

BLACK DOT

by

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Characters:

RUTH – Preacher's wife, Female, 30's

Location:

A place with a table and chairs.

Before and after the Preacher's funeral.

premise concept:

A woman loses her husband suddenly to death and embarks on an existential trip to realize her identity.

SCENE 1

RUTH

I am Ruth. Yesterday I was the preacher's wife but today I am Ruth. I am just Ruth.

'I am here by accident. On this planet that is spinning through the universe as the result of a heavenly catastrophe. I am here watching people who are as ephemeral as me and watching them in their own delectable happiness and joy, chasing chimeras. It is confusing and unreal. Very much like a dream.'* And as I listen to these words I am speaking to you, I know that I have loved and suffered in my life and that I will die one day, in a dream. Just before my last heart beat I will say 'I have been dreaming.'

**This is a quote excerpted from an interview in the book Varieties of Religious Experience.*

SCENE 2

CHORUS

Our Captain has disappeared
Have you seen him?
He wears a hat
He plays a trumpet
He has a drum beat

Without him we are lost
A flock of birds without land flying in circles in a sky of stars
We write him letters in a language we do not understand
with no place to send them
With him we could dance
We could move
He led us through an arched door
There
we were happy

Now we follow a path tracing the stars

We long for his music

(A shift.)

His holiness
His justice
His mercy
His absoluteness
His infinity
His omniscience
His tri-unity
Redemption
Sacrament

SCENE 3

RUTH

I woke up the day after he died and looked out the window and thought 'simple magic'. The sun was rising like an inferno with cow silhouettes marking time. Then I remembered he wasn't making the coffee...he wasn't in the shower...he wasn't watching the sunrise with me.

My husband loved a flapjack sausage breakfast. It was a kind ridiculous pilgrimage for him. He never found the best flapjack sausage breakfast. We were on the road a lot and he told me he could tell a lot about the people by how their flapjacks tasted. This was important to his work, knowing the people.

When we first met I liked flapjacks then for a long time I didn't like them but today I think I will try the flapjacks again, I think I'll like them.

I'm sorry, there is a whooshing sound in my ears like I am inside something that is accelerating.

SCENE 4

CHORUS

A white bird flies in a black sky
A prophecy?
For those who can read the flight of the bird maybe
It is a white bird
a white bird flying in a black sky.

I must work
Must not concern myself with birds in the sky
Must not concern myself

I look around and I see my family.

I look beyond my family and I see danger
(car accidents
drinking
smoking
drugs
murderers
men with knives)

I see one man willing to protect me.

I see people hating this man
Telling lies

I see
Dark time around us
Winter is coming
Cold and relentless
Wet at first then frozen

Maybe that is the black sky
Maybe the bird is my family
They are all I have
I must feed them
They are all I have
I must feed them

RUTH

Do you believe in psychics? My mother did, she believed she was blessed. Our phone would ring at all hours of the night and my mother would answer and listen. I never knew what the voice on the other end was saying but she would pull out her beads and pray.

My phone doesn't ring like that. Neither did my husbands. Last night I had a strange feeling at about the same time my husband must have passed. I had been to a service in a chapel and stayed late to pray a little. I left the chapel and was walking to my car when the bell chimed and that made me stop. I was cold and realized I had left my

cashmere sweater in the chapel. I was exactly half way between the sweater and my car and I could not move. The wind was mean. I decided to count backwards from five and when I got to one I would go to my car or go back to the chapel. When I got to one I would make a decision. Five. Four. Three. Two. One. I was suspended. All I could do was look down. I looked down and on the grass in front of me was a sleeping Luna moth. A luna moth. I knelt to the ground and felt warmth. I wept. I didn't know why I was weeping until I got home and found him on the floor in front of the t.v. with an open bag of barbeque chips on the floor next to him.

CHORUS

This thing I see is blue
I don't know it
I don't understand it
It is out of place

/It is here to stay

It is not like me
It is blue with a green heart
I am yellow with green blood

I am weak and cannot resist
I want my white flowers with orange and yellow petals
I want to be free
There are storms outside my wall
There are things I cannot see
Something knows I am weak
That I am no longer free

RUTH

I think I'll wear three flowers. Two white and one red, in my hair?

SCENE 6

CHORUS

You are beautiful
mesmerizing colors and shapes
You have wheels / surrounded by rings of air
Hexagon stars

I stand before you

I wait
I watch
I wonder what is next

Will your flowers come to life?
Black petals with green hearts
Blue petals with black hearts

I drink
I kill, steal, beat, molest
(Am I responsible for my brothers and sisters?)

In the end
Half will go
Half will suffer

RUTH

My father said people die in the fall and in the spring,
mostly. Uh... he was a mortician. My husband died yesterday,
three weeks before spring.

I think when someone dies there is a hole created where
they once were, an emptiness, a gap, a break ... the break
acts like a sound wave traveling outward forever, loudest
at the source of the break and inaudible beyond the limits
of our comprehension but still there. Always with us,
inside.

I don't really believe that. I said that because I think
I'm supposed to believe that or believe
something...something more than what I feel and what feel
is close to the feeling i have after a really delicious
meal that I've eaten too much of...if I had only stopped a
little sooner I wouldn't feel like this...if I had only
been better I wouldn't ...

CHORUS

I am a bird standing on a ball
Something is not right
Something is missing

I look into the distance
My heart beating faster
My talons dig into the soft fabric of a void

I don't know that I am hanging on for my life
That I will be sucked into the void

That I won't see that family in the distance kick balls

I won't glide on thermal pockets tomorrow

I won't eat sweet seeds under the porch of a red house with
a white door

That the sucking mud sound in my ears will be the last
thing I hear

And tomorrow the leaves that are green will turn and fall
to the ground

RUTH

I am making preparations for the funeral today. I've always
been good with details and organizing our trips and this is
sort of the same thing.

So first I pick the casket, the flowers, write the
obituary, send it to the newspaper, and on and on. All of
this is easier than thinking about what will happen after
he is in the ground.

I don't want to go back to the house. I don't want to look
through those boxes of his...

CHORUS

Ten
In the middle of sin.

RUTH

You are so certain.

CHORUS

Nine.
Stand in line.

CHORUS

Eight.
Fill your plate.

RUTH

With sausage. The Preacher loves sausage in the morning.

CHORUS

Seven.
Red sin. Red. Sin.

RUTH

There are no lies.
There is no sin.
There is no death.
There is no hope.
There is no mercy.

CHORUS

No mercy.
No hope.
No death.
No sin.
Red. Sin.

CHORUS

Six.
Reach into your bag of tricks.

CHORUS

Five.
Staying alive at five.
Halfway to a beehive.

CHORUS

Four.
Lay on the floor.

CHORUS

Three.
Be free.

RUTH

How do I look?

CHORUS

Two.
Leave your shoe.
Leave your other shoe too.

CHORUS

One.
Watch the sun.

(Something happens. Everything
is different but the same.)

CHORUS

Four men
Two ride horses
Two don't
One has a beard
One has a mustache
Two don't

Two birds
One is striking
The other is not

There is one man on a horse whose skin is different
The other three are pale

One looks up
One looks down
Another holds a decapitated head on the tip of his finger
while sitting cross legged
(he has a flute that he likes to play in his other hand)

I am holding my breath
I wait for the right amount of time to pass

The wind dies down
Cars drive fast

Where are the sirens going?
I don't smell smoke
I am sitting, not doing nearly as much as these four men

RUTH

I was just thinking about tornadoes and my situation. Would
you rather be facing a tornado or the loss of someone you
love.

If a tornado is bearing down on you, you don't run, you hide in the deepest darkest place you can find because there is no way of knowing for certain which direction the tornado will go. If you run, it may follow you, it may chase you and if there is a fence or a wall or something in your way you will not escape.

I would rather be running from a tornado.

CHORUS

I've seen this man before
He is not subtle, I ignore him

I look him straight in the eye
I am a peacock spreading her feathers
He will shoot
It does not matter

There will be blood
I will run and try to fly

This is my pond
This hunter does not want the pond

I drink
I enjoy
I cannot stop the hunter

RUTH

so it's tomorrow and he is in the ground. I wake up to a cloudy day or a sunny day, I wake up. I can handle that part, making the coffee, toasting some bread, fry some eggs and turn on the news. I'll listen to the news for awhile and the next part is easy. I'll take a shower. I'll get dressed. I'll fix myself another cup of coffee, with milk. That's where it ends but it can't end because there is the whole day in front of me. I could make the bed, call the bank, call the church. I could make phone calls and tie up loose ends but then I'm still the preacher's wife but I'm not the preacher's wife anymore, death has parted us, so who am I. I am Ruth, that's where it starts. I am Ruth. I wish I could call my mom and ask her, I wish I could call my father and ask him - what did I want to be when I was little what were my dreams. I can't remember my dreams anymore, what did I want to be. being a preacher's wife was

so easy, I just did everything that came my way but now that's over isn't it. The everything is ending because he is gone and not making anything happen anymore. He is gone and I am still here. I know exactly where I am but I don't know what I am supposed to do - maybe that's it I don't have to do anything but I feel the need to do something but I don't know what it is I want to do.

CHORUS

All I have in my hands is an empty bowl
All I ask is that my bowl be filled for one year
So it will not be empty

I am young
But my hands are old
My eyes are light
But my heart tires when I walk
I am hungry

My bowl is empty

I wander the streets
where people do not see me
justice and redemption by a cause passed down from
generation to generation

Others look as though they would help if they could but
their bowl is not full enough

I am a fire hydrant
a parked car
a chair
a table
a traffic light
I am here

RUTH

I have nothing but hunger inside of me. I have no words.
I've been digging but I find nothing. I am not the
preacher's wife

CHORUS

I am not a bull
I am not a lamb
I am not a cheetah

I am not a rhino [ceros]

I am waiting to die
A horrible blood curdling death
Not from a knife
Or a gun
Or an axe
Or a nuclear warhead

This death will come from my neighbor's lungs
Eat its way through the healthy walls of my own
Leaving me taking fifty breaths a minute
It is not hard to believe that my end would be so cruel

I only wish I could die on a carpet as beautiful as this
picture where the birds that triggered my end would
surround me on a wild landscape of beasts and prey.

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End.