

LONG TIME AGO

Long Time Ago

Orations
to be Spoken Alone During a Holiday
(with an Experiential Soundtrack)

Pablo Helguera
New York City
2012

*Just as we remain alone despite all our efforts,
we remain free despite all ties.*

Guy de Maupassant

First Oration

Soundtrack One

(old perfume bottle, wedding sachet, music box, a handful of rice.

Between 8 and 9pm. Cold weather. Entrance of a church, and if that is not possible, a garden where a party has recently taken place.

A light that may be illuminating the area. Shadows produced by the light. Purple sky. Chimney smoke)

HELP ME OPEN
UNREPEATED
A HUMBLE PORTRAIT
CLEAR
MADE BY CLOSING EYES
WERE IMAGINARY REPETITION LACKS
COME, UNREPEATED
CLOSE MY CLARITY
CLOSE MY CLARITY
OPEN
PARADISE
OPEN
THE CLARITY
OF THE HUMBLE IMAGINATION

Second Oration
Soundtrack Two

(Oil. Vinegar. Tablecloth. Photo Album. Red Wine. Cigarettes. Grapes.

Between 1 and 2 am. Inside. Or balcony. Open fresh air.

Faraway barking dogs.)

ONE SINGLE INSTANT
OF CONFOUNDED SIGHS
OF RECOGNITION
IN THAT FEAST OF ENVY

NOTHING MORE
OF WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR
ONE SINGLE LOOK
OF RECOGNITION

IF I CAN DIE
KNOWING I CAN SEE
NOTHING MORE
THAN A FEAST
OF SIGHS

NOTHING MORE
THAN A FEAST
OF SIGHS

Third Oration
Soundtrack Three

(Blue Carpet. Broken projector. Cognac. A pile of books in a foreign language. Three pounds of Jordan almonds.

6pm, after work.

Perhaps a friend's house, or a pawn shop. Empty street.)

I WANT YOU TO
RECEIVE MY THANKS
FROM THIS OLD CORNER
FROM THIS OLD POCKET
OF PHILOSOPHY
FOR THE RICH AND FOR THE POOR

I WANT TO THANK YOU
FOR COMING
AND NEVER TRY TO BE A POET
AND NEVER TREAT ME LIKE A POET
OR TAKE AWAY THE DAYS
OFF MY BACK
NOW THAT THEY ALL ARE GONE
NOW THAT THEY ALL ARE GONE

I HOPE YOU CAN HEAR ME
AS I THANK YOU
FROM THIS CORNER OF DAYS
TO COME

Fourth Oration
Soundtrack Four

(Fresh laundry. Perhaps a parrot. Azaleas —lots of them.

Salt smell of the sea. Sunday, 2pm.

Ancient ruins. Archaeology museum. Abandoned, of course).

OH THAT I LOSE SLEEP
AS I TRY TO SEE

UNLESS YOU CAN SHOW ME
HOW TO SEE

I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP
UNTIL I CAN SEE
AND WAIT TO SPEAK
ABOUT IT

OH THAT I COULD
AS I TRY
AND WAIT
TO SLEEP
AND SPEAK

I EMBRACE ANY DAYS
I CAN FIND
AS I WAIT

Fifth Oration
Soundtrack Five

(Scapular. Manure. Leather. Sweet bread. Old radio.

Break of Dawn. Blue turns into Orange.

Room with daguerreotypes of fifteen-year old women).

JUST IN CASE
ONLY IN CASE
IN THE REMOTE CASE
THAT I PASS AWAY
AND YOU FORGET
THAT I PASSED AWAY
WITH FLOWERS BELOW

I DON'T WANT
SYMBOLIC FORGETFULNESS

NOT BLACK , NOT WHITE
DO I WANT IT
LIKE THE SKY
WITH FLOWERS BELOW

SHOULD I PASS
REMOTE CASE
NOT FLOWERS
NOT BLACK NOR WHITE
NOR ABOVE NOR BELOW
I DON'T WANT THEM
NO SKY BELOW
NOT BLACK
NOR WHITE
SHOULD I PASS

Sixth Oration
Soundtrack Six

(*White noise.*

After awakening.)

AHHH
CLAY
+
GHOSTS
+

CLAY GHOSTS
+

DUST

+
+
ASHES
+
SOIL+
+
CLAYSOILASH
ASHSOILCLAY
+
DUST

Seventh Oration
Soundtrack Seven

(Freshly cut grass. Yellow windows. Velvet. A large globe.

The day after.)

GRAY WITH DUST
SHALL YOU TOUCH
IT
IT WILL BE GONE

SO STRANGE IS DESIRE
SO
WILL IT BE GONE

VANISH AS IT PLEASURES
AS
IT SHALL TOUCH YOU

SAYING MY BIRTH
AS
I AM NOT YOURS

WHERE THE LANGUOR
AS
VANISHES FROM YOUR

AS IT LOSES INTENT
SO
IT SHALL PLEASE

SHALL YOU PLEASE
AS
IT SHALL VANISH
IN GRAY DUST

Eight Oration
Soundtrack Eight

(Rocking chair. Old doll.

Night after a carnival.

Riverside. Porch)

EVEN LONG MURMURING
DWELT HIGH AND LOW
WHERE
THE BRIGHTER
BELOVED
PERISHED

EVEN TENDERLY BUT
BELOVED
LONG TIME AGO

WHERE

EVEN
HIGH AUTUM
PERISHED
GLISTENED

EVEN
A BELOVED
ROCK
PERISHES
IN
TIME

En Fermant les Yeux (1884)
Manon- Jules Massenet (1842-1912)
Piano: Beatriz-Helguera Snow
[recorded in 1920s technology]

Una Furtiva Lagrima (1838)
L'Elisir D'Amore, Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
[recorded on phonograph record, 1900 technology]
Shawn Borri, technician

Vecchia Zimarra (1896)
La Boheme, Giacomo Puccini

Maria, Mari (c. 1899)
Vincenzo Russo (1876-1904) – Mario di Capua (1865-1917)

La Cruz Azul
Pedro J. González (1915-1978)

Rockaway (2012)
Adapted from "Galway Bay" by
Francis Fahy (1834-1935)*

In a Garden so Green
Anonymous Scottish Song
Pub. Forbes, Cantus, Songs and Fancies, 1662

Long Time Ago (1950)
Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Piano: Beatriz-Helguera Snow
[recorded in 1950s technology]

*Rockaway is a song with adapted lyrics from an original Irish song known as "Galway Bay" by Francis Fahy (1854-1935). On the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, this adapted song is dedicated to this area of Queens that historically was known as the "Irish Riviera", first performed at the Queens Museum on November 18th, 2012.