

BLACK DOT

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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.