



STEVE GIASSON

MELTDOWN / WORDS WITHOUT ACT

PUBLICATION STUDIO MALMÖ



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Steve Glasson (° 1979, Québec) is a conceptual artist. He has published nineteen books and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Étude et pratique des arts (UQAM). His work has been shown in Canada, USA, Mexico, UK, Spain and France, including international exhibitions such as Text Festival 2011, the Liverpool Biennial 2012 and Ed Ruscha Books & Co. at the Gagosian Gallery Madison (2013). He lives and works in Montréal.





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MELTDOWN (AFTER BECKETT) / WORDS WITHOUT ACT

Steve Giasson



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Grey face

ruins same grey as the sand ash grey true refuge

grey air

ash grey sky mirrored earth mirrored sky

grey face

grey air

Little body ash

grey

Grey sky earth ash grey sand Little body
same grey as the earth sky ruins Ash grey all sides
earth sky

Little

body little block heart beating ash grey

same grey all sides earth sky body ruins

little body grey smooth no relief a few holes

crack overrun

arse a single block grey

ruins ash grey

Ash grey little body

Earth sand same grey as the air sky ruins body fine ash grey
sand

same grey all sides earth

sky body ruins

Grey air

earth sky as one same

grey as the ruins

ruins same grey as the sand

grey air

grey face

Little body same grey as the earth sky ruins

same grey all sides earth sky body ruins

ash grey sky mirrored earth mirrored sky Grey air
earth sky as one same grey as the ruins

grey air

Grey sky

earth ash grey sand

ruins same grey as the sand ash

grey true refuge

grey air

Grey face

Earth

sand same grey as the air sky ruins body fine ash grey sand

grey face

little body grey smooth no relief a few holes

ruins same grey as the sands

grey air

Ash grey all sides earth sky
ruins ash grey

grey face

Ash grey little body

Little body little block heart beating ash grey
ash grey

Little body

arse a single block grey crack overrun

white body

white floor

White

walls

white ceiling

white body

light grey

almost white on white

white feet

white planes shining white

white

body

light

grey almost white

white body fixed white on white

eyes only just light blue almost white

eyes

light blue almost white

light grey almost

white

light grey almost white on white

white walls shining white

white body

light

grey almost white White feet

Eyes alone uncover given blue light blue almost

white

white body

one yard white on

white

All white all known murmurs

almost never

always the same white

white body

eyes only just light blue almost white

eyes light blue almost white

Eyes holes light blue almost white mouth white seam

White walls

light grey almost white

white planes

White feet

eyes holes light blue almost white

Eyes holes light blue alone uncover given blue light blue

almost white

All white

white planes

shining white

white body

elsewhere white on white

eyes given blue light blue almost white

Planes meeting invisible one only shining

white

holes mouth white

seam

white

body

time a little less blue and white

White ceiling shining white

grey light almost

white

nails fallen white

hair fallen white

White scars

same white

as flesh

time blue and white

nose ears white holes mouth white seam

eyes given blue fixed front light blue almost white

white planes shining white one only

shining white

time a little less blue

and white

eyes holes light blue

almost white

white one yard

naught eyes holes light blue almost white

eye black and white

A far flash of time all white

white walls shining white

eyes holes light

blue almost white

ping white

eyes white

white all known

White ceiling

white floor

one second almost never blue and white

White planes no traces shining white one only

shining white

all known all

white

eye unlustrous black

and white

Till all white in the whiteness the rotunda

the

white ground

two white bodies

White too the vault and the

round wall

all white in the whiteness

The light

that makes all so white

all shines with the same

white shine

all white in the whiteness

whiteness

all grows white and hot

together

commonly attend the passage from white and heat to black and
cold

towards heat and whiteness

its

whiteness merging in the surrounding whiteness

merging in the white

ground were it not for the long hair of strangely imperfect whiteness

the white body of a woman finally

its great white calm now

so rare and brief

that white speck lost in whiteness

or the great whiteness unchanging

Not I

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

no matter . . .

no

sooner buttoned up his breeches . . .

so no love . . .

no love such as normally vented on the . . .

no . . . nor indeed for that matter any of any kind .

. . . no love of any kind . . .

nothing of any note till coming up to sixty when- . . .

no! . . .

and if not exactly . . .

she did not know . . .

she was not suffering . . .

not suffering! . . . indeed could not remember . . .

slightest . . .

having none . . . not the

reason . . .

or no particular

not so foolish . . .

was perhaps

not in the ears at all . . .

but probably not . . . certainly not . . .

no moon could . . . no . . . no moon . . .

the least . . . not a twinge . . .

writhe she could not . . .

but could not . . . could not bring herself . . .

not any sound . . . no sound of any
kind . . . no screaming for help for example . . .

no . . . no
part- . . .

no part of her moving . . .

no feeling of any kind . . .

had not all gone out . . .

no! . . .

a
voice she did not recognize at first so long since it had sounded . . .

could be none other . . .

not

catching the half of it . . . not the quarter . . . no idea . . .

no idea what she was saying! . . .

it was not hers at all . . . not her voice at all . . . and no doubt would have . . .

as of course till then she had not . . . and not alone the

lips . . .

no speech possible . . .

not felt at all . . .

not only had she . . .

but no . . .

not catching the half . . . not the quarter

. . . no idea what she's saying . . . no idea what she's saying! . . .

no stopping it . . .

could not make a sound . . .

no sound of any kind . . .

and no response . . .

essential to life . . .

perhaps not . . . not

no one else for miles . . . no sound . . .

nothing there . . .

like moonbeam but not . . .

nothing but the larks . . .

no stopping it . . .

no! . . .

no love . . .

guilty or not guilty . . .

guilty or not . . .

nothing but the

larks . . .

not that? . . . nothing to do with that? . . . nothing
she could tell? . . . nothing she could tell . . .

not that either . . .

not
that either? . . . nothing to do with that either? . . . nothing she could
think? . . . nothing she could tell . . . nothing she could
think . . . nothing she- . . . no! . . .

no love . . .

but not completely . . .

no one could follow . . .

nothing there . . .

not knowing what . . .

not knowing what . . .

no! . . .

no matter . . .

nothing but the larks . . .

Thirty-nine today, sound as a— Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the . . . (hesitates) . . . crest of the wave—or thereabouts. Celebrated the awful occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the winehouse. Not a soul. Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separation the grain from the husks. Jotted down a few notes, on the back on an envelope. Good to be back in my den, in my old rags. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty restrained a fourth. Fatal things for a man with my condition. (Vehemently.) Cut 'em out! (Pause.) The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness around me I feel less alone. (Pause.) In a way. (Pause.) I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to . . . (hesitates) . . . me. (Pause.) Krapp. The grain, now what I wonder do I mean by that, I mean . . . (hesitates) . . . I suppose I mean those things worth having when all the dust has—when all *my* dust has settled. I close my eyes and try and imagine them. Extraordinary silence this evening, I strain my ears and do not hear a sound. Old Miss McGlome always sings at this hour. But not tonight. Songs of her girlhood, she says. Hard to think of her as a girl. Wonderful woman, though. Connaught, I fancy. (Pause.) Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever am? No. (Pause.) Did I sing as a boy? No. (Pause.) Did I ever sing? No. Just been listening to an old year, passages at random. I did not check in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago. At that time I think I was still living on and off with Bianca in Kedar Street. Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business. (Pause.) Not much about her, apart from a tribute to her eyes. Very warm. I suddenly was them again. (Pause.) Incomparable! (Pause.) Ah well . . . (Pause.) These old P.M.s are gruesome, but I often find them— — a help before embarking on a new . . . (hesitates) . . . retrospect. Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! (Brief laugh.) And the resolutions! (Brief laugh.) To

drink less, in particular. Statistics. Seventeen hundred hours, out of the preceding eight thousand odd, consumed on licensed premises alone. More than 20%, say 40% of his waking life. (Pause.) Plans for a less . . . (hesitates) . . . engrossing sexual life. Last illness of his father. Flagging pursuit of happiness. Unattainable laxation. Sneers at what he calls his youth and thanks to God that it's over. (Pause.) False ring there. (Pause.) Shadows of the opus magnum. Closing with a —(brief laugh)—yelp to Providence. (Prolonged laugh.) What remains of all that misery? A girl in a shabby green coat, on a railway-station platform? No? When I look— —Back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity, and the— —a-dying, after her long viduity, and the— —bench by the weir from where I could see her window. There I sat, in the biting wind, wishing she were gone. (Pause.) Hardly a soul, just a few regulars, nursemaids, infants, old men, dogs. I got to know them quite well—oh by appearance of course I mean! One dark young beauty I recall particularly, all white and starch, incomparable bosom, with a big black hooded perambulator, most funereal thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to speak to her—not having been introduced—she threatened to call a policeman. As if I had designs on her virtue! (Laugh. Pause.) The face she had! The eyes! Like . . . (hesitates) . . . chrysolite! (Pause.) Ah well . . . (Pause.) I was there when— —the blind went down, one of those dirty brown roller affairs, throwing a ball for a little white dog, as chance would have it. I happened to look up and there it was. All over and done with, at last. I sat on for a few moments with the ball in my hand and the dog yelping and pawing at me. (Pause.) Moments. Her moments, my moments. (Pause.) The dog's moments. (Pause.) In the end I held it out to him and he took it in his mouth, gently, gently. A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. (Pause.) I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day. (Pause.) I

might have kept it. (Pause.) But I gave it to the dog. Ah well . . . Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indulgence until that memorable night in March at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision, at last. This fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that . . . (hesitates) . . . for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely— — great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-gauge spinning like a propellor, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality— — unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire— —my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side. Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited. Here I end— —upper lake, with the punt, bathed off the bank, then pushed out into the stream and drifted. She lay stretched out on the floorboards with her hands under her head and her eyes closed. Sun blazing down, bit of a breeze, water nice and lively. I noticed a scratch on her thigh and asked her how she came by it. Picking gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on, and she agreed, without opening her eyes. (Pause.) I asked her to look at me and after a few moments—(pause)—after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. (Pause. Low.) Let me in. (Pause.) We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! (Pause.) I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side. Past midnight. Never knew— — gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and

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Desert. Dazzling light.

The man [redacted] reflects.

[redacted]

He reflects [redacted]

[redacted] reflects.

[redacted]

He reflects [redacted]

[redacted] reflects.

[redacted]

He reflects [redacted] reflects.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He continues to reflect.

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

He reflects

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

reflects.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

reflects.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He reflects [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.

[REDACTED]

He does not move.

[REDACTED] reflects [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reflects.



He does not move.



He does not move.



He does not move.



He does not move.



CURTAIN

