

"La Morna"

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: *(Sings)* All the young girls die in my arms die like wounded birds strangled by the palms.

IPHIGENIA: *(Continuing)* A torch song, the kind of song my mother sings alone in her room at night with the trace of vodka on her lips. The door to the room opened. A young man's voice said "Wake up, puta." When I opened my eyes, I felt strong hands poking at me. I screamed. The young man said "Shh. Your father's sending the money."

And he pulled from deep inside his pants pocket some twine, and tied my hands together, and he took a thin strip of cloth from inside another pocket, and he gagged me.

(Sings softly) All the silent girls scream in the night letting their tongues fall upon the broken moonlight.

IPHIGENIA: He pulled me into another room and flashed a camera in my eyes. "This is for the papers," he said. "They'll pay for a picture of you."

(Shift to the screen: T V NEWS ANCHOR is standing against a backdrop of a field dotted with palms. Sporadic gunfire.)

NEWS ANCHOR: General Adolfo is trying to negotiate with the drug cartel To end its operation Project Zero

Which is making all the rich flee the country in fear that their sons and daughters will be taken away and held for ransom

There is no greater fear than the fear of losing prominent investors in what would be the largest growth of the multinational dollar in this country's history, Either that

or having a loved one's ear sent in the mail. *(Through the screen)* You hear that, Iphigenia?

IPHIGENIA: *(To the screen)* What?

NEWS ANCHOR: Nobody misses you. *(Fade on the screen. Back to...)*

IPHIGENIA: A car pulled up. My father's secretary was let in. He carried an envelope in his hands. It was stuffed with dollar bills. I was quickly untied.

There were cuts on my arms and wrists from the twine, and piss down my legs.

The young man took me by the arm and dragged me over to my father's secretary. "Don't worry. She's still a virgin, cabron,"

The next day, my picture was in the papers—

The photo the young man had taken of me sitting on the stool:

tied, gagged, and hungry.

(Front page news photo of tied-and-gagged IPHIGENIA is reflected on the screen.)

IPHIGENIA: My father refused to recognize me.

"The papers will print anything," he said, "My daughter, my dear, sweet Iphigenia, never went through this."

I looked at my father with the memory of the young man's hands on me. "Father, why won't you hold me?"

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: They might as well have killed you up there in the country.

(Photo fades on the screen.)

IPHIGENIA: What?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You can't do anything. You're at the mercy of your father. Like me. Like a piece of chicken. Want a taste?

IPHIGENIA: Here, and into the trash with you, remnant of the mutant underclass.

(IPHIGENIA throws dollar bills at VIOLETA IMPERIAL and starts to walk away.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: I'm only speaking the truth.

IPHIGENIA: Which truth is that?

To think I almost believed you when you said all that about being cut up by my father's men...

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: I've the scars...

IPHIGENIA: Put there by someone else.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: What are you saying?

IPHIGENIA: I'm at no one's mercy, least of all my father.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're blind, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA: I'd rather be blind than a walking corpse.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're your father's daughter, after all.

IPHIGENIA: Shut up.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Cruelty is in your blood. Thanks to you this city will be smashed, and every soul will be uprooted from their homes.

IPHIGENIA: I gave you money.

I don't want to hear anything else.

I hear things all the time: voices, screams... I sit in my garden

and cover my ears while my brother cries,

because he needs his fix,

he needs coca to keep him alive.

He's not even a year old

and he's already a junkie.

Look at my tits. Go on. Touch. Pata.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Don't.

IPHIGENIA: I want you to. I want your hands on me. Squeeze them. Go on. Feel my tits.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You mock me.

IPHIGENIA: I mock myself. I breast-feed my own brother. ...Keep your hands.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: No.

IPHIGENIA: I disgust you?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: There is no place for tenderness in my life.

IPHIGENIA: I don't know what tenderness is. I look for it. All the time.

I close my eyes and pretend it exists.

And then I think of those men, of how I was taken, of how my father...

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Iphigenia, where are you going?

IPHIGENIA: To the northernmost edge.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: It's better for young girls not to be seen. Come, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA: Take the money, Violeta. Devastate yourself for the promise of a blessed touch from this god-less girl...

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: The chicken is good, Iphigenia. Eat. IPHIGENIA: Do not follow me.

(VIOLETA IMPERIAL picks up the money, and recedes into the shadows. IPHIGENIA burns in the evening's acid glow.)

IPHIGENIA: The aircraft hangar is minutes away. I can see it from here, from the dust and gravel road that ruins the soles of my Gucci shoes. I can hear the unrelenting pulse of music made to unstill the heart.

(In the distance, ACHILLES is heard singing from the chorus of The Deluge.)

ACHILLES: (Sings) And all the pretty girls dance in the deluge. All the pretty girls...

IPHIGENIA: Aah... the crimson lights and purple strobe will soothe me, Will make this birthday more than just a creeping, convulsive treachery Played on me by gods unwilling to grant me peace.

(Light catches another pink cross, another name on a factory wall's façade.)

IPHIGENIA: Another pink cross, another name, and... I am bathed in the most heavenly... (Sings) Yvonne...

(Three FRESA GIRLS emanate from the factory walls. On their foreheads, metallic crescents are painted. Their club

dresses are slightly stained. They have "anime" eyes, and shiny red lips.)

FRESA GIRL 1: (Appears) Yvonne? That's me.

IPHIGENIA: (Sings) Dulce...Magaly...Luz...

FRESA GIRL 2: (Appears) Luz? I'm Luz.

IPHIGENIA: (Sings) Aminta...Gladis...Yoli...

FRESA GIRL 3: (Appears) Hey. They finally spelled my name right. Yoli. With an "I" at the end, not a "y," like all the bastards think.

IPHIGENIA: Names upon names

Foreign to my tongue

I move them around in my mouth

As I run my hands across the smooth surface of these factory walls

FRESA GIRL 1: Is that where we are? I haven't been near the maquiladora in a long time.

FRESA GIRL 2: The last thing I want is to be near a sewing machine.

FRESA GIRL 3: We're here because of her.

FRESA GIRL 1: Who?

FRESA GIRL 3: Iphigenia.

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2: That bitch.

FRESA GIRL 2: She's been nipped and tucked since the day she was born.

IPHIGENIA: (Sings) Maria...Clotilde...Azul...

FRESA GIRL 1: Azul's gone, too?

IPHIGENIA: I feel these girls' hands on me. I feel myself pulled...

Oh, their touch warms my skin...

FRESA GIRL 1: She must think we're living.

FRESA GIRL 3: With our throats cut?

FRESA GIRL 2: (*To IPHIGENIA*) Hey girl, take a look at my jagged necklace.

FRESA GIRL 3: (*To IPHIGENIA*) Take a good look, because your blood will be let soon.

IPHIGENIA: Everything is alive here. Everything I'd ever want...

FRESA GIRL 1: Oh. She doesn't know about us.

FRESA GIRL 2: What?

FRESA GIRL 1: The fresa girls.

FRESA GIRL 3: The ripe girls, like strawberries, who come from the deep country to work in the factories.

FRESA GIRL 2: Who spend twelve hours a day at a sewing machine.

FRESA GIRL 1: Come time to get paid

FRESA GIRL 3: Mere dollars a week

ALL FRESA GIRLS: We'd go out all night

FRESA GIRL 1: To remind ourselves

FRESA GIRL 3: What a bit of tenderness

FRESA GIRL 2: What a bit of candy limbs and tainted love can...

ALL FRESA GIRLS: Do to wreck a body.

IPHIGENIA: I could be one of these girls. Who says I have to be Iphigenia?

FRESA GIRL 1: She really doesn't know about us.

FRESA GIRL 2: The shit girls of Juarez.

FRESA GIRL 3: Who find themselves dead.

FRESA GIRL 2: Killed by anonymous hands.

FRESA GIRL 1: Outside the clubs, bodies violated and slashed on the dirt-gravel fields.

FRESA GIRL 3: And no one knows...anything about las chicas de Juarez.

(*To IPHIGENIA*) Because who is going to lift a hand to save a fresa girl?

IPHIGENIA: (*Sings*) Nesha...Mora...Doris...

(*The stage becomes filled with pink crosses and scrawls of women's names floating in space in a montage which frames IPHIGENIA as she moves, transported.*)

FRESA GIRL 2: Let's scare her. Let's show her our wounds.

FRESA GIRL 1: No. She's too happy.

FRESA GIRL 2: Bitch. Look at that dress.

FRESA GIRL 3: Look at her swirl.

FRESA GIRL 2: It's a Chanel.

IPHIGENIA: The names of all these girls enter my brain. I take them on, and undulate. Oh. I am losing myself.

(*IPHIGENIA spins among the crosses.*)

FRESA GIRL 3: I remember dancing.

FRESA GIRL 1: Yeah?

FRESA GIRL 3: Like she's doing now.

FRESA GIRL 1: Remind me.

FRESA GIRL 3: I remember...hips, and torso...

FRESA GIRL 2: I remember arms. Lots of arms. And feet.

IPHIGENIA: I am losing every part of me, and I'm all right.

FRESA GIRL 2: She's doing it all wrong.

FRESA GIRL 1: She doesn't know the moves. What can she know

stuck in a garden all day?

FRESA GIRL 3: I like the way she dances.

FRESA GIRL 2: It's like she's stuck inside herself.

FRESA GIRL 3: Sexy-weird.

IPHIGENIA: I want to be just like you, girls.

FRESA GIRL 3: Like us?

IPHIGENIA: Names on a wall

Written by lovers who caress me.

FRESA GIRL 3: Caress us?

IPHIGENIA: You are beautiful girls.

FRESA GIRL 1: Hey, Iphigenia. Take us to the club, will you?

IPHIGENIA: To the club?

FRESA GIRL 1: You can get us in, can't you?

IPHIGENIA: I can get anyone in.

FRESA GIRL 1: Take us, then.

FRESA GIRL 3: And we will wear our hair in pillows.

FRESA GIRL 2: And our jackets square.

FRESA GIRL 1: And we'll go among the living again.

IPHIGENIA: Among the living?

FRESA GIRL 3: Take us dancing, Iphigenia.

Take us away from the walls of these factories
Where we left our skin.

IPHIGENIA: What?

FRESA GIRLS 1 & 2: Take us.

ALL FRESA GIRLS & IPHIGENIA: Oohing and aahing into infinity.

(All FRESA GIRLS freeze mid-dance.)

(Burst of white noise as montage fades and music blares.)

(IPHIGENIA is caught in the unending column of light of the aircraft hangar turned club. Her voice is amplified.)

IPHIGENIA: The aircraft hangar opens an electric wound.

Somnambulant bodies throb

under the crimson light.

Girls with cellophane chests put blue pacifiers in their tender mouths

While Diesel shirt boys twirl and hip-shake

To a subsonic bass line.

(All FRESA GIRLS un-freeze, and move among the throbbing mass of shadows.)

(FRESA GIRL 2 shouts over the club's noise.)

FRESA GIRL 2: Hey. It's gotten faster.

FRESA GIRL 1: What?

FRESA GIRL 2: Everything. Look at the screen.

FRESA GIRL 3: What?

FRESA GIRL 2: The screen.

(A rapid-fire succession of images pulsates on a large screen—innocent geometric shapes, atrocities, fragments of magazine ads, jumbles of letters.)

(FRESA GIRL 1 shouts.)

FRESA GIRL 1: It's cool.

FRESA GIRL 2: What?

FRESA GIRL 3: Let's move.

(FRESA GIRL 3 writhes to the sound. The other FRESA GIRLS join her.)

IPHIGENIA: A thousand factory girls move as the beat consumes

The everlasting promise of sundown.

Ipfigenia feels her name escape
through the pale insomnia

Of the fake Gucci, Prada, and Helmut Lang seething
around her.

"Ooh, and aah" she lets herself cry

ALL FRESA GIRLS: Ooh, and aah...

IPHIGENIA: As the cobras hiss
in the blue lounge

to one side of the wide-open hangar.

I have become invisible in this flickering light.
Lick me.

(IPHIGENIA joins the writhing FRESA GIRLS midst the
throbbing shadows.)

(On the screen, the images give sharp way to the digital
image of the VIRTUAL M C, a floating face with an obscene
mouth and liquid eyes, who speaks with the hollow, teasing,
sounds of a true lounge lizard cum D J. He is the one who
spins the music that keeps the writhing at maximum.)

VIRTUAL M C: Lick her,
cries the Virtual M C,
and welcome to the end, el fin, finis!
Lick her face and rub up
against the climactic wood
of a planet about to go dust.
This is el fin, children. This is the end.
Hold onto your cojones.

We got the sound to un-still your hearts
blasting through tomorrow, hasta manana,
until the wee bleak trash can Sinatra hours
of a dim morning that will go on for days,
or until the next brutality
brings us face to face.
Lick and moan, cabrones.

Moan in the creep of this psychedelic light
Because here we do what the state says.

(On a part of the screen, the video image of ACHILLES is
found.)

(He wears a close-fitting woman's tunic, fishnet stockings,
boots, glitter lipstick, and black nails. He has a tattoo of
a large tiger down one arm. Think industrial glam rock
androgynae.)

(His looped vocal line "War is over, the gods are over,
everything, everything is over" is barely heard underneath
the thumping bass.)

VIRTUAL M C: Lift up your hands, guerrilla ballerinas
showing off your Hello Kitty straps.

It's time to smash your heads,
down those raspberry martinis,
and dream of Mars,

Because "the war is over, the gods are over,
everything...."

hijos and hijas de la gran puta, is over.

So lick the scab off those valentine lips,

(On the screen, ACHILLES offers his tongue to the
VIRTUAL M C, who places a tab of E onto it.

(Simultaneously, live, FRESA GIRL 2 places a tab of E on
IPHIGENIA's tongue, mid-dance.)

VIRTUAL M C: and give your tits and dicks up
for our very own war-bred pop myth with Day-Glo
hips that move, oh yes.

IPHIGENIA: Who's he talking about?

FRESA GIRL 2: The boy with the body. See?

VIRTUAL M C: The boy with cherry crush, crazy love,
hot pink, star red

(The image of the VIRTUAL M C begins to disintegrate.)

VIRTUAL MC: Lips.
Achilles.

(A piercing sound)

(Large letters on the screen now read "Patria o Mierda."
These letters bleed into smaller letters that read "Die for
Your Country or You're Fucked".)

(ACHILLES is on video on all the screens. Behind him
mutated geometric shapes spin. He sings.)

The Deluge

ACHILLES: Stoked up on the cocaine
Living with a migraine
Looking for an end to end all my days.

Strolling through the backwoods
Living on the wild glue
Taking what I can for what I pay.

Swimming with the ratas
Behind la policia
Cutting white snow on the hoods of la migra
Pulling small razors from inside mi lengua
Cutting young men en carne viva

And all the pretty girls
Dance in the deluge
All the pretty girls

Kiss...

Why don't you kiss me?

Killing for a bum rush
Off a lousy bum fuck
Putas in the corner
Begging for a blow-job

Caught in la tijera
Of a road sin pena

Spinning my brain: oh what can I, what can I...?

And all the pretty girls
Dance in the deluge
All the fresa girls
Die...

(THE FRESA GIRLS swoon to the image of ACHILLES on video
on the screens. He continues singing.)

ACHILLES: Why don't you die...?

(ACHILLES looks at IPHIGENIA through the screen, and
sings)

ACHILLES: Where is your father, girl?
Where is your father?
He's left you all alone in the world.
Tell me.

(IPHIGENIA is about to answer ACHILLES' image, but
ACHILLES kisses the camera's eye, and sings:)

ACHILLES: And all the pretty girls
Dance in the deluge
All the pretty girls
Kiss...

(ACHILLES' image freezes on the video. Time shift. Pinspot
on IPHIGENIA, still.)

IPHIGENIA: Hold me. My limbs ache. I tremble. I blur.
One hundred-and-twenty beats per minute: my heart
goes.

(ACHILLES' video image fades.)

IPHIGENIA: The fresa girls surround me with their
stained skirts, and metallic foreheads.
I move, pulse, escape.
The inside of my chest bursting.
I tease myself

into thinking no one can find me here.
And then I see you standing beside me, father
except you don't look like yourself.

You wear a smart coat and tall hair,
and you're smiling with razor teeth, father.
You place your hand over my eyes,
and whisper "Shh, angel."

(The FRESA GIRLS hiss.)

ALL FRESA GIRLS: Shh.

IPHIGENIA: As a knife comes into my back
and I feel myself fall a thousand feet down

ALL FRESA GIRLS: Shh.

IPHIGENIA: A thousand feet into darkness.
And you don't say anything, father.
You don't even say

ALL FRESA GIRLS: Shh.

IPHIGENIA: You just smile.
With white snow on your tongue
I am laser-lit. Suspended.
A hundred million particles of light.
Iphigenia is dying. Hold me.

(Time shift)

(Spot dims on IPHIGENIA and the FRESA GIRLS as they move in an ecstatic orgy.)

(The VIRTUAL M C re-appears on the large screen.)

(ACHILLES image is no longer on the screen. Only geometric shapes remain where his video face and body used to be.)

VIRTUAL M C: Well, sluts,
it looks like our kissing boy
with the pretty chemise has "disappeared,"
As our dear general Adolfo likes to say.
Isn't that right, Iphigenia?

IPHIGENIA: What?

VIRTUAL M C: Not to worry.

Our blinking eyes may catch the lipstick trace of this

divining angel
in the not-too-distant time
we have to say goodbye.

Every state has someone
to absolve them of their debts,
and well, we've got Achilles,
The glam messiah for the savagely tricked.
A little moving of those hips,
and everyone swoons on the beat.

Plunge, my million and one disgraced ones, my sorry
children
who live day to day.

Here's some ooh and aah to send you into la mala
noche of my sad dreams.

(VIRTUAL M C's face fades.)

IPHIGENIA: Where did they take him? Where's Achilles?

FRESA GIRL 1: I don't know. Who knows anything
around here?

FRESA GIRL 2: He's got chulo legs, eh?

FRESA GIRL 1: Yeah. And in that slip. You can see right
up his...

FRESA GIRL 2: "El chulo culo," that's what I used to call
him.

IPHIGENIA: What?

FRESA GIRL 1: The ready ass.

IPHIGENIA: Where is he?

FRESA GIRL 3: You don't want him, girl. He's inside the
screen. Stay here.

We'll keep dancing.

IPHIGENIA: He couldn't have disappeared.

FRESA GIRL 1: You want to see Achilles?

You want to kiss the twisted boy with the golden eyes?

IPHIGENIA: You know where he is?

FRESA GIRL 1: Give us the dress.

IPHIGENIA: I have to go.

FRESA GIRL 2: You're not going anywhere, Iphigenia.

(The FRESA GIRLS attack IPHIGENIA. They tear off her dress, nylons, shoes, earrings. As they do so, they improvise a chant. Everything is captured by the camera's eye.)

ALL FRESA GIRLS: In the land of the living, the dead will reign.

FRESA GIRL 1: Yvonne,

FRESA GIRL 2: Luz,

FRESA GIRL 3: Yoli...

FRESA GIRL 1: A litany of the dead,

FRESA GIRL 2: Of the forgotten and unforgiving

Who have been left to walk
along the fields of Juarez

FRESA GIRL 3: without graves.

(IPHIGENIA is left wearing only a slip, as the FRESA GIRLS toss her clothes about and speak-sing their chant.)

FRESA GIRL 3: Mimm. Gucci.

(FRESA GIRL 3 exits with IPHIGENIA's shoes.)

FRESA GIRL 2: Mimm. Dior.

FRESA GIRL 1: Mimm. Prada.

For her.

FRESA GIRL 2: For her

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2: Everything is for her...

(The remaining FRESA GIRLS exit in the fading somnambulant beat. Silence. IPHIGENIA sings.)

Prayer to Elegua (reprise)

IPHIGENIA: *(Sings)* Mi Dios, mi salvador, mi Elegua...

Tell me what to do.

And I won't ask for anything anymore,

But your love.

(A close-up of IPHIGENIA on the screen. ACHILLES is heard singing, live.)

"The Deluge (reprise-variation)"

ACHILLES: And all the pretty girls

dance in the deluge

All the pretty girls

Cry...

(ACHILLES appears in performance mode. He is wearing the same tunic, boots and makeup as in his video. A pacifier hangs from his neck. He sings.)

ACHILLES: All the pretty girls

Sing in the darkness

Letting their torsos fall

Upon the morning's light.

(ACHILLES sees IPHIGENIA. His face is captured on the screen in a still frame as he walks away. IPHIGENIA follows him.)

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

IPHIGENIA IN BETWEEN

(A field outside the aircraft hangar. Night)

(IPHIGENIA and ACHILLES, both in their slips, are entwined. They are back-lit with neon, seen in silhouette.)

(FRESA GIRLS 1 and 2 appear. They each wear a version of the Chanel dress they tore from IPHIGENIA.)

FRESA GIRLS 1 & 2: Iphigenia moves through the killing fields
unaware of the bones in her midst.

FRESA GIRL 2: She slums
with the boy who glitters
at the furthest edge of the city.

FRESA GIRL 1: Cherry crush, crazy love, hot pink, star
red:

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2: their lips bleed.

FRESA GIRL 1: Tattoo me a cross, Iphigenia.

(FRESA GIRL 1 disappears as FRESA GIRL 2 transforms into the T V NEWS ANCHOR, whilst a montage shows CAMILA and ADOLFO multiplied in the eyes of the surveillance cameras. The T V NEWS ANCHOR is outside the screen.)

(Dark Trance in the) House Mix

NEWS ANCHOR: In Chalkis or Pylos or wherever else floods and famine...

Hundreds of thousands are killed.

There is no count.

No numbers have been released

in what is the most devastating disaster of the century

Which changes every minute.

This is a long century

and some people like to count the days.

Though you won't find me,

ladies and gentleman,

I have been covering this story for so long

I don't get to count.

I just look for the airplane

to get me the hell out.

One more body dug up from a grave

and I will shoot them all to splinters.

Put the magazine in and let me rip.

You hear that, general? General Adolfo?

(ADOLFO is inside the screen. *The T V NEWS ANCHOR remains live outside the screen.*)

ADOLFO: I recommend
a good plate of chicken broth
with potatoes, and yams.

NEWS ANCHOR: Is that your official statement, general?

ADOLFO: I think it's safe to say that when we move on, there will not be a shred of evidence we were here.

NEWS ANCHOR: What about your daughter, general?

ADOLFO: My daughter?

NEWS ANCHOR: She's been missing for hours. Some say she's been kidnapped again.

Some say you have engineered the kidnapping

yourself to have her killed,
And thus win your people's eternal sympathy, not to mention, the election.

ADOLFO: My daughter is at home, where she always is.

NEWS ANCHOR: Like when she was taken last year, general?

ADOLFO: No harm will ever come to my daughter. Not from my hands.

NEWS ANCHOR: Is that what your wife says, general?

(CAMILA is inside the screen, an oversized cocktail glass in hand.)

CAMILA: I hope they plaster her body all over the papers. Hang her up, boys.

Get some bamboo and string up my Iphigenia. Screw her 'til sundown.

ADOLFO: A general has many burdens.

(ORESTES can be heard crying from inside the box.)

NEWS ANCHOR: Like your son, general?

ADOLFO: My son?

NEWS ANCHOR: Orestes.

ADOLFO: He's a baby. He doesn't know about such things.

NEWS ANCHOR: General?

ADOLFO: The name is Adolfo. Leave us in peace.

(ADOLFO and CAMILA disappear inside the darkness of the screen.)

(T V NEWS ANCHOR, not knowing what to do, stands for a moment, then decides to follow them into the screen. End of "House Mix" section.)

(Neon rises. ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA are seen. The camera watches them.)

ACHILLES: Slip me your dick.

IPHIGENIA: I don't have one.

ACHILLES: I thought the rich had everything.

IPHIGENIA: Don't be coarse.

ACHILLES: Does it offend you?

IPHIGENIA: Stop.

ACHILLES: You're in me. I can't.

IPHIGENIA: I like your skin.

ACHILLES: Taste it. Lick it.

Do what you will.

I am used to being devoured.

Slip me your tongue.

IPHIGENIA: I don't...

ACHILLES: You want it all, girl.

That's why you asked for the stars

to come down and screw you.

You see this? This is my hand. I'm going to stick it —

IPHIGENIA: Stop.

ACHILLES: I'm crude. I'm what you want. Lick me.

Suspend yourself in my cradle.

I am falling down

like a mutant star hungry for skin.

You are the girl-boy-thing I need.

This is another sex we're making, twin.

Kiss me.

IPHIGENIA:

...And my tongue moves through your open mouth

sinking into saliva and teeth

and all that makes you.

I watched you last night,

my eyes were transfixed.

I caught a glimmer of myself in them.

At first I didn't realize

I was looking at my eyes,
but then I looked again, and realized
They were my eyes transformed by yours, burned by
your iris.

My slip became yours,
and our legs became one.

ACHILLES: There's death here.

IPHIGENIA: Where?

ACHILLES: All around. Bones.

Bodies torn, buried in graves.

Left by men hungry for money.

You know the kind I mean.

Like those men that took you in the night...

IPHIGENIA: I don't want to think about that.

ACHILLES: Everyone knows

the girl framed in the magazine:

Buy her picture.

She'll suffer for you as you sleep.

IPHIGENIA: Did you buy a picture of me?

ACHILLES: Pleasure

comes in ways you can't even dream.

The pursuit of it blasts us all.

Rip down the wall and you will see

one hundred million atrocities

Perpetuated and executed

in the name of pleasure.

I've been asked to be frozen,

caught in an image on a screen.

"Just sing, convulsive angel.

Sing that line over and over.

Move those hips.

But don't make a sound, a true sound, because we will
kill you."

So I spit poison in the night. I graffiti my skin. I fuck my own celebrity.

IPHIGENIA: There are better pictures of me than the one you bought. I can show you.

ACHILLES: Zig down my spine, twin.

Let's make love on top of the dead bodies

that have been lying beneath us for centuries.

Because that's what you want—a touch of the obscene.

(The tabloid photo of IPHIGENIA, bound and gagged, is projected onto ACHILLES' slip, his body.)

IPHIGENIA: The fields disappear

in a sting of light

that bleeds colors foreign to the eyes.

Mouths eclipse each other. Consume me.

ACHILLES: Can you come straight through me? In a flash?

IPHIGENIA: I will burn you.

ACHILLES: Slow down.

IPHIGENIA: I want to kill the tabloid girl that envelopes your skin.

I want to bury her in your mouth and thighs...

ACHILLES: You move too fast, girl.

IPHIGENIA: You bought my picture when it was sold on the street.

Did you make love to me then?

Did you press the picture of me against yourself and blush

At the thought of me bound—?

ACHILLES: Sink to me.

IPHIGENIA: I will sink and get rid of every bit of me.

ACHILLES: What is your weakness? I will give it to you.

(The tabloid photo engulfs them. FRESA GIRLS 1 & 2 appear. They are in yet another version of the Chanel dress, which is becoming unrecognizable now — barely a trace of its origin.)

FRESA GIRL Iphigenia stirs inside the flesh of the boy with the glitter lips
flaunting her sex for all to see.

FRESA GIRL 2: Where do you think you are, girl? You don't get anything here for free.

FRESA GIRL 1: A tabloid lover
will find you on the debris river
and sink you into the junk food wrappers
Stretched past greasy fingers and salty lids itching for sleep.

FRESA GIRL 2: Tattoo me a tiger, Iphigenia.
Just like the one Achilles has down his arm. Give me its milk.

(The FRESA GIRLS disappear. The tabloid photo fades in flickering black-and-white.)

IPHIGENIA: You are the sorriest boy
I ever met.

What's that you got in your bloodstream: nicotine,
caffeine, coke, glue?

ACHILLES: A Mars bar, some acid tabs, and E.

IPHIGENIA: All muscle.

Didn't you use to be an archer, boy?

A wing-footed archer

with limbs traced in golden armor?

ACHILLES: I used to be everything.

IPHIGENIA: A regular dream.

ACHILLES: Curl around me.

IPHIGENIA: I don't want anything but your tongue.

ACHILLES: Coax it. It will sing for you. I am easily won.

IPHIGENIA: Scar.

ACHILLES: Feel nothing but my tongue.

IPHIGENIA: Right on the eyebrow. You were cut once.

ACHILLES: I cut myself with a blade when I was young.

I wanted to brand myself before someone else would.

I wanted a mark on me.

Everyone is branded here.

Even those that pretend they are un-marked.

So, I cut. On the slant of my brow.

Until blood ran into my eyes.

Here. Look at it. Burn your candle on it.

It says I am a boy and girl at once.

And what I do, who I am, is punishable by death,

or worse: endless repetition.

(Sings) War is over, the gods are over, everything, everything is over...

(Spoken) The crowd trips and sways for a trick of my light.

Take me into your bloodstream.

IPHIGENIA: Erase me.

(She takes a tab of acid from his tongue with a kiss.)

ACHILLES: We are night-crawling, girl.

Your heart is racing

inside the soft part of my chest

Where you hide like a drop of rain

And never cry.

(ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA are rapt in the night air. They are suspended in light, and sleep. Time shift)

(Light comes up on silver clouds and jagged trees.)

(Three masks appear between the trees, as if this were a stage set. A VIRGIN PUTA, who sounds like IPHIGENIA, a

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, who sounds like ACHILLES, and the GENERAL'S ASS, who sounds like ADOLFO.)

(The GENERAL'S ASS carries a thin whip in his hand. This is played as a commedia piece for an imaginary audience. This is IPHIGENIA'S nightmare hallucination.)

VIRGIN PUTA: The Story of a Virgin Puta

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: The Hermaphrodite Prince

GENERAL'S ASS: And the Blessed General's Ass

GENERAL'S ASS, HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE & VIRGIN

PUTA: A satyr play.

(The "play" begins.)

VIRGIN PUTA: You should've seen the sky. It was beaming green.

Pulse pulse...I was dancing.

GENERAL'S ASS: Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA: Oh, father, don't hurt me. I only wish to please.

GENERAL'S ASS: Don't you like my ass, daughter?

VIRGIN PUTA: I love it, but you can't walk around with it out in the open all night.

GENERAL'S ASS: Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA: Oh, father, don't hurt me.

GENERAL'S ASS: You were made to be sacrificed, daughter. Open your legs.

VIRGIN PUTA: But how will I stand, father?

GENERAL'S ASS: You will be bent.

VIRGIN PUTA: Is that the custom, father?

GENERAL'S ASS: It is for all the virgin putas.

VIRGIN PUTA: How long will you stay in me, father?

GENERAL'S ASS: Until you've learned the truth about me.

VIRGIN PUTA: I prefer lies, father. They go down so much better.

GENERAL'S ASS: Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA: Do I offend, father?

GENERAL'S ASS: You have been made meat.

VIRGIN PUTA: I am still your daughter. Love me.

GENERAL'S ASS: You must resist me.

VIRGIN PUTA: I will.

(*The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE dances, lost in himself, while in real time ACHILLES slips away un-noticed from Iphigenia's side, and disappears past the edge of the field.*)

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: (*Sings*) "Bathroom girl, oscillate those eyelids. Smuggle my gaze."

GENERAL'S ASS: Who sings? Tell me. Speak.

VIRGIN PUTA: It is a prince, father.

GENERAL'S ASS: This bitch?

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: (*Sings*)

"Silver strands of moaning flesh will I be..."

GENERAL'S ASS: Do not dance for me.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: Don't you want to watch me?

GENERAL'S ASS: What?

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: Make love to your daughter.

VIRGIN PUTA: Oh, father, please.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: I'll be any sex you want me to be.

GENERAL'S ASS: Scratch her with your fingernails. Suckle her, boy.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: (*By rote*) Whore. Bitch.

VIRGIN PUTA: More.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: Iphigenia.

VIRGIN PUTA: Don't call me that.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: Isn't that your name?

GENERAL'S ASS: There are no names here. Only bodies. Do as you are told.

(*The GENERAL'S ASS strikes the HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE on the ass with the whip.*)

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: I bleed.

GENERAL'S ASS: Hands on her throat. That's right.

VIRGIN PUTA: But, father...

(*The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE chokes the VIRGIN PUTA. She falls limp.*)

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE: (*Sings*) Iphigenia...

(*The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE collapses.*)

GENERAL'S ASS: Her double.

But you've done the trick, bitch.

Now I will tell you how she should be killed.

Lead her into a quiet house off the main road.

She will follow you

if you tell her a lover waits for her.

Then close the door, blind her,

and pierce her with a knife.

She's not my daughter anymore.

She has abandoned me.

IPHIGENIA: Father?

GENERAL'S ASS: I love you so much I will do anything for you. Anything.

IPHIGENIA: Father, hold me!

(The mask of the GENERAL'S ASS spears black birds from its hole. IPHIGENIA screams.)

(The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, the VIRGIN PUTA, and the GENERAL'S ASS drop their masks to reveal VIOLETA IMPERIAL, FRESA GIRL 2, and FRESA GIRL 1.)

(End of "Satyr play.")

IPHIGENIA: Iphigenia comes back to me. Her story is fresh upon my skin. Destroy me.

FRESA GIRL 1: What's the matter, girl? Didn't you like our show?

IPHIGENIA: Scavenge me. Wreck my heart.

FRESA GIRL 2: Who are you talking to, girl?

IPHIGENIA: Money. Do you need money?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: What are you saying, child?

IPHIGENIA: Under my bed. I have new bills that aren't even in circulation yet.

FRESA GIRL 1: We don't want anything.

IPHIGENIA: What do you mean? Everybody wants...

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: We don't need anything, child.

FRESA GIRL 2: We disappeared a long time ago. Nobody needs anything from us.

IPHIGENIA: What are you—? Your throat...

FRESA GIRL 2: Razor. Right on the breath.

IPHIGENIA: You're dead?

FRESA GIRL 1: We're all dead.

FRESA GIRL 2: Another pink cross, another name... marked upon the fields of Juarez.

(FRESA GIRLS 1 and 2 start to walk away.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: The country needs you, Iphigenia. We need a girl like you to give us hope.

IPHIGENIA: What?

(VIOLETA IMPERIAL touches Iphigenia's forehead with the palm of her hand: a benediction.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're dead.

(VIOLETA IMPERIAL Imperial joins the FRESA GIRLS. They walk away, and disappear among the jagged trees. Time shift. IPHIGENIA is awake, trembling.)

(ACHILLES emerges from a part of the field. He is in a state of delirium. He is high.)

Liquid Haze

ACHILLES: *(Sings)* Wake me at dawn
pierced through feeling
Re-inscribe the terror
Of the pulsing light.

IPHIGENIA: Achilles, did you know...?

Did you know we were being watched?

ACHILLES: *(Sings)* No sign,
No sign of trembling.
I have left you dry.

IPHIGENIA: Did you know that we are surrounded by ghosts?

You have tricked me.

ACHILLES: *(Sings)* Trick and sway
the boy twist.

He's got a gadget up his sleeve,
And he knows
How to use it.

IPHIGENIA: Look at me. Please.

ACHILLES: *(Sings)* I got a blue tab.
Do you wanna split it with me?

IPHIGENIA: You have poisoned me. My teeth gnash, are made raw.

ACHILLES: (*Spoken*) Where are you going?

IPHIGENIA: I want to hear the people scream.

ACHILLES: (*Speak-sings*) Lacerate me.

IPHIGENIA: I've heard screams in my sleep. Blinding shots of electricity:
into earlobes and soles of feet.
And I have closed my eyes,
and covered my ears.

I have pretended I couldn't feel anything.
I have been dreaming, Achilles:
reckless in sleep.

ACHILLES: You're with me.

IPHIGENIA: I have been trying to erase every bit of me,
so that I could make something else out of myself,
so that I could feel something with this body
that has been denied for so long.
But Iphigenia is still here, isn't she?
She still owes her country.

ACHILLES: You don't owe anybody anything.

IPHIGENIA: Where are we?

ACHILLES: In the sky.

IPHIGENIA: Every muscle in my body is trembling.

ACHILLES: The sun will be up soon.

IPHIGENIA: Everything hurts.

ACHILLES: Shh.

(*FRESA GIRLS 1 and 2 are heard hissing in the distance.
Their hiss is amplified and electronically distorted.*)

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2 (V O) : Shh.

IPHIGENIA: The girls hiss.

ACHILLES: What?

IPHIGENIA: The dead girls from the factory, from the club...

ACHILLES: You're dreaming.

IPHIGENIA: Are you going to kill me?

ACHILLES: ...I'm a coward, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA: You were raised by centaurs. You'll do anything.

ACHILLES: I don't know what centaurs you speak of.

IPHIGENIA: Achilles, son of the sea-nymph, raised by a glorious centaur, a deceiver of men.

ACHILLES: That's in the past, isn't it?

IPHIGENIA: Do you remember? I remember things that I haven't even lived.

ACHILLES: I have erased everything.

IPHIGENIA: With acid tabs and a Mars bar?

ACHILLES: I am completely remade.

IPHIGENIA: I think I am what the past has made me.

ACHILLES: You think too much.

IPHIGENIA: ... You won't let me die, then?

ACHILLES: ...Lean on me, twin.

(*ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA embrace.*)

IPHIGENIA: Look. Your tiger has tattooed itself on my skin.

ACHILLES: You'll forget me.

IPHIGENIA: No.

ACHILLES: You'll walk into the club one night, and you'll spit at me.

IPHIGENIA: Don't.

ACHILLES: You'll grab my legs and trip me out of the screen...

IPHIGENIA: I'll do anything. Watch me.

ACHILLES: And you'll beam your novocaine teeth, and pound me,

IPHIGENIA: I will destroy every bit of your celebrity.

ACHILLES: (*Continuing*) as the Virtual M C strings me up and floats me above your reach:

(*In the voice of the VIRTUAL M C*)

"Pull a limb off the dangling boy, girls. Shake his tree.

He won't feel anything.

His blood is soaked in E."

IPHIGENIA: There will be no one left to adore but me.

ACHILLES: And you'll pull off my arms while I hang from the invisible hook attached to the ceiling

And you'll parade my limbs for all to see.

Then another girl will take my legs

And you'll start to cut me.

"Let's make a flower from his flesh," you'll say.

And my twitching eyes will watch you make a corpse of me.

IPHIGENIA: You curse me.

ACHILLES: Give me your body.

IPHIGENIA: My teeth are numb.

ACHILLES: Put this in your mouth.

(ACHILLES puts a pacifier in IPHIGENIA'S mouth, as he turns her body against him.)

(Shift to baby ORESTES, who appears on the screen. He speaks in an adult voice, and is stoned.)

ORESTES:

Right in my sock mouth yeah, that's what I need, my sister dear, my sister be.

You are loud and right in my face.

Is that why you got me stoked up for?

I got coca in my brain since the day I was born.

I don't need any more coca cola, or any other yanqui dollar, get me?

I bounce without any help from the motorcycle slaves killing off girls on the side of the street.

You think I don't know anything?

Pink cross on a factory wall. That's me.

I'm the painter, dear. Your brother Orestes.

(IPHIGENIA spits out the pacifier.)

IPHIGENIA: Orestes?

ACHILLES: There's no one here but me.

ORESTES: I'm the one marking the time, day, and the very santo espiritu moment

(*He makes the sign of the cross with his tiny hands.*)

of the fresa girls meeting their death outside the rave.

Rev, rev, rev on, sister.

(*A lid is placed over ORESTES' head by an anonymous hand.*)

ORESTES: We see he is inside a designer shoebox labeled "Gucci."

(*Night bleeds into morning.*)

IPHIGENIA: What have you done to me?

ACHILLES: Shh.

IPHIGENIA: I'm bleeding.

ACHILLES: I'm sorry.

IPHIGENIA: You wanted to split me.

ACHILLES: We're one, girl.

IPHIGENIA: You're a monster.

ACHILLES: I'll be dead soon.

IPHIGENIA: What?

ACHILLES: I've had AIDS for years. It's all a matter of time...

IPHIGENIA: You're lying.

ACHILLES: Why do you think they show me every night dancing in the same image?

"He'll be delirious in a beat. Watch him. Watch him lose his mind.

He's our original rock n'roll suicide."

I feel it sometimes. Words get botched. Everything goes slow.

IPHIGENIA: ...Kiss me.

ACHILLES: You still want me?

IPHIGENIA: I want everything.

I see myself in the sky, and I don't have this weird film on my skin.

The whole earth has been irradiated, and I'm flying through the air looking down on my house, except it's not there anymore.

There's nothing, except land and a few flowers made of human bones where my room used to be.

And my baby brother is swimming in this large pool shaped like a guitar, like the one Elvis used to have. And he's happy.

He's not drowning in coca anymore. He's free.

And I'm on the gulf where the sea is gray, and no one wants a piece of me, not the newspapers, not the boys in fatigues, not even my father...

(She kisses him.)

ACHILLES: You kiss without shame.

IPHIGENIA: Will you betray me?

ACHILLES: Will you forgive me?

IPHIGENIA: ...Give me your hands.

ACHILLES: What?

IPHIGENIA: You have bewitched me.

(Sun burns upon ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA as he goes her his hands.)

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE

IPHIGENIA'S RETURN:
SEVEN CUTS FROM A DREAM

one

(In the city's gleam, IPHIGENIA is standing.)

IPHIGENIA: Back arched. The neck pivots on tired shoulders.

Iphigenia comes home from the dance.
The streets are empty.

Dots of houses lie low against the horizon.

Iphigenia is headed home,
but she takes her time.

She walks with the last trace of Achilles
on her skin.

Her father is far from her mind.

(VIOLETA IMPERIAL appears. There is a dress over her arm.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're going to need your strength.

IPHIGENIA: Get away from me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You've a temper in the morning,
eh? Come on. Try on this dress. I made it special with
lace. You want to look good for Achilles, don't you,
child?

IPHIGENIA: For Achilles? Yes.

(IPHIGENIA lets VIOLETA IMPERIAL place the dress on her.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: I made you this dress, Iphigenia. From Queen Anne's lace.

These hands sewed night and day praying for your return, while another pink cross, another girl's name went up on the factory wall.

IPHIGENIA: Another girl was killed?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Where do you think I got the Queen Anne's lace?

IPHIGENIA: Take this off me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: It's all right, child. I washed it. This dress has been cleansed of all blood. You are safe.

IPHIGENIA: Hold me, Violeta. I'm scared.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: I can't have anyone near me. You know that.

IPHIGENIA: No one will see.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You think because you're out here that no one can see?

IPHIGENIA: Hold me. Please.

I can feel the dead girl's breath inside this dress. I feel all the dead through me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Girls die every day here, and no one mourns them.

IPHIGENIA: I want to mourn them, Violeta. I want to free them of their pain. I want your scars on me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Look around you, Iphigenia. There are eyes everywhere. They've seen everything. Your death will help us make some sense of it all. Our grief will finally have a place.

IPHIGENIA: I'm not dead.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: They're selling pictures on the street.

(The screen flashes a thousand photos of IPHIGENIA's body splayed on the field outside the club.)

(In each photo, her eyes are either ecstatically blank, or scratched out.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: We need someone to mourn for, Iphigenia.

We need a girl we can look up to.

(The screen rests on a close shot of IPHIGENIA, slightly bloodied, with the pacifier in her mouth.)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: This one's my favorite.

Fifty dollars for a premium shot of Iphigenia sucking on her baby blue.

Of course, I wouldn't sell it. I sell chicken. Legs and wings.

For running, and flying, see?

(The close shot of IPHIGENIA with blank eyes is magnified now. Image upon image. Eyes, mouth, nose. Cropped shots overlaid as VIOLETA IMPERIAL fades into the periphery.)

IPHIGENIA: The dress of a dead girl sticks to her skin.

Iphigenia sees her father's eyes staring at her from behind the screen.

The centuries fade in ribbons. Father...?

(SOLDIER X, a mercenary, appears.)

SOLDIER X: Give us back your body, girl. It's never been yours to keep.

IPHIGENIA: She closes her eyes against the sky as it turns to day.

Away from her dreams. Away.

two

(SOLDIER X and IPHIGENIA stand a few feet apart from each other.)

IPHIGENIA: When will you kill me?

SOLDIER X: I'm a mercenary, Iphigenia. I kill for money, not out of rage.

IPHIGENIA: Has my father paid you yet?

SOLDIER X: Let's not discuss such things.

IPHIGENIA: Make my father pay you.

I want you to lead me into a quiet house off the main road,

and tell me Achilles is waiting for me.

I want you to close the door, and cover my eyes and when I ask "Why?"

I want you to pierce me with a knife.

SOLDIER X: You're growing up too fast, girl.

IPHIGENIA: I never liked childhood.

three

(IPHIGENIA talks to ORESTES, who is inside the designer shoebox.)

(ORESTES's face is seen on the screen.)

IPHIGENIA: I don't think you will ever grow up. You haven't grown an inch since I put you in here. You're so thin, and your fingers are so... Your eyes are spinning, Orestes. Stop looking at me.

(IPHIGENIA rocks the box. ORESTES's face contorts in restless, wide-eyed sleep on the screen. She sings.)

Lullaby for Orestes

Marry the winged messenger with a foot on the grave.

Here we do what my father says.

The fresa girls work in factories all day

Waiting for young men to kill them.

Dream, dream, Orestes.

Dream, dream, with blood on your mind.

Dream, dream, Orestes.

Dream my death

With your stoned eyes.

four

(CAMILA is combing her hair. IPHIGENIA watches her.)

CAMILA: Iphigenia's the eldest. My first. I'm supposed to be proud of her.

But when I look at her, I feel hatred.

Inexplicable, for it was an easy childbirth I had with her.

Her brother, on the other hand, was hard. They had to cut me open.

But Iphigenia popped out in minutes, eager to be out in the world.

She burns my fingers.

She is the fruit of Adolfo's rape of me.

Such glorious, poisonous fruit.

He married me against my will.

He smashed the head of a baby boy whose name is no longer remembered

And stuck his cock inside me.

For the good of the country.

For the promise of a model wife at his side.

"My dear, sweet Iphigenia," Adolfo would say. "She is the best of us."

I slap her. Across the face.
I make her take care of her baby brother, because I
know he cries all night,
and she won't be able to sleep.
I know what she wants.
She wants to touch me. Like any daughter.
Iphigenia. I will never love you.

five

*(IPHIGENIA walks like a ghost through her own house, and
out into the street, toward the light of the hangar, past
everything.)*

IPHIGENIA: It is night. I see fragments.
My mother braids her hair in the moonlight.
My brother cries from inside the box that once held my
Gucci shoes.
My father sleeps with his feet facing the window. I kiss
him for the last time.
No tears, father. Everything will be all right.
I move to the whisps
of soldiers in neon out on the street,
outside the house that holds me.
The fresa girls leave the factories
with their party dresses on.
Hey, girls. Let's go dancing.
Pulse I go in the mirror-ball. Pulse...
Spin, spin a drop of magenta green
in the open sky.
Give me a kiss, fair Achilles,
give me a deep, wet dizzy with E...
I am caught in my father's eyes.
They stare out of every camera.

*(IPHIGENIA motions to SOLDIER X, who appears out of the
shadows.)*

IPHIGENIA: Lead me now, soldier.
Be my blissful mercenary.
(She offers him her arm.)

This is how I want to be remembered:
With E on my tongue,
and the rush of love in my heart,
And the whole world spinning with my glory.
Pulse. I go.

(SOLDIER X takes IPHIGENIA in a shiver of electric light.)

six

(The FRESA GIRLS at the club are on the T V screen.)

FRESA GIRL 1: Yeah, I saw her. She had a Chanel on.
She was looking for Achilles.
You think I look good? I've been thinking about plastic
surgery.

FRESA GIRL 2: Everybody was dancing. I couldn't see
anything. Hey. Hey. Do you like Prodigy?

FRESA GIRL 1: I could make myself into her. With the
right smile, the right teeth...I could be Iphigenia.

FRESA GIRL 3: Hey. Hey. Don't you want to talk to me?
I saw everything. Yeah.

Soldier X, the mercenary, came in through the back of
the club. She waved to him.

ALL FRESA GIRLS: What?

FRESA GIRL 3: She was no saint. I saw her. You hear
me? I saw him kill her.

I saw everything. Like I had the eyes of God. Hey.
What are you—?

*(Sound and image out on the T V. T V NEWS ANCHOR's
face fills the screen. He is "off-camera".)*

NEWS ANCHOR: No, Walter.

I do not know where the Knicks are playing tonight. Can't you goddamn look it up? This is the information age, for God's sake. Everything's at the touch of a... What? What? (*He is "on the air"*) In late news tonight, the general's daughter Iphigenia is said to be dead. I repeat, "this is a rumor," But sources tell us she was seen outside an aircraft hangar shortly before midnight escorted by a man yet to be identified, and she has not been seen since. Unlike other incidents involving the general's daughter, reports lead us to believe this is not a kidnapping. Blood has been seen on the ground at a short distance from the hangar in a house made of cinder block. And experts confirm it does match Iphigenia's blood type. I repeat "This is a rumor. This is a rumor. This is a rumor."

(T V NEWS ANCHOR *fades as ADOLFO is seen, live. He wears pajamas.*)

ADOLFO: She was very still. I made the sign of the cross with my hands. The man took out the knife. My daughter's cry was heard but once. When I lifted my eyes, she was gone. There was blood everywhere. But no sign of my Iphigenia.

(*In the background, ADOLFO is seen on video, dressed in a military coat. He speaks to the nation.*)

PART THREE

ADOLFO: (*On video*) God took her. I believe God's will has been done. We must pray that all the fighting will stop. We must remember Iphigenia, and everything she did for us. As your leader, I will do my best, in this time of great sorrow for our family, To live up to her precious memory. Iphigenia is a saint. (*Live*) I will be re-elected. No one will throw a father who has just lost his daughter out of office.

(*CAMILA appears, live.*)

CAMILA: A saint?

ADOLFO: Listen, Camila. The people are praying. She escaped death. She'll save us all. (*On video*) In Iphigenia's name. I call for our nation to be united.

CAMILA: My dear Iphigenia, where have the gods taken you? Where are you, Iphigenia? (*ADOLFO embraces CAMILA.*)

(*The sound of baby ORESTES crying in the background. Fade on the scene*)

(*The VIRTUAL M C comes up on the screen, disembodied, and grinning in the light.*)

VIRTUAL M C: Well, my little sluts, it looks like our dancing daughter has taken flight. Angels bring her rest while we change places on a wooden bench and take our crystal high. If it's not one brutality, it's another, and the way we count the days is

by the pulse of this light.
 Skip on, crashers. Shine on.
 You get me, dolls?
 This is about pig tails and ankle socks
 and setting yourself up
 for burying your heads between your knees.
 There is no tomorrow, children.
 There is only the night.
 And we're going to live it through for eternity.

(The VIRTUAL M C's grin escapes the image of ACHILLES, live, who nevertheless seems to be ghosting a corner of the ever expanding space. He sings in performance mode.)

My eyes to your eyes

ACHILLES: Insomnia trace my skin to you.
 My eyes to your eyes,
 My eyes to your eyes.

(Image projected on the screen: close-up of IPHIGENIA's face through a surveillance camera.)

ACHILLES: Save the hour, sweet angel,
 And I will follow.
 Hold your breath, dear angel,
 And I will follow.
 I will follow.
 Peel off my scab, restart the wound.
 I will follow.
 I will follow...

(He disappears into the darkness.)

seven

Iphigenia in Extasis

(A view from the camera. IPHIGENIA remains. She is both live, and on the screen.)

PART THREE

IPHIGENIA: Crash.
 I am not cut, but I am bleeding.
 There is black sand on my feet, but no water.
 Only the sound of waves rushing.
 I am standing.
 I have wings.
 They grow out of my shoulder blades
 Out of the veil of the T V screen.
 I am not cut, but I am bleeding.

Crash.
 I remember falling,
 Kissing
 Through the garden,
 To the neon lights on the street,
 Splitting me into threads of skin.
 Wings lift me.
 I am moving.
 I am at the edge of the city.
 I am atop the aircraft hangar and its beams of green.
 Boys, girls and a million vacant eyes.
 Look at me.
 I stand on the metal ledge.
 Black liquid sand slipping off my skin.
 The story has been told again.

A wreath has been placed upon Iphigenia's head.
 Crash.
 Every part of me is breaking.
 But I'm all right.
 Give me your hands.
 Give me your hands,
 Cause you're wonderful.

END OF PLAY

Afterword

Euripides' Children

"We're all kids of E..."

This is a trance tale, of death and dying, of dancing and swaying, of divination, hypnosis, religion, and ecstasy. This is a tale told from the breath of myth (or some would say, the breach of myth) through Euripides' pen through to Calderon de la Barca's *The Monster of the Gardens* (1667), Racine's *Iphigenia* (1674), and Gluck's opera (1774) to Garcia Lorca's lost manuscript to versions told again and again, and now resting in my mouth, in my body, coursing through my veins. This is an "ambient translation" (to use musician/mixer Bill Laswell's phrase) of a story that has been translated from the ancient Greek to the French to Spanish to English and back again. In every version, the same impulse seems to arise: how to rescue Iphigenia? How to keep her from sustaining the fate to which she seems destined in Aulis? How can Iphigenia escape death? The impulse drives Iphigenia herself, who is a woman trapped inside the systematic corruption of a society which will not give her a voice, a body she can call her own unless she offers that voice, that body, to the state. Iphigenia is trapped by a notion of heroism that is not even hers, but which over time she has been made to believe is noble. This is a tale about cowardice, lies, celebrity, ambition, and sacrifice. And love. Above all, love. Deep, passionate, screwed-up love...

The Ceremony of Memory

Ecstasy (*from the Greek for "being placed outside*), a state of exaltation in which the self is transcended

Step into the warp, which is reading Euripides' text, and the feeling of being angry. His text has the force and savage, despairing wit to anger, even today in the year 2004, when we're supposed to be past all that. How could this girl accept her death, her forced destiny, so willingly? How can she love her father so much? And her country? Is this patriotism or foolishness? Or a bit of both?

Release the victim from the thread of time, and set her in a landscape of dirt, and rituals all too alive. Images are conjured up: a collage of countries: Nicaragua, Mexico, Columbia, Panama, Argentina, Cuba, Bosnia, the U K, the U S, etc. The global marketplace and all its histories in the whirling bits and bytes and bleeps that do not even let us take in one disaster before another strikes. And not even disasters but how about people's lives? Continuity. Is there time for that these days? Who remembers the "disappeared ones" in Argentina besides the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo who stand there day after day? That was in the mid-1970s. Ancient history. Who recalls the bitter fights in Nicaragua? Who opens their eyes and looks at what is truly happening in Columbia? The rush to move on to the next and next had produced a culture of people who only wish to look away, or look up: individuals addicted to release. The Western world is in a state of constant departure.

A swirl of sounds mixes in the night air as the template of rave culture plays in the background, allowing for the consumerist totems of this culture—a drug called Ecstasy; designer clothes that elaborate on infantilism, kitsch, S & M and retro hippie-ness to enact their own

mad neo-mod game; a repetitive mix of loops and hard-driving beats that live somewhere between glam, disco and Philip Glass — to spur feelings of departure. Listen up. It's Brian Eno, and Kraftwerk time again. It's about letting the body rage in the in-between stage all night, and straight through morning. No doom and gloom here in this nocturnal wonderland. After all, haven't we licked AIDS? That was the 1980s and 1990s, right?

Iphigenia lives in the walls of culture and descends to find herself. She sets herself loose onto a world she doesn't quite understand, filled with the memory of knowing too well what awaits her in the unchanging pattern of fate, and wondering what she can do to wreck it now, if she can. Eleggua is a god in the Santeria pantheon, in the syncretized religion that was born in West Africa and Cuba and then made its way to Brazil, the US and other countries. He is the god who opens all doors, and guides the paths of those lost. He stands at the cross-roads with conch shell eyes and an open brain. He watches you being split in two. If you pray to him, you will find your way. Iphigenia begins to pray "Mi Dios, mi salvador, mi Eleggua (My god, my saviour, my Eleggua)," because sometimes you have to reach past sanctioned, "official" religions, you have to reach past to something ancient to find even a glimpse of an answer to sustain you on your life's journey.

The prayer is set against the relenting eye of the media, which haunts without even wanting to. It is part of the camera's function to look, to fix the gaze, and cultures are built around the rapt stare, which entrances its citizens in front of the many screens which populate our midst. Even the "disappeared ones" are haunted through lovers' memories, enemies' worries, and the

living's constant look over the shoulder which says "will I be next?"

The prayer gives way to a mistrust of faith. The nation becomes a cadaver as Iphigenia roams outside the cage which has held her over time and centuries. The voice is made corporeal (through screams, through song) as the blindfold, which has been placed willingly and thus begging for the relinquishment of self-direction, is cast off, and the stumbling toward something which can be found through the body's own desires begins.

The Body Politic

The body who has become an object to society, which has been already violated and trashed and reconfigured, seeks a bit of tenderness. Pleasure has been killed, you see. Iphigenia wishes to rediscover pleasure, and her body. The split persona longs for some kind of integration, but the state which governs and censors bodies and dismantles them, makes it hard for her to do so.

Iphigenia encounters the first of many mirrors in a woman who is part messenger, part prophet, and part her own creation. Violeta Imperial is a victim of torture, a member of the living "disappeared," who through her invisible status in society, rendered so by the state, moves freely in the corners, alleys, and countryside selling pieces of animal bodies to those hungry enough to buy. She has been marked verbally as a pata, a "dyke," (and thus, outside prescribed sexual laws), and doubly marked physically by soldiers eager with the blade. By escaping death, she now serves to court the present and living dead who cross her path.

This traumatic mirror conjures traumatic memory from Iphigenia, the pristine girl who has been scarred by culture, and rape. As Clytemnestra, now called Camila, was herself raped by Agamemnon, now called Adolfo, the violation of the female body and its subsequent brutalization lives in Iphigenia's skin.

"All the young girls/die in my arms/die like wounded birds/strangled by the palms"

the song goes as it mourns for Iphigenia's forgotten body, which she is seeking to remember, dis-member, and put together again. The song plays as an elegy for body all too living and already being mourned by celebrity's addictive fix.

Memory jars, as longed-for affection is recalled. A father much loved by his daughter will no longer touch his child because tears must be avoided, and a new face must be put forth to deny the old one. Guilt hides in Adolfo's cheek, and Iphigenia, who once again, is faced with the specter of death, throws a veil over the mirror called Violeta Imperial, who recedes in the shadows, but will remember her.

Vectors of Identity

Accustomed to public spectacle, the split body searches for private space. Ecstasy transports, lifts, and carries the soul until the heart cannot go on any longer, until bliss is too overpowering. A bacchanal of the spirit that melts into the brain. And it's just another day. Another day at the factory where the fresa girls work for forty US dollars a week in maquilas all over Latin and South America, where offshore riches are made by giant conglomerates (are there any other kind?) who prey on the dreams of girls longing to rise out of poverty

and into a more "glamorous" world where certain material things can indeed be bought for a price. Split souls meet other split souls, and Achilles is remade into a new shape for our times. A hero turned inside out for another age. A body longing for death but not able to die. His mother Thetis, the sea-nymph, dipped him into the River Styx to make him immortal. The waters made him immortal except for the heel by which his mother held him. The heel bleeds now, and keeps bleeding. He has been touched by a modern plague. He lives with the plague taunting him with mortality every minute. But this soldier who has become another kind of icon, a rock star, continues to play. In a world where the DJ reigns, this rock star heeds Buddy Holly's call to "rave on." There is no respite for this man idolized from Homer down through Rubens' painting *The Death of Achilles* down through W H Auden's *The Shield of Achilles* (1955) down through the present when his name is but a click of a web-link away from the imagination and hey, isn't that golden boy Brad Pitt wearing Achilles' armor in *Troy* (2004)? Achilles' body has been traversed by all zones, and is still standing. Some flesh must remain for the eventual slaughter. A rough and tender beast in a silver dress and fishnet stockings, in a slip and combat boots, in perpetual transformation, slouches toward Bethlehem to be dilated and thus, be born.

The surface of Achilles' skin is inscribed. This is another semantic space. A symbolic contract has been made between Achilles and society, as has one been made between Iphigenia and society. Twin encounters twin. Two celebrities caught in different lenses of experience: one escapes myth's hold through drugs, the other seeks to both claim, and escape myth, and thus be free of its hold forever. Identities are disguised in an effort to act against the tyranny of social roles

who have designated a body must live by certain quotations only. Altered states illuminate wounds. Paranoia, and dreams of destruction set in. The meta-hell is the body in knowing pain: refusing anesthesia even while under the spell of the drug which ravages, damages, and plays myriad tricks with the chemicals which make it up.

Root is what we're after: origin. A fire that not only burns, but hurts. As crime and violence is ever closer to us in this society, we are ever more distanced from an active and ethical relationship with the original event. Ethics fall away, and we are left in a heretical place where hell is stored in someone else's eyes.

For every act of erasure, there is an act of recuperation, or an attempt to do so. As the self becomes more and more separated, it becomes more difficult to recover what has been lost. Has Iphigenia been lost to us forever? Will acts of recovery ever grant her rest?

The tattoo moves from one body to the other. Iphigenia finds herself through someone else's sign. Her snatch meets Achilles' velvet orbs and a new sex is made, the sex of celebrity offering itself up to the heavens for absolution. This is an assault on Babylon, and the penultimate act of erasure.

Sacrifice

Iphigenia departs her body in order to find it as the fresa girls, the ghosts of girls killed by the hundreds in border towns along the Americas, dream of her caressing their wounded flesh. These ghost-girls mark the landscape. They are the dead whose deaths are not claimed: violated bodies left on roads, outside dance clubs, killed for sport, because they belong to an economic class which has no power. Pink crosses are

painted on walls and lampposts and street corners by those who remember them, those who wish someone to remember the dead. The fresa girls (the ghosts of the Women of Juarez) dream of the icon that has been given to them, the Iphigenia they wish to possess, and whose manner they wish to appropriate, and they wonder what's happened to the girl who has abandoned them to seek her own pleasure. What burden for a young woman in any station?

How can Iphigenia meet everyone's dreams and expectations? Isn't death the perfect answer for a life that has been continually robbed by everyone since the day she was born?

Ecstasy, the designer drug of choice that crosses all class boundaries, leaves the mouth dry, and teeth raw. Everything grinds in the mouth, the gums hurt, and a pacifier provides instant comfort, not to mention, it makes a great fashion statement. Look at me, the pacifier says. I'm your baby now. I'm your bit of baby kink. Come into my mouth, pry open my lips, if you dare. The heart races in constant acceleration, and transcendence of a kind is found in a drug-induced fever dream.

Achilles' mirror betrays as the immortal one begs leave of the mortal. Iphigenia belongs to her country, to the state, to her father and mother, to Orestes, who still rocks in his cradle and can only hint at thoughts of murder. She belongs to everyone but herself. She is in the grip of myth, not of the gods, and so she must die. A torturous rest awaits this stuttering child who in order to drown her appetite has drowned her-self.

Death as fetish. Death as commodity. In the cadaver state, elaborate rituals are created to play with the dead. Tortured bodies are re-tortured and mutilated, dis-membered, and treated as objects for YouTube

sport, and a new kind of profession emerges: the specialist in cuts. Grotesque manifestations of damaged psyches dot the landscape: a bizarre, irrational "beauty" that bears no explanation in the condoned bacchanal of the spirit.

"Mi corazon esta en llamas, mi corazon esta en flor/
Mi corazon se vuelve polvo, ante el espectro de tu amor.

(My heart burns, my heart blooms/My heart turns to ash before the specter of your love)

One of Achilles' songs can be heard as a show is played in front of an imaginary crowd. There is no applause here in this newly found place of jagged edges, only screams. This is the earth Iphigenia must walk to find her way home.

A cut in the membrane, and another, as Euripides mocks the decisions of men made in the name of war, and therefore, peace. Agamemnon lives inside his mask, suffering but also able to contain the measure of it to expedite his ambition, to satisfy his greed. Clytemnestra will one day avenge the miseries inflicted upon this fallen house, but in the mean time, cruel vanity consumes her.

Reach down into the nothingness. Write this in blood. Iphigenia holds a miracle in her hands.

Prophecy

As the record spins, and everyone celebrates shamelessly in the wake of a young girl's death (what's another young girl's death when so many fresa girls have died, when so many are buried under lush trees feasting on broken bones?), Iphigenia can see the city and all its inhabitants burning. She reaches out with

her hands. She dreams of Mars. She imagines herself forever silent and cannot breathe for a moment. Then she thinks of a star. She thinks of creatures designed for amusement, to help societies get by in midst of chaos.

She is such a creature. She is the photograph in the exhibit, on the dinner-plate, immortalized and memorialized in bronze, silver, and tin. Dolls will be made in her image. Children will play with these dolls and try to look like her. Her dresses will be copied and re-sold to the highest bidder. Iphigenia's fashion will always be in vogue because to wear her clothes is to be her, isn't it? To be the heroine, the martyred heroine, is the ultimate accomplishment for many a young woman. Starve a little, hold everything in. Be flesh-less. Be invisible. Escape.

Iphigenia remembers a song once heard on the radio (was it Bowie in his Ziggy days claiming his "Rock n' Roll Suicide?" Was it Marilyn Manson? Lou Reed? My Chemical Romance?), and she smiles through the cuts on her skin, cuts made from Euripides' time on down. She smiles through everything. Her smile has been fixed for the camera. But as the song plays in her head, something true emerges, an expression not found in the stack of photographs and films and digital images and videos left behind. For Iphigenia recalls how to hold onto someone else can be wonderful.

Breath

I hold Iphigenia in my hands. She fits in my palm. Her breath moves through me.

I look in the mirror. Is that her face...?

Tremble. Blur.

I let her go.

This is the way.