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Dialogue No. 1345

(Between a buried single room and a pitched one-man tent)

Written by Lucy Pawlak

FINAL DRAFT
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WARSZAWA
POLAND

1. EXT. Voice of woman emerges from a crack in a wall and voice of man emerges pitched camouflage one-man tent near by

(Telephone rings)

Man

Hello?

Woman

Hello? Hello, it's me!

Man

What? Who? Who is it? Who is me?

Woman

Its *ME!*

Man

Oh it's *YOU!* Hello! Hold on a minute, just hold on... I just have to change ears... ok, right... Well what is it? I can't talk for much longer; you're actually calling at the hour of the day when the most thoughts come to me, so... I can't talk for long, sorry...

Woman

Oh, sorry... well I just thought I'd ring to see how you were. Ummm... The weather... for example...

Man

Yes... Fine, I'm fine!

Woman

I'd like to hear about the weather... The sun doesn't reach me. I'd like to imagine the sun on my skin. I see parts of it sometimes, through the gaps. Actually I don't see the whole of it ever, probably a good thing – you aren't supposed to look directly at the sun are you?

Man

Well no, it'll make you blind.

Woman

Actually, I did sneak a look at the sun when I was younger, I spied it stealthily, nobody saw me do it. I can tell you that it was frightfully bright.

Man

So it seems...

Woman

In fact I know when it is sunny, because I get horribly sweaty, it gets sweaty and sticky in here, I think it must be sunny outside now. Once a sunbeam reached me, it came from some light reflected on a puddle. So anyway... what's the weather like with you? Is it sunny? Where are you?

Man

I am speaking to you from the tent! The weather? Well if you *really* want to know, it's changeable here. The sky is blue. The sky is blue with the occasional cloud. It's windy, the tent is holding up well.

Woman

And what else?

Man

The trees are making an infernal din because it's such a blustery day. The leaves are... *rustling*... and just as I think they have stopped they start up again and I realise that in the silence I was only waiting for the noise to start again, it prevents me from getting down to meditating properly.

Woman

Ah the wind! Maybe I can hear it down the telephone line... I like the sound of the

wind, it usually means a breeze is on its way and I might get a bit of fresh air in here.

Man

No! The wind is a bloody nuisance. You have no idea what it is like for me.

Woman

Oh, but a blessed breeze really does me good. I am not sure but I think... well sometimes I worry that I smell a bit. My skin has become pale yellow and soft; it is like cheese, except with dark black hairs sprouting from it. You wouldn't recognise me, really!

Man

Pale yellow?

Woman

Yes, my skin is becoming pale yellow due to my habitat, the lack of air. My eyes have become wide and black because I stare into the darkness and try to summon your face. I don't know if I can picture you anymore. I know you have greyish blue eyes. Now you look serious, now you are pulling a face, but I don't know if I can recall your features...

Man

Oh, you wouldn't recognise me anyway. I have been growing a beard... or rather I have stopped shaving. The sun has made my skin very brown, the wind has made it very dry, the two combined have resulted in a large number of wrinkles appearing – Essentially my head is a screwed up grocery bag.

Woman

I see, and what about other people?

Man

I don't like the way other people look at me – it means they think I am not like them...

Woman

So it seems.

Man

So I try to blend in with the scenery. I stay out of the way; it's easy to avoid people if you keep moving. But the *wind*, that's another story, if I could just escape the wind I could get some *real* peace and quiet and get down to some serious meditation and contemplation and writing.

Woman

Yes, I would have been meditating this morning if it hadn't been for the moths. There are hoards of them at the moment, I woke up one day and there they were, flapping about – they must have hatched in the night.

Man

Oh the horrors!

Woman

They had been nesting in my salt pot, and I never use the salt, so I had no idea. They are quite literally like an invading army, I feel like I am being occupied by a very dusty regiment.

Man

You should poison the bastards.

Woman

Yes, they are bastards, I have been waging war on them, I have put to sleep 48 souls, but it doesn't seem to make a difference: they just keep on coming and coming. I only

want peace. If I can just slay all the moths then I will have some peace.

Man

What will you do with the bodies?

Woman

I don't know... I don't like the sight of their corpses, I mean it's pretty gloomy in here so you can't really see them but I know they are there.

Man

Why don't you eat them?

Yes, I tried eating them but they taste fowl. I thought of burying them, and then I thought of burning them but its too damp in here for that. Finally I settled on flushing them down the toilet.

Man

Hold on, just a second... (*Furious scrabbling*)

Woman

What is it? What's wrong, my goodness, what's happening?

Man

There's a *friendly* bee in the tent, oh! It's driving me wild... I have to kill it, (*Panting*)

Woman

Don't kill him! He is good! He is nature's helper.

Man

But I want to kill it. I am worried that I might knock the tent down if I chase it, and also... I don't want to anger it. What do you think? What shall I do?

Woman

Stay calm. He will smell your fear.

Man

Smell fear? What do you mean? I am *trying* to keep calm,

Woman

You should let him out. He is probably as afraid of you as you are of him. Unzip the tent! Unzip the tent!

Man

No! I want to kill it...(pause) Oh, but I don't want to get stung! If it got wind of the idea I had of killing it then it might rush at my face and sting it, then it might fly down my throat while I was screaming in terror and sting my thorax which would consequently swell up and I would be unable to breathe and then I would die out here alone and on the phone to you.

Woman

Oh stop it! He would die too; they sacrifice themselves when they make their attack!

Man

It's sitting and resting currently... I am worried by it... (*Prolonged silence*) Ah the bee is dead now... I have murdered it...

Woman

Oh I see... Well I suppose that is that.

Man

Its funny but now that you are so far away, I really feel that I can tell you anything. Maybe its because I can't see your face. I can easily admit that I killed the friendly bee. Also I am still afraid of the dark, and I...

Woman

(Interrupts) Lots of people come to me to admit things. I try not to eavesdrop – its not really me that they are talking to, it's the hole. It's easier to admit something to a hole. Once someone tried to shine a light in to see what was inside. I pressed myself hard against the wall trembling violently. I usually sit in the dark to save the light. I don't want to waste the light, also that means people will think I am asleep or else not at home.

Man

Are you sitting in the dark now? You should live like me out in the wild open. I can come and go as I please!

Woman

The wilds... Oh dear, I do worry, I overheard a conversation the other day, someone said they had seen you rampaging about in the woods with your head thrown back, honking like a bison. She said she had to crouch hidden in the family picnic area for some hours for fear you might catch sight of her, she said she imagined you would have been capable of doing something dreadful, she felt like Europa when Zeus disguised himself as a big white bull or something.

Man

You point is?

Woman

I'm just saying watch out, don't imagine you can behave just as you please, people will talk...

Man

Pah! I don't care; at least I am not a captive!

Woman

Now listen here, I can leave here at any time using my imagination, I don't need to roam about. And actually the door is locked from the inside, I keep it locked and I guard the key, I keep it around my neck, I try to stay away from the hole in case someone tries to grab the key.

Man

And even if they had key they wouldn't get in... *(Regretfully)*

Woman

True. I *have* also cemented up the exit as a precaution, just to be on the safe side. If there was a disaster then I would certainly be safe, but people might stop posting through my supplies, I would call out through my hole but everyone would be too busy rushing around in the chaos and they would not hear me and I would slowly starve.

Man

I don't need supplies; I have nowhere to store them, and if I did they would only gather dust. What kind of supplies do you keep? What kind of things have you been eating?

Woman

I get what is given to me really; it's mostly past its sell by date. I haven't had a pineapple for months, oh for a kiwi, or a pomegranate, I wrote a list of all my favourite foods... but perhaps my stomach couldn't handle such exotic fruits now.. Perhaps it's for the best.

Man

HA! I catch all my food *myself*. I'm self-sufficient. I only eat when I am hungry. However... The other day I confess I killed an ate a little mouse, when I really wasn't hungry at all, I just desperately desired to kill it and eat it right away when I saw it sitting there under a dandelion

quivering... and all of a sudden I stamped on the little thing and shoved it into my gob just like that.

Woman

Oh dear! That makes me think of something, something from a book. Wait... let me find it. But where did I put my glasses? Damn it, I cant find them, I can't concentrate, I was trying to find them when... I was going to start writing and then...

Man

You don't need them, you don't need to see, you are always sitting in the dark anyway and only the other day you said you were blind.

Woman

Yes... Yes, yes, yes, but I like the feeling of them on my nose, I like the pressure they exert, gently resting there on the bridge of my nose, it is reassuring, like having a cat on your lap. It gives me confidence... It reminds me that I *have* a nose – I might forget in this darkness.

Man

Well one thing is for certain: your glasses can't have gone far – I mean you're bricked up in an eight-foot room.

Woman

Ah *here* they are... Now, what were you saying?

Man

Meals.

Woman

Ah that's it! We were talking about meals.

Man

I wait for them, I look forward to the next meal, I wish away the hours to supper, and then I wonder where the day has gone. I passed it hoping supper would come.

Woman

And your autobiographical text, how is that proceeding?

Man

One way or another I am not getting much writing done at the moment, frankly, I spend a lot of time masturbating. I try to draw it out as long as I can. Oh, I am inventive, I use different objects too, sometimes I dig a small hole in the earth, pour in a cupful of water or a little oil and then... umm

Woman

Yes, yes, yes, and then?

Man

Then, after I have arrived I lie panting on the ground and the same sensation of guilt I have always had, since the very first time, rushes over me.

Woman

Yes, yes, yes, the bad feeling, where does it come from?

Man

And will it ever be otherwise? But I forget the guilty feeling pretty fast and before too long I am looking at a freshly de-boned fish with thoughtful and imaginative eyes. Do you... um ever... I mean?

Woman

Well, naturally... I... I... Well, I have a rock that I use. It's smooth and I spit on it and warm it up, and then... then, sometimes I worry that someone might be watching me through the hole... I don't imagine anything

in particular... while I am...um... you know... I don't think of you inside me, I just try and concentrate on making it last, but in the end I can't hold on any more and I... You know... Actually its funny, I think of you mostly when I am on the toilet... waiting for... It's the food they give me, it makes me... Well, I pass a lot of time in the WC. So I sit on the toilet and think of you, for example, sometimes I try to imagine you are dead and I feel like crying. I would visit your grave if you died. I would continue to talk to you. Oh, do lets talk about something else, how is the nature?

Man

Nature? I saw a bird high above me when I set up camp last night. I must have been near to its nest – it was shouting at me telling me to get lost, I couldn't think straight, I thought I was about to see the colour red, it kept on with its yelling for a good few hours until I shot it dead.

Woman

Oh! A dear little bird landed on the edge of my hole once, I quickly shooed the little friend away, I was worried it would hop inside and then feel trapped and panic and then start flying into the walls. So I shooed it away. It was only afterwards that I wondered if it might have been a vision... A vision of one of the saints or something...

Man

I might have had a vision the other night too. I thought I heard something out of the blackness, something sneaking about outside, around my little tent in a perfect circle. I lay very still and listened, then finally I peered out into the dark, I could hardly bear it, I thought I saw something, but I couldn't tell, I called out into the dark, "is any body there?" of course there was no answer and the question seemed to make it worse. I started to repeat the lines: "All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well" and before long I was shouting it,

screaming till my neck turned purple,
anyone who would have heard me would have
certainly run off believing me to be mad.
Then I wondered if the thing outside might
have been a vision, perhaps I had scared
off my vision? My epiphany... because I was
afraid...

Woman

Whenever I feel afraid I hold my head erect
and whistle a happy tune so no one will
suspect I am afraid. Sometimes people come
to my hole to victimise me, I just whistle
nonchalantly, and eventually they tire of
tormenting me and go -they can't actually
reach me, they cant actually *do* anything to
me just so long as I crawl deep, deep up
inside myself, but that is what gets them
so cross. Once someone covered up my hole,
that scared me a bit, I felt trapped.
Another person said they would fill up my
home with water... I thought of being buried
alive, I thought of the movie Titanic, I
almost wanted to go outside.

Man

Uh huh... (*Distractedly*) mmmm... What are you
wearing?

Woman

Um... Actually, I am wearing a plaster on my
nose and my relaxing clothes - the purple
tracksuit top, some nylon tights and the
pair of slippers in the shape of chickens;
my feet are effectively inserted up the
rectums of two cartoon hens!

Man

Oh god! Can't you ever? Well I am nude;
I've got no clothes on... I... Sorry, sorry
forget I said that, my god, *please*, try to
remember, its best if I keep things at arms
length or else I will just pull them apart
and destroy you... sorry, I mean them... The
things... Sorry. It's best for you if I keep
you at arms length.

Woman

Heavens, what a thing to say!

Man

Thank you, sorry. Things weren't always like this you know, there was this one time for example, when I was in a bar, in the city and there was this certain lady, in a bar, in the city (it was the same bar) and I saw her across the room through the dim smoky light and she happened to look at me, and just for once I held her gaze and looked right back at her instead of becoming fascinated by the toothpick in my hand. And she rose and I rose simultaneously, and it was like we were in sync, like we were one... but after a while things didn't work out, the smoky and exceedingly dim light in the bar *did* raise both of our expectations of one another in the looks department... We got closer... we saw one another close up... But now that we are apart, I always wonder what you are doing. I wonder what you look like, I think about you a lot, I suppose what I am trying to say is that I think I am still in love with you. I remember the impression you used to do of someone who is deaf speaking, I think of the pair of little red circles that appear on your cheeks after you have had a glass of wine or I think of your great big soppy wet eyes watering... because... because I was chopping onions, or I think of your stiff leg and your loping gait, you march off purposefully, you try to be strong but you can't event walk right. I see that you have got me in a corner at a party and you are telling me how much or how little you care for someone else. Or you are waving your arms about enthusiastically or lying on an unmade bed, very still, with a faded yellow face. Do you think of me? Do you ever think of me?

Woman

I think of you on average every three point seven days. You cannot count on those figures to be accurate but... I sit here and you spring into my head. I think of you

when I piss sometimes because once you said that you got a kick out of peeing really loudly in public toilets, aiming right into the centre of the bowl. I think of you when I stop writing to squeeze ingrown hairs, because of the sign you had above your desk that ordered you not to pick at yourself. I think of you when I have not masturbated for a long time because once you told me that you were so down that you had even stopped wanking and that you considered it to be a very bad sign. You barge into my head when I look at my hand because you burnt it with a lighter. Or when I catch the scent of a hyacinth because that is what you said the rotting corpses in the jungle smelt like. I write you long letters or I start to call you I repeat in my head what I am going to say, I rehearse it, and then I dial your number and then I suddenly become overcome... I realise its best to leave it until next week. I mean, I think of you when I lick my knife, you said I shouldn't... I think of you when I lick my BLOODY knife and it spoils the pleasure in getting the last of the sauce. Or when I am in the middle of telling a story and I say "me and my friend" instead of "My friend and I", and I realise that you would notice the error and my train of thought is broken, I cannot concentrate and the whole story is ruined. And then I think of you and the phone rings and I don't want to answer it in case it's you.

Man

Why does everything always have to fall apart like this? Go ahead tell me *all* about what I am like and maybe while you are at it you would like to tell me what my pet cat was like too?

Woman

Well your pet cat was *certainly* dumb... Sorry, sorry... the time I made you cry, remember that? I recall feeling so shocked and surprised to see you crying, it was only then I realised I had taken things too far.

Man

Listen, lets talk about something else, let me tell you *my* news, I found the most wonderful stick when I was out walking the other day, the perfect length and shape, for me at any rate. One could use it for all sorts of things, leaning on, stirring, poking, hitting. It was first rate, and then I put it down somewhere in the forest and I left it there by accident, bloody bastard! Idiot! Fool! I thought about going back to hunt for it, no bloody point now though is there?

Woman

Don't change the subject.

Man

Oh very well, what shall I tell you? That I think of you too? I drank a carton of cream thinking about you, and a bottle of bailies as a chaser. I *would* come and visit but I am currently engaged in picking a scab over an ingrown hair on my inner thigh, I *will* visit you soon, but not this week, because I really must get down to some writing, and I am meditating and fasting too, I am busy fasting, I have let myself go, you wouldn't recognise me, I have changed – my body is spent, all swelled up by the drink, my hands are all purple and shiny, my eyes, my eyes are for nobody right now. Christ can't I just tell you some of my news? I was thinking of getting my hair cut, no, some better news, I am working hard, everything is going well, what else... nothings happened to me, I have been spoilt, I don't know anything about pain... once I broke up with my life partner... that's it. What am I supposed to tell you? I can hardly tell you about my life, how can I describe events in a life that seeks to have none?

Woman

Listen, um... I'd better get back to work now, I can't think straight and I want to be alone, I've just remembered I like to be alone... although sometimes I do start

talking to myself, and we have such crappy conversations, we don't have any news, we just sit and talk about old news, or, sometimes we try and make up news but then we both know it is too far fetched and that it never happened.

Man

Sometimes I talk to myself too; usually I say things like "Why? Why? Why did you do it? Everything was perfect! What were you thinking? Typical! Typical! Bitch! Fuck! Fuck you!"

Woman

OK... good, all right, well speak to you soon... Good luck with the meditating, don't sit on the wet grass, and watch out for that bee...

Man

Sometimes I worry, I am sorry, I have to ask, do you ever worry... that you might be living inside someone else's metaphor? Like, are you living in a metaphor for the mind? Are you being used as someone else's example? Or perhaps you have chosen to live in a metaphor and if you have then doesn't that mean you have trapped yourself in a kind of set and that you are method acting all the time? Look, how would you feel about me dragging you out of there?

Woman

No! I wouldn't fit, I'd have to cut myself up into tiny bits and you'd have to reassemble me on the other side.

Man

And if I were to smash down the door and drag you out?

Woman

No, no! It would be too bright for me... I wouldn't like it, its too late anyway, listen I really have to go, I am sorry.

Man

OK sorry, sorry I mentioned it. Too much has happened - I wouldn't do it, only words. Well, Don't forget to write everything down, watch out for the damp. I think of you often, I miss you.

Woman

Ok well, speak soon, see you... see you in the future...

Man

No wait don't hang up I forgot one thing, wait, what was it? Don't hang up yet, hang on...

Woman

No, no, its ok I won't hang up

Man

I am sorry, I missed that could you repeat it? Oh the line is breaking up... Did you say goodbye?

Woman

What? Yes goodbye, of course, I am sorry I can't hear you the line is breaking up, I am just going to say goodbye and go!
"Goodbye!"

Man

Hello? I can't hear you! Can you hear me? I suppose I will just say goodbye? "Goodbye"