Babel plays cat and mouse with Mem. Mem moves around, always one jump ahead of the dot. Babel points at the djed column, strikes a tile, which pings]

A: [to Babel] Would you stop that. We don't know what it is. You might accidentally booger something vital. [Babel agrees, returns the pointer to pocket]

[Abis looks inquiring at Croyne.]

[Mem returns to her post, a little closer to Babel, it's a watchful Mexican stand-off.]

[Croyne turns her attention to the djed column, scans a tile, transfers the glass ball to her slate, reads from it in surprise]

C: Sheesh, unbelievable. There's a hideous amount of information stored in these tiles. I'm only getting part of it. Seems to be a holographic flux. Not even particulate physics. It's so compressed in there that gravity annihilates itself. Near as I can figure out each of these tiles holds the encoding of an entire galaxy. All the mineral stuff. All the biome. Nucleonics. Radiance. To break the envelope is ... I don't want to think about that. Too ridiculously dangerous. This isn't science. It's magick. Will power. Imagination. There's lots of 'em.

[Abis steps onto the dias, looking into the hole from which the djed column arises]

A: No bottom. Comes up out of nowhere. [to Babel] Light?

[Babel shines her light in there]

B: Impossible.

A: You think so, eh?

[Babel still carries her compact mirror, Mem moves directly behind her]

A: [to Babel] Stop trying to impose your will on something you don't understand. For all we know, these tiles are the real galaxies. Careful with that.

[Shakti steps up on the dias between them]

S: Who built this?

C: Aw, good one.

[She stands back with the ball as a monocle, consults her tablet]

Hm. Egypt, on a planet called Earth or Dirt. The djed column is shown on pyramid walls, their way of writing – that's how they extend knowledge. It's called presence of divinity. The backbone of the universe. A spinal column. Kinda superstitious. But maybe they were onto something.

[Babel adds a mesh grillwork to her visor]

B: I can decipher this shaft.

[They wait expectantly, Mem hovers directly behind Babel, hands out to perhaps catch her as Babel reads the column]

B: Eye. One eye. Many eyes. I can see through my own eyes. Your eyes. (In the ensuing monologue, her voice rises into near hysterics). I can see us before now. Very little of the future. Stars are winking out. Those are God's eyes. When they can't see, there is nothing. But I can see nothing. I can see myself falling inwards into nothing. I see possibility, parallel tracks, multiple divergeant threads, cords, hawsers, all spirals moving through nothing, nothing, nothing conducts thought. I can see myself thinking. These thoughts are not my own. Those are. I will choose those. I will destroy these.

[Mem reaches forward, removes the mirror from Babel's hand, hands it to Croyne, who examines it. Babel goes rigid, reaches up as if diving into the sky, then falls backward as a tree felled in the forest. Mem catches her, lays her on the dias. Abis and Shakti make room. Shakti takes Babel's head on her lap, sits with her, sets her own wood circlet on Babel's head as a crown, Mem fades into conscious view. Abis and Croyne regard Mem with awe. They can see her in the here and now. Croyne secures Babel's mirror compact in her sleeve.]

C: (matter of factly) A neutron emitter. Large particle beam. Set for lethal.

[stars in the inside veil disappear, red shift deepens round the back wall]

A: (startled) Where did you come from?

C: Who are you? Do we trust you?

M: My name is Mem. I'm the attendant here.

S: Of what, where is this?

M: You're at the center, at the source.

A: Uhhuh, of what?

M: Oh, of everything.

C: We'll need some more context.

M: Sure. Everything, that includes everyone, maintains a direct line back to the source. I facilitate that, I mediate between divine process and mundane trajectory. There is no stasis in the universe. Everything moves relative to everything else ...

C: Except here?

M: In a singularity, at the center, the axial rotation is null. You and I have a lot in common. Consider yourself in training for my job. (big smile)

C: And what are we?

M: Wisdom, the knowhow to ask the right questions. You four are an egregore, separately and collectively. Each of you embodies some very basic functions of life. Together you are successful.

[Shakti shifts the circlet on Babel's head, shakes her own head, distressed]

A: (to Shakti) You've decided?

[Shakti looks up, connects, keeps her hand on the circlet, seriously conflicted.]

S: I would do this for anyone. I have to. I cannot ignore the call to heal. But, yes, I've decided.

A: So be it, I won't pursue you. Can I help?

[questioning gazes at Mem]

S: [to Mem] What has happened here? I feel lost. It tastes of grandeur.

M: When mortality accesses divinity, it does so at its own peril. Because the platform of an organic brain doesn't have that critical mass of interconnectivity. There's just enough synapses to deal with decision making. The mass in your head is not infinite; the thinking universe is infinite. We're not very good with eternity. Not equipped to grasp its implications. Your friend, Babel, she's well named, falls afoul of a major pitfall facing magicians. Arrogance. The power feels so good that it swamps out reason.

C: Is this related to intuition?

M: Yes. But even intuition is filtered, clamped, quarantined.

S: Babel. What has she done?

M: Is still doing in the present.

A: Is she dead?

M: Thinking doesn't stop after death. Shakti feels lost. That's her empath at work and describes the situation very well.

C: Babel. So not dead?

M: Wandering the possibilities of mind. Thought draws from a bottomless well.

C: Catatonic?

M: All her volition is being spent on decision making. It's not enough.

A: Then where is she?

M: Attend. Babel followed a common thread. The path to self-knowledge. You cannot hide from your own conscience. She found herself, examined herself, and found herself wanting. Naturally, she wanted to change herself. Life is change. But feared too much change. In that case, she would be a different core personality. We don't like that. The groove of self runs deep. Major change is fearsome; minor change is allowable. So Babel opted for a parallel path.

C: But there's no potential pitfall there. Logic dictates that new paths diverge. There are no parallel straight lines in the mass of the universe. Everything moves tangentially.

M: Very good. Just so with mind. It wanders. So Babel wound up in a mental labyrinth. Divinity encourages mirroring. Alas, we're not up to it. Cannot be.

S: Then what's to be done?

A: And can we do it?

M: Groupwork is stronger than singular effort. And a single-minded group is stronger still. Furthermore, all the elements are present right now. Last, greatest of all, I believe that you are lucky. Luck is a divine attribute. Luck is hope. Hope is eternal. Yes?

A, S,

C: Agreed.

[Croyne stands before Abis, looks her in the eyes]

C: [to Abis] You hesitated. And just now you blinked.

M: There can be no holding back. Half-hearted is useless. May actually lead the work astray.

C: [to Abis] Your rival for [points to Shakti] her affection lies supine before you. Defenceless. We're not even sure that it's her in there. Kill her now. Use her own dagger. We won't stop you.

[Abis considers, denies the suggestion, looks at Mem]

M: I will not interfere. Only if the consequences of the act endanger the inner sanctum.

C: If you're squeamish about the blood and immediacy, use this.

[Croyne offers Abis the compact mirror]

C: A neutron particle beam. It disrupts cell function, is lethal several days later. You won't be here to see it, nor will we hold you accountable. Here we are beyond jurisprudence. We make the rules.

[A considers again, denies the offer a second time]

A: [To Mem] What would be the consequence if I do?

M: Shakti will turn away from you, do or don't, you won't have her.

[Abis regards Shakti, Shakti nods somberly]

A: Then it's decided. Nollo contendere. I'm in.

S: What's to be done? I'm not getting much here [adjusts the circlet]

So she's sleeping?

M: Dreaming.

A: Is she happy?

M: Dreams are how you clean the dross out of your mind. Personal fantasy is very real. Fulfilling so, yes, probably she's happy.

A: Then why should we do anything for her?

C: Unvocation is inevitably lethal. No food, no drink, the body dies in seven days. Then she's free.

A: So it's a death wish?

M: Could be. But it need not be.

S: Again. What's to do?

C: That's mostly up to you, my dear, you have decided.

S: I want her back, I want her with me because vitality is driven by completion.

C: Then let us contemplate what may yet be.

[Mem supplies a futon pallet and pillow from under the dias. They lay Babel on it, head to the right, square before the dias. Mem hands two candlesticks and two candles to Croyne. The candles are gimmicked to flare or fade at will.]

M: For the ancient ritual.

[Croyne searches Babel's pockets, finds a lighter wand, sets the candles at head and foot, lights them, then sits square before the body. Shakti at her right, Abis at her left. Mem walks to the opposite end of the dias and sits down, back to the audience and facing the rear of the stage. Croyne puts her arm around Shakti's shoulder]

S: Do you think I should remove my circlet from her brow?

[The outer passage lights fade one by one. The back wall goes to a darker red. Lights over the dias dim a bit]

M: [speaking to the back wall] You lead. Each contributes as you see fit.

[S retrieves her circlet, hangs it round her neck on its chain.]

[Presently one, then the other candle flares, resumes its normal size. This happens three times over the ensuing dialogue]

A: Well, there's some action in there. Any impressions?

S: It's easier a little removed from the focus.

A: Where is she?

S: I get some central location, a place of authority.

C: You've just described the lighthouse beacon place that we're in right now.

S: Oh. Crap.

[Mem nods, doesn't speak]

A: But it could be here. She's the control type.

[Croyne and Mem both nod]

A: Why don't I just go in there, find her, haul her out. I've had my snoot in all sorts of weird places. Rooting around in someone's head. Should be doable.

[Mem shakes her head, no]

S: You mean put on her visor and multiplier mesh?

A: Well. Yes. That's how she did it. [to Croyne] Watcha thinking?

C: Perilous. Once you're close you'd want to be drawn into your own head. That's much more interesting. Interesting than someone else's. Then we lose you too.

[Mem nods agreement]

A: Right. Crap.

S: (to A) Abs, change places with me?

[They do, Shatki at B's feet, A at her head]

[Pause]

S: If. When she comes back do you think she'll want me?

C: You? You're a shoo-in, my dear. The shekinah abroad in the firmament. You've had many names: Shakti, the feminine principle, Aphrodite, Freya, das ewige weibliche, Maja, Eve, magna mater, aura, the shiela, you've been Binah, hearthrob, Demeter, throughout the eukumene. You are ours. We cannot look away. Babel will want you. You have decided. Never doubt it.

[Mem nods] [pause]

S: Where do you suppose we'll go?

C: Babel will want security, the comfort of the past, certainly so after dissociation. I don't know if that's possible.

[Mem nods yes] [pause]

A: Would removing her visor make any difference?

C: It might. I advise against it. Clear sight got her into this mess. It's probably necessary to get her out of it. Here, use this.

[Croyne hands over her glass monocular, Abis applies it to her eye.]

A: Marvelous. Telescopic and microscopic. Neutrino?

C: Charged from a pocket pack.

[Abis scans Babel]

A: Useful. I can see a plaza with statuary set about. Dates, names, many scripti. Seems fitting for a translator. She's well named. But prone to missteps.

[hands back monocular] [Mem nods]

S: [to Croyne] How would you charge up luck?

C: Aw, good one.

A: Focus?

C: Knowledge.

S: (goes into reverie) Babel, a spiral tower. Many tongues. Broad at the base. One-pointed at the top. Top is one, ecce pluribus unum. Tower, self-image, the edifice we build to indwell. Sometimes it leans, to see from the top, down into the plaza, there she is crossing, now.

[Mem hunches over to separate herself from the groupwork.]

C: My hair just stood up.

S: Now, (urgently) right now!

A: (whispers) Now is forever.

[Croyne sits ramrod straight, extends her hands over the body, palms down, Shakti reaches over, touches her circlet to Babel's feet. Abis kneels at Babel's head, touches it with her ansata. They speak in unison.]

C: Osiris reassembled, Lazarus from the dead, Christ ascendant, Babel come forth.

S: Babel! Babel! Come.

A: Go! Go! Go!

[Babel's arms come up, stiff. They raise her to the vertical. Babel looks confused. Then sees the pallet and candles. Both candles flare, then go out. Babel recognizes the implications]

C: Welcome back.

B: How long have I been gone?

S: Oh, a while.

A: How long does it seem to you?

B: Many lifetimes.

C: Understandable. Mental time is wonderfully elastic. Whole lives can pass by in mere seconds. Can you remember what happened?

[They stand around her. Mem uncurls herself, returns, removes the futon, pillow and candles. Then she sits again facing the back wall while they talk.]

B: (surprised) I'm alive.

[shakes head, deep breath]

I don't know how to answer the question, so real it happens right now, diving into a whirlpool, each droplet a jewelled pearl

[her delivery is cadenced, more fluid, her movements less choppy, she turns within their purlius, facing each]

of marvelous signature, that's how stars and souls endure, I know the gravity that sucks me down, the flowing flight

[she dips and bows]

that spins me, dips round, I slip my hands into streams, fantastic personal dreams that feel very, very good.

[facing Shakti] and you are well understood.

I examine, I go home, I look at my chromosomes,

[to Croyne]

at the book that is myself, delve into what could have been, bootless in a mental wind, I enter the mirror hall,

[to Abis]

see myself barefoot and small among the giants of earth, decide that I am worthless, can't hide from my reflections, how vast is the attraction of what has passed, what can be, I'm lost, that's infinity.

M: [speaks to the back wall] That's what we store in the glass, questions, the lore of the djed. In that, we mirror the past, present and what's up ahead.

C: [grabs Babel by the shoulders, searches her eyes]

You're still the same but
... turned about,
We feared your flame
was burning out.

[they go back to conversational speech]

B: When I went to ground, I just kept making circles. There was no other way. I made many lives, each one unique and satisfying, but not truly complete, and so I kept going keeping on. Succeeding circles waned, got smaller, shorter, less interesting. I suppose we call this doom.

[Mem nods unseen]

Between circles I crossed a central place. Always the same. Lots of choices, languages, scriptures. I thought about staying in the center, but that would have been dead. Nothing moves in the center. The grip of life is strong. We court death, enjoin her not to take us. I felt eyes upon me. Someone once observed that for every act there is a witness.

C: Kafka.

A: Yes. A strange one.

C: If someone looks at you that implies interest. We like that.

B: I did. I do. I chose life yet it eluded me. How I came to be here I don't know.

A: You've Shakti to thank for that. She refused what we thought near certain. She wouldn't, couldn't let go. Her eyes loved you, then as now. I know this for sure.

[Abis hands back the lighter wand and Babel puts it in her pocket]

[Abis takes Shakti and Babel by the hand, joins them, bows, retreats]

C: Be it so inscribed. [to each] Do you and do you agree? We witness your decision.

S: We do.

B: Words fail me. I do.

M: So noted in the book.

[Shakti and Babel embrace. It seems to go on for a long time. The overhead lights return to full bright]

[Mem rises, turns, faces stage front, regards the group across the dias while they talk]

C: [to Shakti] You look a little glassy-eyed. Slack-jawed.

S: I feel ... confident, yes, but dazed at the sudden ... well, spellbinding.

[Mem agrees]

Yet uncertain, maybe, maybe sideways?

C: Fear of the loss of autonomy? Very common in new relationships. Accommodation is ... interesting.

[Croyne turns to Babel]

How about you? Anything different?

B: I feel like I've got all the time in the world. I have decided. We are bespoke. That's a new one for me.

A: Any whiffs of regret?

B: Signed and sealed. I will honor my birth.

A: You did not blink. It bodes well.

[Mem nods agreement twice]

[The back wall drifts down to dark red, maroon, with occasional sparkles of ruby laser flash]

[Mem pulls bell from under dias, rings it once, sets it on the dias, faces audience across and past the horn]

M: [she calls them to attention] Perhaps you've noticed that the stars have gone out. Mass erodes into red shift sorcery. The very tenure of this temple is cast into doubt, we approach our final words.

[They attend at the table, in order, L to R, Abis, Shakti, Babel, Croyne, they face inwards, share the pentagram]

M: We create time, we surround time. From here the time stream can be entered at any point.

[to Shakti]

Take your pick.

[to Babel]

Good tidings unto you.

[Shakti and Babel consult]

S: Valley.

B: Waterfall.

S: Lilypond.

B: Frogs.

S: Rainbarrel.

B: Nasturtiums.

S: Amenities.

B: Amenities.

[They fall silent.]

M: So noted and done.

[The horn slows to a stop before Shakti, she reaches in and draws forth a bottle with ministrobe lightning flashes in it]

M: [to all]

The feminine principle encompasses and nurtures all of time. It's the male principle that starts and stops stuff.

[to S]

You've got the distaff down, you're on with mom, so we thought you'd like a little lightning of your own. Captive. Beholden to your command. It's always full. First vintage.

[Shakti cradles the bottle, makes it flash, sets it on dias]

[The horn turns to Babel.]

[Babel pulls out an hourglass, in an ornate stand, intricately carved, she cradles it.]

M: There's all kinds of time. Racial, cellular, atomic, personal time. This gets you to the harbor of your destination. Furthermore, best of all, it always gives you just enough time to complete some project. Artistic endeavour. Learn to play a musical instrument. Knowing aforethought that there indeed be time facilitates the future thingie.

B: (dreamily) Anything project thingie that I want can like be?

M: Yes. From here that's possible.

[horn resumes turning]

[Shakti edges towards Babel]

M: Certainty is divine. The hour is at hand. We wish you well. I adjure you to be gone.

[Shakti extends circlet with her right hand. Babel grabs it with her left hand. She carries the hourglass in her right hand. Shakti carries the lightning bottle in her left hand.]

[They promenaded the audience. As she's about to exit, Shakti upends the bottle and swigs, shouts "Yee haw!", subliminal rumble from the PA]

M: Close ranks.

[They stand shoulder to shoulder, the horn swings to Abis. She draws forth a compass, sextant, astrolabic thingie.]

A: Ah hum, what's the couscous with this?

M: Your personal direction finder. It points to where you want to be. Works anywhen and where. Certified by the holy modal rounders. Guaranteed to trail's end.

[The horn takes a short cut to Croyne.]

[Mem fetches a glass tablet from the horn, hands it to Croyne]

M: [to Croyne]

Apostolic succession, from our hand to yours. That's a terminal tablet. It connects to those [points to spiral column] and those you cannot yet see, but alone through here may you see them all.

C: It's a trip advisor?

M: Yes. Teach you what's the right question to ask. Point at related stuff, horrendous amounts of stuff. We filter, we clamp down, we mollify.

C: Are there parallel functions?

M: Move a huge amount of energy at your end to move little at that end. So, yes, within limits. It's in and out.

C: This one links to yours.

M: Welcome to the synapse, the bridge, gate, walkway, door. Mom is on speed dial. I wouldn't bother her right away.

A: How so?

M: She's figuring out a new universe for you. Not one with weird laws or physics that vanishes mass far away, something salubrious. We'll get you there.

[Mem demonstrates the function, then hands it over]

M: Knowledge is power. This distance is vast, yet you are one step from us. You will be in quarantine. That's the nature of space. It's ability to receive, to accommodate. Room for all, for everyone, for whatever ya'll wanna do.

C: [to Abis] Would you care to peruse my collection of smutty limericks?

A: Oh yeah!

[Abis holds ansata before, consults compass, leads through audience, Croyne follows.]

[Mem rings bell once, sets it under the dias, motions scrim down, lights off for scene change]

Act 2

[Add two Adirondack chairs CS, facing out, the horn doesn't turn, it's full of ice cubes and a bottle that will require a corkscrew]

[A serving dish with grapes, cheese, crackers, paté, 2 glasses]

[House Manager strides before the scrim, reads from an open book.]

[Cue overhead spot.]

[House Manager's Prologue]

God lives in the eye of the beholder,
Recognizable in the neighborhood,
She gives of herself, while we grow older,
In a guise that's easily understood.

We anthropomorphize the goddesses
When we look up at the stars and wonder.
They're quite willing to accommodate us
With marvelous holy books and thunder.

For you all here right now we will present
God as a little old lady of means,
We hope that you'll allow that we will invent
What's really happening behind the scenes.

God takes a gander at our spiral arm,
Insignificant minor backwater,
Retrospective in the entropic swarm,
To our earth, almost not worth the bother,

But for this—at terminus we take stock,
Examine our conscience that will decide
Was it worth it, or was it lackluster,
Just a crock of crap better cast aside.

So. The eternal dialogue of God.
We part the veil, as in here so out there,
What we are is cognizant of her thought,
What we become depends on what we dare.

[Stage Manager departs SL]

[Spot off, stage lights up, scrim up.]

[Mem pulls strings for gauze curtain tunnel to the secret door in the back wall. Mem lays a ledger between the chairs. She sets out an ornate quill pen, inkwell.]

M: [to audience] We're ready for the epilogue. When we traverse the abyss. Start a new procedure. Fire up the time. Check it out.

[God enters straight up the middle of the tunnel, Mem drops gauze arch, puts curtains back into space.]

[God appropriates the left Adirondack chair]

G: [intones sweetly]

Persephone aureatus
Heavy shit from on high
Then a benecratis.

[Mem supplies pillow, plumps it into place, removes God's shoes, sets them very carefully at the foot of the Adirondack chair, sets out delicacies.]

G: We are carnivores.

M: Thank you for that.

G: Any trouble?

M: Nah. They figured it out by themselves. Sharp cookies.

G: [consults ledger] Nice touch, the lightning in a bottle. Already in use, running full bore.

[They nibble. Mem procures a bottle from the horn, examines label]

M: First grand cru?

G: Ah likes it sweet.

M: Coming ... on ... out.

[removes the cork, pours, they clink glasses, quaff.]

G: Remarkable muscatelle. With some brown carib berry in it back there.

M: Slather a biscuit?

G: Oh yeah. Babel made progress, send her an ocarina, a thirteen tone in clear glass.

[Mem pulls flute and packaging materials from under the dias, makes up a special delivery.]

G: Was this one worth it?

M: [annotates ledger] Instant archive poll says yes.

G: Self-serving, me first, squawk? Blessings upon you.

M: Kowabonga dude.

G: So you feel imminently dead yet?

M: Just any old day like any other day. No qualms, flutters or drift.

G: (pause) Chortle.

M: What are you cackling on about?

G: That.

M: What?

G: Megalodon. A really big shark, how does it go?

M: As cheery a charmer as ever was.

G: Stage presence the size of a Greyhound bus.

[Mem shakes her head in disbelief.]

G: What?

M: I'm amazed at what captures your interest.

G: Oh, I'm not as bloody-minded as Durga or Kali I might mention. It's more that Megalodon swam at the peak of his form. A fine nautical design. Completely rapacious.

M: Way to go, mom.

G: Go ask Artemis.

M: Devastating. Talented.

G: For a while.

M: Refresh my memory.

G: There was a lot of sulfur in the air, acid ocean, no krill, diatoms, shrimpies, crabs, shellfish, need it by the ton, didn't get it, no whales, no big shark, amazing how quick it went down. It's like Megalodon marks the extreme swing of a pendulum that measures the standard of excellence. I judge my work. Meggie sets a benchmark, got any favourite critter?

M: Oh surely, the blue pelt therebint come to wash her child in the fountain with all those stately old trees set about.

G: A silent wood except for the water. Splashing, giggles, crooning. An engaging life form.

M: Just alluring enough to human males. Admirable. Miserable.

G: Sold on the block. Nice stuff gets perverted all the time. But I agree with you, that was a remarkable scene. Noted. Enjambed. Any others?

M: Oh, the Phoenix.

G: Oh yeah, good. Favorite volcano?

M: (shudders) No earth tremors. More wine? And no dire forebodings.

G: Champion trees?

M: The cathedral hemlock forests after the last ice age.

G: In the Borgia gardens. Just north of Smyrna. Ancient specimen trees from all over.

[Mem pours wine]

G: Best edifice?

M: The porphyry pyramid on Parnassus.

G: Best flower?

M: Bridal veil.

G: Best attribute?

M: Conscientious.

G: Memorial?

M: Treblinka.

G: Stone witnesses in the jurybox.

M: Always.

G: When are you leaving?

M: Pretty soon.

G: Leave me my black obsidian mirror. Ground to a deep concave. I shall feel my own heart.

M: You're procrastinating. Here, we'll practice. I'll take this package on my way out and mail it but I'll come back in so we'll talk some more so it's not final.

[Mem leaves through veils, returns, sits, unctuous bow]

G: Belay that.

M: Any regrets?

G: Oak would make a suitable cradle.

M: Rowan for the hood.

G: Hemoglobin.

M: Squashblossom fritters.

G: Gifties?

M: Rugged.

[God pulls a rattan picnic basket from under the dias, presents it]

G: For your travels, service for two. Bottomless decanter.

[pause]

G: I have prepared a place for you. The castle at Hale Vale, looking into the rainbow ravine. A man worthy of your stature. Kids of your own. As long as you like. Your say-so. Me spook.

G: If.

M: If she likes it.

G: If she wants it.

M: Mother knows best.

G: I don't like it when you start referring to yourself in the third person. Gives me the separation blues.

M: As you say.

G: You gonna be difficult?

M: Not my problem.

G: Only us chickens in here.

M: I brood my case.

G+M: Squawk!

[Mem jumps up, leaves gauze curtains in disarray, disappears out secret back door]

God's First Soliloquy

G: It was us.

[faces audience]

Right from the beginning, it was always us. Amorphous. Many points of view poking about, looking in at me, not very comfortable with that, looking back, you know, déjà vu?

Many eyes. Others not me. Stepping out. Loneliness is not is not is not an issue. Note how gregarious I am. I speak of my self.

[Mem returns, stands attentive, veiled by the last gauze, shakes head negative.]

G: Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow, I shall fear no evil.

[Mem nods]

Ziggie Freud said sometimes you're a cigar.

[Mem shrugs doubt]

G: I bet you're thinking I'm a bit bizarre.

[Mem nods vigorously]

G: Carry malted moonbeams home in a jar.

[Mem nods brightly]

G: Exhalted exhalted in our dreams that's who we are.

M: Delusions of grandeur.

G: Vertigo.

M: Glow worms.

G: Ourobouros.

M: If you prefer.

G: Fire-belching dragon. Vitrified parking lot my speciality.

[pause]

G: [to audience] Time begets time. Time extends herself. Need not be linear. It's a lot of fun. If you like it, what you're doing sometimes grooves out. Or in. Time can be a singularity, for me, there is not time. It's all now. The great winged orm feeds on herself. Sacrifices herself that you may be. A strange symbol for motherhood no doubt. (truculent) Got a better one? Crazy, you say. Feeling unstitched. Acting unhinged.

M: (right on cue) Ahem. Matter follows your mindset round here.

[sits in second Adirondack chair]

G: Is the outside stuff degrading?

M: Mostly ablation of the backcountry shield. Fabric shreds away, turns into little flakes.

[Mem makes fluttering random gestures]

M: Silver spangles from the inner sanctum façade make rain, then the hydrogen all burns out. Most of the bunting is long gone. And. (ominously) Something's made off with the zipper.

G: Probably those little marmots. They like glitter. Let's go look.

[They leave, sound of major blowtorch on PA, orange flare through secret door, they return, Mem rearranges the curtains.]

G: [sits] [to Mem] Got a problem with the glass parking lot?

M: (brightly, industrious) Oh no. I like the curve of that plasteel entrance ramp. Artistic. No, no problem.

God's Second Soliloquy

G: (to audience) Yeah, there's some stuff I regret, paths not chosen, projects left undone. But, you ask, is your conscience clear? Only you know that. Tricky. Ask any cop. Kurosawa. Have I been self-serving? At the expense of others?

[Mem nods twice, God chooses not to see her, Mem puts on figurative horseblinders]

G: What, create anything? It's what we do for you. Yes, you are my creation, I make lots of that, stuff I can relate to, know what I mean? Fun stuff, not for profit. I feel better. Never for sale. At the expense and ruin of the self-serving witch, which I am not!

[Mem reaches under dias, pulls out a long orange tramp cord, wraps the plug end round the column.]

G: Where you going with that?

M: Draw off some last little oomph.

[She unrolls the reel out the door, horn lights dim, sound of clothes washer way backstage, Mem returns, punctilious with the curtains]

M: Diapers.

[Now the simmer starts]

G: This old girl ain't doing no diapers.

M: I left your lunch in the fridge.

G: If.

M: If you want it.

[They move the Adirondack chairs side by side behind the dias. Adjacent armrests make for a surefoot platform.]

M: I'll look in on you.

G: (slack-jawed, hesitates)

M: Yes?

M: So you want me to lock up then?

G: (resigns) Yes.

[God leans on chair, fingers curtains.]

[Mem exits, sound of ponderous bolts shooting home, massive wheel turning, final echoing thuds from the Berlioz requiem]

G: [sits on dias facing audience] Could have said it better. So sudden. Planned. Final. Endgame.

Mem said Treblinka, Dresden, Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

[God addresses herself]

G1: How's about them regrets you were talking about?

G2: That I didn't fuck with King Kong when I had the chance.

G1: Would have done something different?

G2: Distribution of wealth.

G1: Evidence of your essential humanity.

G2: Compassion. Giving feels good.

G1: Your stand on war?

G2: Perpetuated by hyena monsters to further their own interests.

G1: Your stand on peace?

G2: That we could understand it.

G1: Last rites for the dead?

G2: Valedictus vitae.

G1: How did they hide the money?

G2: In plain sight. Little pieces everywhere. So's you wouldn't notice.

G1: Learned anything?

G2: That there are multiple realities.

G1: Each as valid.

G2: As the other.

G1: What's the takeaway from this exercise?

G2: That we can do a better job.

G1: Specifically?

G2: Less manoeuvring about eternity. More how do you do right now.

G1: What not to change?

G2: Mass, light, space, speed, Fibonacci, Avogadro, Planck.

G1: (in full discourse) But do I have a sense of ethics?

G2: Who's your favourite composer?

G1: Louis Vierne. Six organ symphonies, each unique, and a bunch of weird stuff for strange ensembles. All recognizably him.

G2: Favourite poems?

G1: Yeats. The three Ribh poems. Essential Willie.

G2: Place of pilgrimage?

G1: The cleft in the top of Uluru. Havasu Falls. Grand Gulch. Brodgar's Ring.

G2: Bedtime reading?

G1: Marquis de Queensberry, Musashi's Five Rings, Machiavelli, Van Clausewit Z, Mein Kampf, Arbeit Macht Frei, ja.

G2: You baffle me.

G1: Ask me about architecture.

G2: Favorite all-time sacred space?

G1: Gaudy, Barcelona.

G2: Best brewery?

G1: Dangerous. Saint Ambrose in Vancouver.

G2: Snotty language.

G1: Skouse.

G2: Overtime.

G1: Overtime.

[short pause while she sits astride the armrests.]

[pinpoint on her, dark stage, she motions to the horn, it stops, offers its mouthpiece to her finger. Horn flare faces audience. At contact, horn lights up from inside.]

G1: Who shall make these triage decisions? Full measure. Favored child.

G2: Name some stars.

G1: Spica, Sirius, Aldebarran, Rigel, Formalhaut, Betelgeuse, the Pleiades, Ishtar, Vega.

G2: Enough. All gone.

G1: Name some friends.

G2: I don't have any friends. Just acquaintances. Associates. Streetmeet. Personal first name basis?

G1: Nickname. Only you allowed to use it.

G2: Not tight like that.

G1: Ibogaine, mari huana.

G2: Datura, mandragora.

[God regards the secret back door over her shoulder]

G1: That option provides a quick rigor mortis.

[God regards the dias before her]

G1: This option looks more optimistic. Check this out, kids. I'm only gonna show you this once.

[God pulls the chairs apart to make a triangular work space, takes four boxes from under the dias, sets them on the chairs.]

[Stands up straight in the triangle]

G: So. The multi-personal god of we, ours, and us, is gone. I am me, myself and I am. Henceforth, I will speak to posterity.

[God indicates the dias, horn, curtains.]

G: The place is built of light. Mostly, as you can see, dark light. Negative light. No limits. Co equal with visible light. Not now. As mass slides back into the source, potential only gravity echoes through the continuum. Torque spins in centrifugal perpetuity. We are at the moment. All of possibility marches across the altar. The marvelous part of it all is that light, both dark and light, respond to thought. As I marshal the tools for a specific work, the light accommodates my purpose.

[a shaft of lilac light ascends the column from the deep]

G: Lilac. Protective. The color of the collective subconscious. This is where we set out the future parameters. Less this, more that, balance is good.

[God speaks deliberately, addressing an invisible audience through each artifact that she demonstrates]

[G opens first case, takes out a torch. Lilac light gets brighter]

G: [to torch] Fire is the primal elemental tool. It ruptures out of potential. All else follows. [demonstrates torch, sets it on the dias at upper right]

G: Useful at a barbeque. There's other versions.

[flicks a butane wand lighter, scratches a kitchen match]

G: All kinds of stuff burns. Phosphorus in your body. Carbon in a furnace. Nuclear fission and fusion in stars. Some fluxian drift that doesn't have a name but runs everything. Sufficient mass will start its own fire.

[Each pronouncement is accompanied by gestures]

G: Florescent veils between adjacent domains. Bolts between balls.

[Several small strobes go off around the stage floor.]

G: [to potential, i.e., the djed column)] Not yet, dear, let it build up? Think of yourself as a vast silver dome storing up Van der Graph accumulator charge. Turn it up. Practice self-restraint and then let it fly all at once.

[on PA, the sound of a balloon being stretched taut]

G: Whereas fire is projective, water is transportive. Water expedites the biochemistry of life. [She removes a green goblet and a bottle of Perrier from the second case]

G: Some would endow me with the gold cup of royalty, or the jewel-becrusted chalice of the church. Neither is my own.

[She pours the Perrier.]

G: My personal preference is the emerald physician's cup. If it needs healing, I'll fix it. If.

[drinks deep]

Ecstasy. Amazing how friendly the fire and elemental water really are. Most planets aspire to this. Earth herself has a water globe almost right after accretion. That one worked right. If. Where's my memory?

[sets the cup at upper left]

G: Life is fluid. Change is constant. Crystals precipitate as water evaporates. Lattices fall into line. Methane and ammonia shall besport themselves. [Little chattering noise in the background] Soon, my dears. Patience, wait for your cue. Let the altar be set.

[takes another drink]

G: I feel much better. Let us contemplate salt.

G: Iron, copper, let's make a list. Where's my recipe book? More hafnium?? Little itty bitty thises and datses. Good primordial soup should simmer a while before serving. Dust motes. Left-over slivers. Less uranium. Maybe a string of large light planets. More boron, beryllium. Less gravity. Yes, my friends, you will fly. Ha! We've arrived at air. Atmosphere. We'll need more ozone in this one.

[more ballon sqwark, the column lights ramp up another notch]

G: Fire gets along with elemental air very well. Better than with water. Air relates to logic, thought, and snap judgements. The color of a planet's air profoundly affects its life forms. Sodium vapour makes a yellow sky. Chromates orange; mercury actinic. Controlling the color of sky, air goes a long way to controlling the basic psychology of the autochthons. Big word, huh? Air transmits light, light is covalent with intelligence and self-image, self-image is who you are. Where's my mirror?

[From the third box: a notebook, ornate Shaefer pen; plate glass mirror, a prism, and a crystal ball. All go on the dias lower right.]

G: Ah, a new memory book.

[She lays that on a chair armrest and makes notations.]

G: More hafnium. Probably niobium and germanium too. The old terraform template still works. Bigger but less weight. More mathematics and music. Less knives and swords. Everything sings. Play that and that and that.

[God holds the prism]

G: Discernment, separating the components of a system.

[holds the mirror]

Self-recognition, we'll get back to that one.

[holds the ball]

Future vision, we never leave the future to chance. We choose on the basis of foreknowledge. That's why I'm me and you are you.

[Faint chittering noises]

G: Yes, my dears, I hear you and turn my care to you. Little marmots with clever fingers. You want in on this?

[column lights up full]

G: Memory rests in the rock. Fire derives from earth. Given sufficient mass, it explodes with light. Control over this basic faculty sets us apart. Then we share the light. This is how we do it.

[The three glass objects are at lower right, the fourth box contains a bow drill firemaker]

G: A firemaker. With this you are fearless. Warm in winter, bakers of bread, scones, marmalade, hah!

[raises arms over the dias, the firemaker is at lower left, only the elemental tools on the table.]

G: The goods and necessities are assembled, bless us at this work, let the wood remember. Quark, torque, spark, coracles across the deep. Lost. Look. There's a lighthouse. Behold the Pulsar. Look again. We see us. The rock is shared.

G: Proteus Coriolis, hexen chronos, qabalah, vel legis sacerdoti, egrex tabula rasa.

[God gets very fluid and methodical, no hesitation between movements. She returns empty boxes under the dias, slides the two Adirondack chairs back together. She takes a short staff from under the dias, ascends this impromptu stage.]

G: Four square, all secure.
Outta here, I'm sure.

[The horn rotates slowly to face her.]

G: Some nifty sifty for lil ol' me?

[Pulls a large zipper out of the horn, winds it around the staff, zips it together as she goes, a glittering, spiral staff of office]

G: The zipper from the front vestry. You're smart critters, you are.

[more creaks and groans from the chittering applause.]

[horn resumes excursion]

[G assembles her wand, see Appendix: Pulsar Wand]

G: I love the symbology of this.

[holds up loose loops]

G: How so many can cleave together in one easy motion. Elegant.

[Secures glass lens end caps, fondles the spiral]

G: Should make a really good conductor.

[chthonic crackle on the PA]

G: [touches each elemental station with staff]

Spit fire, spout water, see far

[God steps on to the armrest pedestal, proclaims the conjuration]

For the rock, for the trees,
For all life that will be,
I give myself, my own,
Now, that I am alone,
Offer my final kiss,
That none shall suffer this.

I call forth the lightning,
To split the night, I sing
Fiat lux eternam,
In plenipotential
Fleet in the firmament
Keeper of the great orb,
Sentinal of the deep
I am time, I am form.

[each phrase and gesture is punctuated with a colored strobe flash from the staff]

[sonic boom, massive movement]

[Black out stage]

[Big strobe flash]

[traveling arc sputter, reverbs, heavy stuff getting organized]

[Straw pinspot on God, a follow spot]

[dias overhead spots on, all colors]

[column lit by blue light from the deep]

[God descends, lays staff on dias, takes mirror with her]

[God perambulates the labyrinth at random, wherever she sees or points or touches, overhead lights come on, all colors, stuff flashes in the curtains, little stars sparkle, nebulae fade in, spiral galaxies compete for attention, at the same point she reaches the secret back door, looking into her mirror, thus this plaint]

May you face yourself,
Yet retain your wisdom,
Let your praises be sung
Plain-spoken in prisons,

In terminal places,
The mirror speaks sooth,
Beautiful are graces
Permanence, rules, and truth.

And yet I wish I were
A twenty-year-old tart
With bold bodacious fur
And many off the chart.

[A younger version of God slips through the secret back door. The two of them exchange places, God and her younger self, adroitly hands off the mirror in a do-si-do dance step. The older God slips out. The younger God doesn't miss a beat, continues her ministrations amid the cosmos, eventually surfaces stage front, bows to audience.]

[Looks in mirror, likes what she sees, replaces mirror on dias]

Plant
in
audience: Your mama does nice work.

[The younger God is a little taller, doesn't slouch, wears a big round fro halo, some coat of many colors, moccasins]

YG: (slight courtsey) Let me introduce the cast.

[Abis enters from SL]

YG: (gestures to Abis) De profundis explorant, alien suns. What you want?

[ad libs Abis's CV (i.e., curiosity, exploration); younger God does this for each cast member]

[Shakti]

YG: A genuinely friendly head
that wants to mend you with her thread.

[Babel enters from SL, playing the ocarina in Aeolian upwardly mobile mode]

YG: Calliope ascends the height, perhaps she's made the greatest strides.

[Younger God takes a step forward to welcome Croyne]

[They line up across the stage]

YG: [To Croyne] Knowledge sacred, for its sake, cut in stone, that all may partake.

[in order from L to R, Abis, Shakti, Babel, Croyne, younger God]

[Older God joins the line at the far left]

YG: [to OG] Hi Grandma. All bubbly.

[smiles, bows all around]

[Mem joins the line]

YG: [regards Mem] Fucking awesome.

OG: [to Mem]

Are we friends?

[Mem sticks her thumb in her mouth, pulls it out, holds her thumb up, eyes it critically, blows on it]

M: [speaks to herself]: Mem, could be ...

OG: If.

M: If you'd just asked me.

OG: Asked you what?

[pause]

OG: What? I gave you everything. Life. Nice place. How's that working out?
Older God leads]

M: Frost valley on Parnassus for a while. Not now.

OG: Then where?

M: Two lives for me. Continuous, contiguous. Ego te absolve.

OG: Ingrate. Agreed.

M: With vacations so I can get away from you.

OG: Agreed.

M: More debate.

OG: Scurrilous libel.

M: Unmitigated debauch.

OG+M: Agreed. (chortle)

[Older God waves her hand, the side door opens, they exit.]

B: It's well to take some baggage on a trip.

YG: They'll figure it out. Babel, my dear, would you pipe us out?

[Ocarina ad lib which eventually fades into and melds with a prepared track on the PA]

[Terpsichore. Pithyramb. Younger God walks the curtain closed, nods towards audience, all exit]

[house lights up]

[fade PA to hydrogen hiss]

[From behind the curtain, Oy! Stoike the set!]

Jack Wesdorp, February 9, 2016

HF, 21 July 2018

...

Post Scriptum

Appendix

Pulsar Wand

The wand will require professional machine-shop preparation. It can be made from a twirler's baton, the kind used in parades. Remove the rubber end caps and replace them with clear plexi screw-on caps. These accommodate eight strobe flash bulbs, four on each end, viz. red, blue, gold and purple; the other end is orange, green, yellow and lilac. Each bulb is individually controlled by momentary push buttons set into the middle of the shaft. So one push will produce one flash. The buttons are low relief, hidden by the hand.

The wand is powered by AA batteries, or a rechargeable battery pack. The stage version wand need only produce eight flashes, so there is not much electrical draw. The merchandising version should have a more robust power pack and the entire device should be waterproof. Lastly, one end should have a clip or hook to keep the DNA zipper in place.

In use, hold at the center and point at the work while pushing the right button. Later versions can include audio signals to mimic fire, ambition, religious awe, healing purity thought and protection. Every budding magician will want one. ♪

Copyright Information

All selections are copyrighted by their respective authors.

Any reproduction of these poems, without the express written permission of the authors, is prohibited.

YGDRASIL: A Journal of the Poetic Arts - Copyright (c) 1993 - 2016 by Klaus J. Gerken.

The official version of this magazine is available on Ygdrasil's World-Wide Web site <http://users.synapse.net/kgerken>. No other version shall be deemed "authorized" unless downloaded from there or The Library and Archives Canada at <http://epe.lacbac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ygdrasil/index.html> .

Distribution is allowed and encouraged as long as the issue is unchanged.

Note that simultaneous submissions will not be accepted.

Please allow at least 90 days for a reply.