



# *The Broken String*

Social documentary

by Christian Lanciai (2008)

*The characters :*

A slut  
Vincent  
Michael, violinist  
A conductor  
A cellist  
A bartender  
Lou, barfly  
Another barfly, Jonathan  
John  
Laila  
Peter, poet

Luke, pianist  
Marcus, former medical student  
Other bar customers  
Other orchestra musicians  
Other random "hippies"  
Tibetan monks

The action is mainly in India in modern times

The play mirrors actual events.  
(The second scene actually occurred in the Gothenburg symphony orchestra long ago, which happened to a cellist, not a violinist.)

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### *The Broken String*

Act I scene 1. A weird place somewhere in Asia.  
(Enter Vincent, looks around, as if he was looking for someone.)

*A slut* Are you looking for someone?  
*Vincent* Yes, I am looking for a lost friend.  
*Slut* What kind? Age? Gender?  
*Vincent* A man of my age, about like myself.  
*Slut* Then he is not here. Could we help you with anything else?  
*Michael (cautiously)* Vincent.  
*Vincent (turns around, sees him but does not recognize him at first)*  
*Michael* Don't you recognize me? No wonder. It has been many years.  
*Vincent* Michael! Whatever are you doing here?  
*Michael* It's a long story. What are you doing here yourself?  
*Vincent* Looking for a colleague, whom I have lost.  
*Michael* Did he enter here? Did he end up here?  
*Vincent* I think so, but this lady denies having seen him.  
*Michael* What did he look like?  
*Vincent* Something like me, but shabbier.  
*Michael* You separate from most of us here by appearing quite normal. Unfortunately you are the first one of that category here today.  
*Vincent* Are you living here?  
*Michael* No, I just happen to be here.  
*Vincent* I won't let you go, Michael, after all these years. I never thought I would ever see you again.  
*Michael* Ditto ditto. I thought the same of you.

*Vincent* You must tell me. What happened?  
*Michael* Where and when?  
*Vincent* When you vanished.  
*Michael* You mean, when I left the orchestra.  
*Vincent* Did you leave it voluntarily? You were not sacked?  
*Michael* Let's say it was bilateral. Both I and the management agreed that I could not remain, but I was the one who resigned.  
*Vincent* We never learned what happened. You just disappeared.  
*Michael* Yes, I did and quite intentionally.  
*Vincent* Without an explanation, without communicating with anyone, without leaving anything behind but a smokescreen of a bottomless black hole.  
*Michael* I had to cut all my ties immediately, Vincent. It was necessary. I had no choice.  
*Vincent* You must have been desperate.  
*Michael* So would you have been, if the commanding order had denied your right to be yourself and that you were right when they themselves were all wrong.  
*Vincent* Take it from the beginning, Michael. I will not let you go until I have learned everything.  
*Michael* No, you won't, if I know you well enough. Very well, I will relate the long story at length. You deserve it after all these years, since you actually recognized me. But we can't just dry up in the meantime. What would you like to drink?  
*Vincent* Anything.  
*Michael* Tea or whisky?  
*Vincent* I can take both.  
*Michael* Good. Then I will have the same. (*to the slut*) A pot of tea and two whiskies. (*She gets it.*)  
*Slut (to Vincent)* Obviously you found another chum instead.  
*Vincent* Yes, and one that has been lost for a considerably longer time. (*She serves.*)  
*Michael* It was just an ordinary rehearsal with the orchestra...

## Scene 2. An orchestra rehearsing in a concert hall.

*Conductor (interrupts)* First violin, why aren't you playing?  
*Michael* I can't.  
*Conductor* What do you mean? Can't you read the notes? Can't you play from the sheet? Surely you didn't become concert master for nothing?  
*Michael* I am sorry, maestro, but I can't play this music, because it is not music.  
*Conductor (getting red)* What is the meaning of this? Boycott? Revolt? It will not do in an orchestra. You are here to cooperate!  
*Michael* I am here to play music, maestro, and not for anything else. If you try to make me play something else than music, I might as well go home.

*Conductor (flaming red)* Orchestra, take five! Time out for everyone for a while, except for me and the concert master! *(The orchestra walks out.)*

*A cellist (to Michael)* I am on your side. Deal with him.

*Conductor (when all else have gone)* What's the matter with you? You must understand that this won't do? It is a downright mutiny against the conductor! You could be sacked for less!

*Michael* Give me notice then, but I can't compromise with music. If it sounds too horrible I just can't play it.

*Conductor* We all have to compromise. Now and then we must let the modern music be heard as well.

*Michael* Yes, if it is music. But if it isn't music, it does not work.

*Conductor* My good concert master, I fully understand your musical integrity, but you can't step out of an entire orchestra. You can't diverge from the program because you disagree with its character. The repertoire was decided beforehand, and we have to carry it through. There is no alternative. If you take a stand against it you have to face the consequences and resign.

*Michael* Even if I would agree with following the stream with my best intentions, I would not be able to, because I am a musician, and this nonsense of disharmonies without melody or rhythm is not music. I am sorry. It's a natural force within me that refuses to take any part in it.

*Conductor* Are you aware that I am the composer?

*Michael* It doesn't matter. Even if Mahler himself or Sibelius had composed it, it would still have been the same unmusical noise, which doesn't just make the musicians suffer but even the instruments.

*Conductor* You must realize that you can't continue with the orchestra with such an attitude? You spread bad vibrations and negative moods and ruin morals. We can't have that in the leading orchestra of the country.

*Michael* I became a musician to share the presentation of music and to be part of the privilege of offering the highest beauty the world knows to a grateful audience. This atonal noise that we are forced to present is just cacophony sounding like constant gnashing of teeth which no audience could appreciate or receive gratefully. As a musician therefore I cannot play it.

*Conductor* Then I must ask you to leave at once, so that we may go on rehearsing without you. I will discuss the matter with the management. You can't stay here. The settled program must be carried out.

*Michael* As you wish. I give you the damn with all your false music. *(takes his violin and leaves in a rage)*

*Conductor (alone)* He is right, but we must keep up appearances. Even if the emperor is without clothes he has to keep his chin up and wear them with pride as if he was not naked. It will pass. That's the only comfort of modern music: that it differs from classical music by being mortal.

Scene 3. A bar.

*Bartender* You've had enough drinks now, Michael.  
*Michael* Just one more.  
*Bartender* You had the last one long ago.  
*Michael* Just one more.  
*A guest* Be decent, Charlie, don't you see he is carrying a violin case? I'll offer you a drink, buddy, if you tell me what's in your case.  
*Michael* What do you think?  
*Guest* Books?  
*Michael* Wrong.  
*Guest* Stuff?  
*Michael* What kind of stuff? Wrong again.  
*Guest* Don't tell me it's a violin.  
*Michael* What else?  
*Guest* Don't tell me you can play it.  
*Michael* What else would I have a violin for?  
*Guest* Is it true?  
*Michael* Do you think I am sitting here lying?  
*Guest* What else would you do at a bar at this hour.  
*Bartender* He is actually a violinist, Lou, and playing in the Concert Hall. He shouldn't be here drinking.  
*Michael* Why not?  
*Bartender* Because music and alcohol don't mix, buddy! You can't play right if your brain is muddled! You should know that as a musician!  
*Michael* Not any longer.  
*Bartender* What do you mean?  
*Michael* Can't you put two and two together, who are supposed to be so wise?  
*Bartender* Aren't you playing any more?  
*Mikael* No.  
*Guest* Why the hell do you then carry a violin case about with a violin in it?  
*Michael* I was sacked from the orchestra.  
*Bartender* How come? Did you play a wrong note because you weren't sober?  
*Michael* Worse than that. I refused to play the wrong note because I was sober.  
*Guest* We don't believe you, buddy. You are pulling our legs.  
*Michael* I never lied in all my life.  
*Guest* We believe you. You never lied so well in all your life.  
*Bartender* There could actually be some truth in what he says, Lou. He doesn't usually come here to drink.  
*Guest* If we are to believe you, you'll have to play something for us.  
*Michael* I don't play any more.  
*Guest* No musician ever quit music.  
*Bartender* Give us something, buddy, and your next drink will be on the house.

*Michael* It's your funeral. I didn't ask for it. If I play out of tune you are responsible, who asked for it.

*Guest* That's right, Buddy. You have the perfect audience here. No one will hear if you play out or in of tune.

*Michael* (*opens the violin case, takes out the violin, tunes it a little, and plays the opening solo of Sibelius' violin concerto, perfectly in tune, interrupts when the orchestra is supposed to enter.*) As I said, it's your funeral. Where is the drink?

*Guest* (*impressed*) Obviously you know how to play. What happened?

*Michael* As I said, I was sacked.

*Guest* But why?

*Michael* They wanted to take the music away from me. I refused to agree.

*Guest* There's something here that doesn't fit.

*Michael* You said it. The music didn't fit. So I refused to play it.

*Guest* But what was wrong about the music?

*Michael* It was modern. It wasn't music. It was caterwauling. It was modern music. It was music without melody and harmony, so called atonal music, which our guest conductor had composed and would give a first presentation. I protested against having to take part in such a rape, such abuse, such blasphemy, such a total debasement of the musical essence...

*Bartender* There now, take it easy. Here is a decent double for you. Don't take it all at once, but take it easy and try not to get excited.

*Guest* So you refused to play modern music?

*Michael* I practised civil disobedience. When it wasn't music any more I let the bow rest. The conductor could not accept it. My silence vexed him. Then I had to explain it. Even less he could then accept me and forced me to resign directly.

*Guest* But they can't do that, can they?

*Michael* They did. Or I did it myself. As a musician I can't stay on if they are to force me into playing unmusic and antimusic, debasement of music and unmusical noise...

*Bartender* Take it easy, my friend, have a sip and calm down. It is all over now. You have greater musical experts here.

*Guest* I actually had another friend once who happened to something similar. He was a church organist and was sacked for standing up to traditions.

*Michael* That's how it works. If a musician employed as such is forced to take a position for the defence of music, if his musical service no longer is something self-evident, but something he has to defend, then unmusic has entered by stealth by the backdoor and made his position impossible.

*Guest* But you are not going to quit music for good just for that?

*Michael* Why not? Whatever do I have to do with music any more? It has been taken from me by ravishment! You can only serve music in innocence. If you happen to a rape you have no innocence left to defend. The whole musical case is only about purity and innocence.

*Guest* Just don't get embittered.

*Michael* What else would I get? The entire establishment is established only for defending its own corruption to be able to strike down those who are not established. If those who determine the musical program prefer unmusic and only are able to deprecate and despize what sounds good and have no feelings left for sincere music, they don't deserve to have any real musician about. So I have nothing more to do with them.

*Another guest* That's right. Give them the finger, for that's all they deserve. Use your acquired liberty instead. Take liberties. Indulge yourself. Take better care of your life now, when you have the opportunity.

*Michael* What would you advise me to? Which way would you show me?

*The other* Straight down to hell, for that's the only way leading on and forward. Go away and the further away, the better. You must know some fallen friend somewhere in exile whom you could visit and learn the way to a new life from. Or else I could give you a few tips.

*Michael* I would gladly most of all just vanish.

*The other* Right'o, my boy. You are on the right track. It's just to run off and not mention your destination to anyone, and they will get something to think about.

*Michael* Tell me where to go.

*The other* Why not Greece?

*Michael* A good idea.

*The other* You could start there. If it doesn't suit you, you could go on. The longer away you go, the cheaper you will be able to live. You have found your way home when you no longer have to think about your expenses.

*Michael* You are a wise man.

*The other* You were lucky to run into me. I will go to India tomorrow. Would you care to follow?

*Michael* Where in India?

*The other* Goa.

*Michael* Could you make room for me?

*The other* There is always plenty of room.

*Michael (offers his hand)* I am on.

*The other (accepts it)* You are doing the right thing.

*(They have a drink together. Then back to the scene with Vincent.)*

*Michael* That's how it started. The rest is a long story.

*Vincent* I would like to hear it all.

*Michael* You will. But we have all the time in the world. A good story deserves all the time you can give it, or else it will end too quickly.

*Vincent* May I refill your glass?

*Michael* You might as well order another pot of tea at the same time. We will keep on drinking all night.

Act II scene 1. Goa in India.

*John* You did absolutely right in breaking up and cutting all your ties with your earlier life. We all need to do that, but few of us do.

*Michael* Did you?

*John* I never needed to, since I was born without roots. But never mind about that. What I have to warn you against though is all the temptations of your new liberated life. It is too easy to just abandon oneself to any self-indulgence just for the delight of escaping from reality.

*Michael* I am grateful for your guidance.

*John* Perhaps you were lucky to happen to me. Not everyone knows what it is all about and where the pitfalls are hiding, but I have lived close to them all my life. Have you tried any drugs yet?

*Michael* Not really.

*John* What does that mean? That you get high but don't consider yourself addicted yet? That's the worst of all traps. If that's what you think, you are already addicted and stuck.

*Michael* Educate me. What should I know, and what should I do?

*John* It is very simple. You must just learn how to deal with them. There are actually only two drugs that are dangerous: alcohol and tobacco. Everything else is harmless in comparison, unless you fall into abuse. Everything is dangerous of course that leads to abuse. Anyone can be addicted to anything, and you mustn't be, because it is just stupid. Like the American Indians could use both tobacco and marijuana without becoming addicted, since they never inhaled, we could do the same. Unfortunately it's in the nature of the white man to go to extremes in everything. That's what you must learn not to do.

*Michael* So you mean, that all the drugs available here, like hash and heroin and whatever, is harmless in comparison with tobacco and liquor?

*John* There is no more treacherous drug than alcohol, just because it is universally accepted and the most habit-forming. It doesn't immediately lead to illness and symptoms, like the use of tobacco does, but works much more stealthily and quietly. If you start drinking regularly you are already an alcoholic, no matter how much you deny it. The secret is, whatever the drug, to never make a habit of it. If you just take a small dose at times, most irregularly, and the more seldom, the better, you could easily use any drugs and with success and gains every time. The trick is to stay detached. You must hold your distance at any cost. Make an art of it. All doctors agree that it is only good for your health to take a glass of red wine now and then but never more than one glass a day. If you can keep that limit, you can keep the distance. Certain drugs are more difficult to keep off, since many soon give way to the appetite for more, but that's the urge you must resist. Let it be a warning signal. Never eat your fill, never drink yourself full, never get drunk, and never get yourself stoned. Feel your body and listen to it carefully, It always knows what is best for you, it must command you physically, and as long as you obey its signals

you are safe. Only what makes you feel good and right is good for you. As soon as there is some abstinence or overwhelming appetite for more, the risk is imminent that you will fool yourself and give in. You must never give in. It is like a lovely woman: desire her, love her, adore her, but never violate or abuse her or yourself.

*Michael* How old are you? How long have you been using drugs?

*John* All my life of maturity. I am past fifty.

*Michael* You could pass for thirty-five.

*John* It's because I always kept my distance, both to women and to drugs. I can use them and enjoy them, but I never abused them.

*Michael* And what about liquor?

*John* That's the only drug I never touched. My stepfather was an alcoholic which turned me allergic against it from the beginning. That might have saved me.

*Michael* Are the other drugs then illegal and forbidden just because they are not established like alcohol?

*John* Exactly. Even coffee was forbidden and illegal and regarded as a social menace and peril as long as it was a novelty. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the greatest terror of the coffee ladies was the constantly imminent threat of the police. Bananas were considered mortally dangerous when they were introduced. Therefore classic drugs like marijuana and hash, cocaine and heroin and even LSD and ecstasy are so attractive, just because they are forbidden. They are still secret and banned as illegal and therefore so exciting. No fruit was ever so attractive, exciting, irresistible and efficient as the forbidden apple in the garden of Eden. Still it was just a most ordinary apple.

*Michael* Where would you draw the line between wholesome enjoyment and abuse?

*John* It is difficult to discern if you indulge in the enjoyment alone. Therefore you should have company. Bad trips are always lonely trips. In a company you always have a certain comfort in the insurance of company against abuse and bad trips. You can check each other and support one another by dialogue and contact. Therefore you should never smoke hash on your own. Better to be on the safe side in good company where you can have a nice time, and as long as the company is not derailed it must give a good and positive satisfaction whatever you do.

*Michael* Does that apply to love as well?

*John* Especially in love. No one can make love alone. It's a good comparison. Let the association with drugs be like a love affair, and always make sure you are in good contact and good company in that association, and you may keep it. But here is Laila now.

*Laila* I can see you are in good company with John. You couldn't have found a better guide here.

*Michael* I am most grateful for it. But so far I only found good friends here.

*John* Michael was forced into exile from his profession and activity as a serious musician when he was forced into atonal music and dared protest.

*Laila* Which instrument?

*Michael* Violin.

*Laila* The best of all instruments. Do you have your violin with you?

*Michael* No, I left it at home. It would have been too impractical to bring it here, where I also probably would have lost it.

*Laila* Isn't it hard to do without it?

*Michael* Outrageously.

*Laila* Do you long to get back to the life you lost?

*Michael* No. I think I have found a better one here.

*Laila* If you miss your violin, you could try playing with me instead.

*Michael* Are you available? Aren't you with John?

*Laila* John has no woman and never had any. And I don't accept just anyone, but I recognize myself in you.

*John* Laila was a teacher but was forced to resign by the system of her country, when she could not accept the cancellation of her most important subjects.

*Michael* Which subjects?

*Laila* All subjects of learning like religion, history, literature and music, art history and esthetics. Even Shakespeare was sorted out from the studies of English literature at my university. That was going too far, I protested and was sorted out from the system as unfit for cooperation.

*Michael* In the same way I was expelled from a symphony orchestra for claiming that atonal music was not music.

*Laila* But it isn't. But no emperor appearing naked will appreciate being told the fact that he actually isn't wearing any clothes.

*Michael* How long have you known John?

*Laila* Ever since I arrived here a few years ago. But we don't have much in common.

*Michael* But you go well together.

*Laila* We come from the same country, speak the same language and share the joy of growing our hair long enough to be proud of it. But my hair was always longer than his. Women are always more generous than men. Women have no monopoly on growing their hair as long as possible, men have the same human right to wear their hair with no limits to their length, but it suits women better.

*Michael* I would like to vanish in your hair.

*Laila* Then do it. I welcome you.

*Michael* But if I enter you, I will do so to stay.

*Laila* If you enter me I will ask you to stay. And even if you pull out again I will always keep you within me.

*John* Watch out, Michael. She is the beast stealer of souls I know.

*Michael* I would gladly share my soul with you.

*Laila* That's the spirit.

*Michael* I would like to hear some more of your experience from the narrowness of our society.

*Laila* It's not a matter of intolerance but of incompetence and want of education and experience.

*Michael* We who have been exiled by the world have much to teach the world.

*Laila* For instance real music.

*Michael* And common sense concerning education. What is learning without history? What is knowledge without literature?

*Laila* What is life without truth and beauty? What is power without knowledge? Just folly. But the world was always ruled by folly, since knowledge always was bypassed and made exceptional.

*Michael* How could our society deprive itself of such a good teacher as you?

*Laila* Its vanity could not endure that I knew better which knowledge was more necessary at length.

*Michael* Shortsightedness has ruined all history.

*Laila* And humanity.

*John* I leave you two together. You can manage alone without my mediation. Just don't puff too much no matter how passionate you get.

*Laila* Do we need getting more passionate? Do you need any more stimulation, Michael?

*Michael* You are more stimulation to me than the whole world.

*Laila* Just let me know when you feel like puffing.

*Michael* We'll take it afterwards for relaxation between the rounds.

*Laila* We understand each other.

*Michael* It is as if we always had known each other.

*Laila* We probably have. Or else we wouldn't have found each other again.

*Michael* I never met anyone as beautiful as you.

*Laila* Enter me, my friend, and stay there.

*(They make love.)*

## Scene 2.

*Peter* You should be happy, who has only been refuted and sorted out of the establishment, this ruling mafia of society which only exists to strike down anyone who dares to stand out. Better then to be innocent and clean and without power, to have your name suppressed and written just in water, unknown except to the ocean of eternity, where everything transient, established, cruel and temporary will just go down and vanish with everything petty, superficial, vulgar and cheap, written for money, ambition and vanity, which isn't of even the slightest use that even a piece of toilet paper is. You will disappear anyway. Just as well then to be lost and done for from the beginning, forgotten and refused unto oblivion, and to be content with the natural eternal exile as no more than a drop of water in the sea.

*Michael (thoughtfully)* You mentioned cruelty. Has society treated you as cruelly as me?

*Peter* Almost. I was just rejected whatever I wrote. It didn't matter how good it was. The better the story, the more certain the rejection.

*Michael* Let me guess. You didn't write enough modern. You had classical ideals. You stuck to so called outdated forms. You preferred beauty to vulgarity and sex. You cared about an impeccable language, that demanded some close attention from the reader.

*Peter* I was not alone. The more serious, the more ignored and consistently suppressed and refused. Poets like Dante and Goethe, Shakespeare and Schiller would stand no chance today. They would have been rejected and laughed to scorn by their publisher's readers, who are employed by their publishers just for rejecting and at least all that are not directly publicly attractive.

*Michael* You are bitter.

*Peter* Is that so strange? Have I not the right? Literature was my life's first love and all my life. The classical literature from the Bible to Stefan Zweig appears to me as something that all people should naturally know by heart or at least have read through once. Is that wrong? Should ignorance then have higher status than knowledge and insight?

*Michael* Have you given up then?

*Peter* Not for myself, but for society. I don't give it a damned rotten potato. It has made its own choice of vain superficial commercialism unto death for its own perdition. It has scrapped all esthetic values. There is only formalism left and technique unto death as long as it is commercial and marketable.

*Michael* Who are you?

*Peter* One of the many lost ones. Thousands are lost every year from our society, just leaving it and never getting into touch any more. They used to be searched for, but nowadays they are so many, that official searches for them would put society in an awkward limelight. And all those that disappear are easily replaced by illegal immigrants, coloured desperate Africans and orientals who would pay anything to get smuggled into a society that would take care of them, in contrast to all those exiled and lost, responsible and faithful idealists, who more or less are kicked out and marked as undesirable. I am voluntarily lost and will never more come back. I don't give a damn about the society that gave me the damn.

*Michael* Have you written many bitter poems?

*Peter* Any number.

*Michael* Let's hear.

*Peter* It's your funeral. What about a horribly dull treatise on the poet's social position?

He writes for serious and has something to say, is versatile commanding all the forms, but is constantly refused, year in and year out, one work after another, decade after decade, by any publisher, who just repeats the same impersonal formulas, saying nothing, without comment, without encouragement, without acknowledgement, without even a confirmation of anyone having read the script. What do the publishers gain on consistently refusing a poet without ever offering

him the slightest chance? Regardless of quality, productivity, interesting contents and impeccable language? He is directed to the black suicide darkness of the desk drawer or to the web, where you have to pay for your own prostitution. Never before in history have poets been in a position that they had to pay for coming out. It is unique for the society of our time. If the poet is a woman she is undoubtedly a lonely mother taxed by the authorities for her poverty, since tax authorities can't believe in incomes below standard – you cannot live below the subsistence level, and if you declare you do you must be lying, so you are subject to discretionary assessment with imposing visits by the taxman every year since you have no assets. And the poet is caught up in the anonymous entrapment of poverty and can't break out of the vicious circle of the blind alley squirrel wheel of misery, which logically cannot be resolved except by suicide, he voluntarily disappears since he was not wanted, like Plato excluded Homer from his academic ideal society, where only puritan academics are allowed, while fantasy, creativity and freedom is locked out. Does it have to be as bad as that? The poet had no wish to become negative or bitter, he only wished to be constructive and creative, he just wished to tell good stories, but the slow suffocation in a society where culture was neglected as exceptional, if it differed from the profitable trends, forced him out of the way into the despised corner of bitterness and isolation, which he could not accept, so he vanished voluntarily with all his poems, plays and novels, essays, travel stories and biographies, which was all deleted from the web since he no longer could pay he charges of his web hotel. We shall never even know what was the poet's name or gender, since the poet took the consequences of his refusal by society and brought his identity with him out of it.

And the publishers hold their silence, cutting down on their productions, blaming it on books being too expensive both to buy and to produce, why only a morsel of writers are accepted annually out of thousands, why the process of refusing grows an unspeakably sad business, and the real manuscripts all end up inevitably in the document shredder. But isn't that even worse than the book bonfires of the Nazis, to destroy books even before they have been printed? And how could any writer have any confidence left in any publisher, when all the publishers can do is to destroy your manuscript? I ask you, my friend, who are here to represent my society. Why did you look me up? Why can't your society leave me in peace after having aborted me?

*Michael* I am myself in the same situation as you. That's why I am here. That's the only reason why we have met.

*Peter* Good. Make yourself at home in the company of the damned, the undesirables of society, the redundant creators.

*Michael* I leave you alone, Peter. Unfortunately I cannot give you any comfort, since I am myself just as cursed as you. (*leaves*)

*Peter (alone)* Drifting along like a zombie, everything going to hell, your life being a condemnation to poverty constantly getting worse, until you end up in a gutter, as a wreck that doesn't exist, wasted and exhausted by your own insufficiency of life without income and proper food, worthless, rejected and defecated on, as if it wasn't

enough that you once was scrapped by the society that gave you your life, just to force you into a deadly treadmill of poisonous inhuman environment destruction of cultural bankruptcy and reckless capitalist hardness. All that's missing is a regular suicide, but the last thing I will do is to die, and before I do, I would like to see some justice. Nature, for what reason are you postponing doomsday? Humanity cannot do more to deserve perdition, we are just waiting for your tsunamis, the lashing infernos of storms that will wreak all poisonous destructive urbanizations to hell and save the future of the world for nature. We have waited for your retribution of unhumanity now for soon two thousand years, but it seems more remote than ever, and humanity more gluttonous in its self-destruction, unnaturalness, inhumanity, stench and dirt than ever.

*Laila* Like some other Hamlet you walk here about in gloomy broodings like another sinister philosopher. May I help you?

*Peter* No, Laila, beautiful Laila, Michael's woman, no one can help me any more.

*Laila* Yes, love may help you.

*Peter* But you are Michael's woman.

*Laila* No, I am for love alone, and my love I give to the one who is in greatest need of it.

*Peter* You mean...

*Laila* Yes, my friend, you are now the one in direst need of it.

*Peter* And may I love you? Your Michael has no objection?

*Laila* If he has it's his problem, and he will get over it. He simply has to accept it. I give my love to whomever I wish, and I have the right to give my love to anyone deserving it.

*Peter* So I may fondle you, caress your irresistibly long silk dark hair and fade into its richness with all my pain, bitterness and unspeakably miserable remorse?

*Laila* It's your illness. I wish to cure it. What else is a community and company for if not to solace the one who suffers from his misfortune and loneliness?

*Peter* For how long may I own you?

*Laila* All night, or until you won't need me any more but can manage on your own and want to be rid of me. For no one can remain dependent on a woman's love at length. The manliness of man will always ultimately demand the freedom of independence.

*Peter* Let me love you then, let me keep you forever even if just for a night, so that I then could always carry with me the beatitude of your love, you the loveliest of all women.

*Laila (smiles)* Yes, that's what man calls the one he loves in the moment he loves her. Then when he sees her through that beauty is gone.

*Peter* I don't want to hurt Michael, though.

*Laila* My Michael knows and understands me. Or else I would not invite you.

*Peter* My love!

*Laila* Enter me, my friend, and then let me remain unforgettable within you as an eternal friend, so that you will be saved and rescued from the vicious circle of

your own mind.

*Peter* You if anyone could save me but no one else.

*Laila* So let me do it. You could then write poems about my love. (*She lets him into her cabin.*)

### Scene 3.

*John* You don't suppose he might become upset that you deceived him?

*Laila* I haven't deceived him. I still love him.

*John* But you have loved another.

*Laila* I have shared my love with another. Is that a crime? I don't think Michael is so stupid that he thinks so.

*John* Here he is now. He knows about it, surely?

*Laila* Of course.

*John* Is everything all right, Michael?

*Michael* Why shouldn't it?

*Laila* You are not upset that I have deceived you?

*Michael* Have you deceived me? How?

*Laila* I went to sleep with another.

*Michael* What you do in your bed with another is entirely between just you and him. Only what the two of us are doing together is of any concern of mine.

*John* You learn quickly how things work around here. You are good at adapting.

*Michael* I still love you, Laila. That's all that means anything to me. How you manage my love then is entirely up to you.

*Laila* Thanks for my freedom.

*Michael* Have you made love with John as well?

*Laila* No, he was never willing.

*John* If I would make love to all those lovely ladies who showed some interest in me, I would never have any leisure time. Just as well then to decline at once and do without them all, and you will have no problems of loyalty.

*Michael* Laila seems to solve them anyway.

*John* It's because she is so natural. But you should meet Luke, Michael.

*Michael* Who is Luke?

*John* Another poor musician.

*Laila* He showed up yesterday.

*Michael* Has he also left all his ships burnt behind?

*John* It seems like it, but for quite other reasons than you.

*Laila* Here he is now.

*John* Meet Michael, Luke, a colleague of mine but a violinist. Luke, Michael, is a pianist.

*Luke* Was.

*Michael* What happened?

*Luke* That's the question. Did I outgrow my music, or did my music outgrow me? I have simply lost my muse, and I don't know how.

*Michael* And consequently you have taken time out indefinitely.

*Luke* It doesn't look any better, does it?

*Michael* But what happened?

*Luke* My muse failed me. My autopilot didn't work any longer. I couldn't trust my fingers any more. They ceased obeying orders. Then it was no longer any joy to play, when the fingers no longer would cooperate. It could happen to anyone. What happened to you, since you are also stranded here like some other wreckage?

*Michael* I was sacked when I refused to take part in delivering atonal music.

*Luke* You are not alone. I know many musicians who were subject to that torture and had to prostitute themselves by its sado-masochism for the sake of music, to be able to hang on at all with the real music. It's a problem all over the decadent western world.

*Michael* Just don't mention it. Was that all about your case?

*Luke* Naturally I fared ill in the musical world. What musician doesn't? We are bullied and despised, we have to take pains like slaves for the sake of music and attract occupational diseases by abrasions and twisted backs, and I was fired a number of times.

*Michael* In what capacity and for what?

*Luke* As an organist and conductor. I was becoming a conductor for an orchestra, but the music I was to conduct was too simple, so I let the orchestra manage the simpler parts by themselves while I flirted with the audience. The management considered that a bit eccentric. As an organist I was sacked for playing the wrong tunes on the wrong occasion and for insisting on using liturgical music in Latin.

*Michael* What was wrong about that?

*Luke* It was a Catholic church, and they hadn't used Latin for fifteen years.

*Michael* So you were fired for preferring real music to to false music.

*Luke* Exactly.

*Michael* The more musical you are, the more narrow and difficult you will find your way in music. Don't tell me you were also a composer?

*Luke* Yes.

*Michael* Did you discontinue that as well?

*Luke* I became too critical. I was lost in technique. And there is no piano here on which I could try out my music to make it sound well.

*John* We could always get you a piano somehow.

*Luke* They are only ruined here in Asia with the extreme tropical humidity and the monsoons.

*Michael* If you could find a piano we could try playing together.

*Luke* Have you got a violin here?

*Michael* If you can get a piano I can get a violin.

*Luke* The muse is more important. You have to have an ideal to play for, a beautiful girl, a spirit to strive for, a mood to work with.

*Michael* The beautiful girl is here. There is no one more beautiful.

*Luke* I thought she was with Peter, the failed poet.

*Laila* I am one with all failed poets, whether they are writers or musicians.

*John* She loves them all and is faithful to them all.

*Luke (examining)* And no one feels betrayed?

*Laila* It is impossible, since I never deceive anyone. Everyone knows whom I love, and the one I love the most knows it as well, and I never let go of any love.

*Luke* Someone like you would be needed to get me started again.

*Laila* Then all we need is a piano.

*Michael* And a violin.

*John* That could easily be fixed.

*Michael* What do you most like to play?

*Luke* Are you familiar with Beethoven's violin sonatas? Nothing is better than Beethoven.

*Michael* Don't tell me you play the Kreutzer sonata.

*Luke* What else?

*Michael* I always enjoyed playing Fritz Kreisler.

*Luke* He is easy to accompany.

*John* You already have a muse and an audience. The instruments will be a trifle.

*Luke* I haven't played for months.

*Laila* Then it's about time for you to start again.

*Luke* It would be to please you most of all, you lovely creature. One would think that you really belonged to John here.

*Laila* Just because we both wear our hair almost equally long doesn't mean we have to be brother and sister.

*Michael* Come, John. Let's go chasing instruments at once.

*John* It will be a pleasure. *(breaks it up with Michael)*

*Laila* And I would perhaps show you around here a little more? Do you know some people here?

*Luke* Actually not, since I am very shy.

*Laila* Then you were lucky to find me. No one can be shy any more after having met with me.

*Luke* How come?

*Laila* My love is contagious and tends to compel its receiver to spread it on further. Come! *(takes his hand and brings him along)*

Act III scene 1. A beach and the sea.

*Michael (with a violin)* Where is that Luke now? He was supposed to be here at dawn, so that we could raise the sea from its rest at night and make it stir a little, but he isn't

here. Could he really have overslept? It's most unlike him with his constantly bad sleep.

*John (enters, solemn)* Are you waiting for Luke?

*Michael* Yes. We agreed to meet here at dawn. As you see, I am all ready with my violin to greet the sun and the sea and life by singing to them.

*John* I am afraid you will have to do it alone.

*Michael* Out of the question. Only he could have turned me on playing again, and only I could have made him start singing again. What has happened?

*John* The worst imaginable.

*Michael* What are you saying?

*John* We have found him, Michael. He is gone.

*Michael* Impossible.

*John* Yes, so it seems, when he got started again with his music and everything, but unfortunately, he has left us.

*Michael* Has he gone home?

*John* I wish he had.

*Michael (getting angry)* What are you hiding? What has happened?

*John* He did not want to hang on any more. He has abandoned music for the second time, and now it will be more difficult for him to get back.

*Michael* Out with it, John! He hasn't blown and died, has he?

*John* No, Michael, he has not, but someone has. (*enter Laila with a company carrying a corpse. Michael rises in shock.*)

*Michael* No! It must not be true!

*Laila* It isn't Luke, Michael. It's Peter.

*Michael (confused)* Peter? Where is Luke then?

*Laila* He has gone. He didn't want to be here any more.

*Michael* What is this? (*all at a loss*)

*Marcus (to Laila)* Is this Michael, who could make music out of Luke again?

*John* The same.

*Marcus (coming up to Michael)* I am Marcus, a close friend of Peter's, a former medical student. You should know everything that has happened.

*Laila* Spare him, Marcus. He is new here.

*Michael* No, don't spare me! I must know everything at once!

*Marcus* Peter had long been thinking of suicide. He viewed his life as a wasted failure and wanted to make a fresh start of better prospects. He was born with a grave handicap from the beginning, he suffered from asthma just like Vivaldi, that's why he came to India, because it was easy here to obtain the datura herb, which he felt as a miraculous medicine that could save him. At the same time he saw it as an ideal exit from life if necessary, for you don't need a large overdose to stifle to death. He believed in reincarnation and saw also that as his potential salvation, as he thought death would directly give him a new life, which he perhaps could design himself. In this life his family had dropped him, his own mother had disinherited him and given over the family property to his older more established brother, which

also motivated him to leave everything and escape here to India. Tonight he swam as far as he could out into the sea where he took his overdose, which separated him from life in the calmly rocking bosom of the warm ocean. He always dreamt about vanishing like a drop of water in the sea. He left a note informing me of his intentions in detail. (*Michael is devastated.*)

*Michael* Did anyone really get to know him? Did he at least leave any poems behind?

*Marcus* We are trying to collect them, but there are only a few of them here. The question is whether anyone cares about those that eventually were spread among his friends and acquaintances at home.

*Laila (still holding Peter to her bosom)* You poor poet, how could we ever convince you that you didn't live in vain, and that you gave your life to a higher meaning than any mortal ever could dream of? You lived and died only for freedom, for the right to dream and to create, for the divine gift that was yours to be able to create lasting beauty out of nothing, to be able to correctly depict truth in words and document it perfectly to make the mortals wake up from their deadly sleep to the inescapable realism of truth, and to always carry on and proceed further, even if your final step to go on was to climb from this life to another. I know, like all of us who knew you, that you never gave up. On the contrary. You sacrificed your mortality to give your immortality the right to live.

*John* You rock the departed one like a baby in your bosom, like a madonna her murdered son, but you have to let him go, Laila. It's just a dead body. Peter is gone.

*Michael (finally)* And Luke? Whatever happened to Luke?

*Laila* He was shocked and left. When leaving he cried to me: "Will I then never be able to take up music again without new curses afflicting me and those I love?"

*John* We tried to catch him up, but he got away. He took the train north.

*Michael* Does anyone know where?

*John* Hopefully he will keep in touch. We all have our e-mail addresses. He might have gone to Dharamsala or Manali.

*Michael* What kind of places are they?

*John* Let's go into that some other time.

*Marcus* We brought Peter with us here tonight to cremate him as the sun goes down. It will be like a service to his honour, a funeral pyre like the one that once was lit on the beach of Arno where the river transcends into ocean waves carrying Shelley to heaven.

*Laila* We are all still here, Michael. Don't stay in shock.

*Michael* It seems as if you had lived through such tragedies before.

*John* They are not unusual, Michael. Many has left us by overdose, if not like this then after first having left, just like Peter.

*Michael (wipes a tear)* Pardon me, my friends, but this is too hard a chapter for me to accept.

*John* So it is for all of us.

*Jonathan* ("the other guest at the bar") We shall celebrate his departure in the right way. His funeral shall be a party which no one ever shall forget. He has chosen to march on, so what! It was on his own responsibility, and if he did the right thing, so much better for him!

*Michael* Have you celebrated funerals here before?

*Jonathan* That's how we do it here. If a friend dies anonymously voluntarily remaining here, his demise is something between ourselves, and we burn him ourselves to then spread his ashes over the sea. That's the only natural thing to do.

*Michael* A party you say, with drugs and liquors, smokes and intoxication, wild dances and orgies?

*Jonathan* Is it better like they do at home, with pastries and coffee, drams and wine, beer and affectations, sanctimonious condolences and pathetic sniffles by the coffin in the church, syrup sentimentality and ridiculous crocodile tears?

*Marcus* Customs are what they are, and you follow them where you are. In India suttees are still a mere formality and nothing out of the ordinary. We have learned to live here in our own way which isn't Indian but neither European.

*Michael* Hippie style?

*John* Something like that. Perhaps something close to Buddhism, which is as unceremonious as possible: just a natural and simple farewell. But here we have to burn the body for sanitary and hygienic reasons.

*Michael* Do what you are used to. I'll hang on whatever you do although without engagement. I will probably gradually learn your way. I guess we all have left our lives behind, so I should do that as well and learn this higher level in a new school. It's no worse than that.

*Laila* We all need to comfort each other. That's why it's so important that we stick together, everyone of us who knew Peter and thought we understood him. In some way we all shared his destiny, he was one of us, and by his exit we have all lost a part of ourselves. That's how it is when anyone dies, but worse, when the deceased was a creative power who himself took the initiative for his departure. You are not alone in suffering the shock of this brutality of life.

*Michael* Don't leave me, Laila.

*Laila* Never, Michael. Why should I?

*Michael* You didn't scare off Luke for my sake, did you?

*Laila* Never. He is still inside me. He will keep in touch. I am sure of it. He hasn't left us.

*Michael* He has only left his music. How could we now get him back with his music again?

*Laila* If you take on that effort it will be a tougher job than any of the rest of us would manage.

*Michael* But I succeeded! I made him take up singing again, and we almost got him a piano! And then Peter comes along and takes his life ruining the general mood and scaring him off! That I could never forgive him.

*John* Peter wasn't musical, Michael.

*Michael* Yes, that's what he was! He was closer to the muses than any of us musicians! That's why it is so unforgivable! He had a responsibility, which he deserted!

*Laila* Cry it out loud to him, so that he may hear you.

*Michael (cries)* Peter, you villain! I'll never forgive you! You have failed! You must not, if once you dedicated yourself to the service of the muses! *(breaks down crying)*

*John* Take care of him, Laila.

*Laila* You don't have to ask me.

*Marcus* Bring him into the cottage and give him something to calm him down, so that he may get some sleep. He has had a shock and needs to get over it.

*(Laila helps Michael into a cabin. John follows.)*

*Jonathan* What a party we will make! All night! I'll invite the whole colony! We will dance all night and day, as if it was New Year's Eve! Peter, we shall celebrate you, for we know that you have only been reborn!

Scene 2. Same scene, at dusk, glowing sunset over the sea, constantly darkening.

*(Kletzmer- and reggae music.)*

*Laila* Don't cry, Michael. I have more reasons to cry than you.

*Michael* Is it because you loved him?

*Laila* His suicide is for me above all a personal defeat. He was one of those lost souls whom I made it my mission to take care of, for only such as I could do it. If I had succeeded he would have come off his suicidal thoughts. His implementing them is a maximal failure for me personally.

*Michael* It wasn't your fault.

*Laila* Of course it wasn't. He took his life into his own hands and made his extremely selfish decision on his own quite alone. Like all suicides he was only totally responsible himself, but no one is lonelier than a suicide, because no one can share it with him.

*Jonathan* Don't take it so seriously. Be happy and party instead. Turn on and relax. We have a camp fire tonight, and we'll make some barbecue grilling sausages by Peter's funeral pyre.

*Michael* You are drunk.

*Jonathan* Of course I am. What's wrong about you is that you aren't. Everyone else is and happy because of Peter, but you mourn him because you take his departure personally. That's egoism.

*Michael* No, it's natural.

*Laila* Do you think things will get better because we turn on?

*Jonathan* You don't know until you do. You will see that it will get better. *(offers her his pipe. She accepts it and inhales voluptuously.)* There. Doesn't it at once feel better?

*Laila* It benumbs and reduces your sharpness of thought, but it doesn't change the world.

*Jonathan* Just you wait. That's actually what it does.

*John (to Michael)* I apologize for this pandemonium. A funeral party such as this must nauseate you and fill you with disgust.

*Michael* I will get over it. (*accepts the pipe from Laila*)

*John* Forbear with them. They are just human.

*Laila* Who prefer to be mortal. They celebrate Peter's immortality by making themselves the more mortal.

*John* You can look at it that way, but they avoid depression and the sadness of it. And Jonathan's argument is in many ways right. I have tried to imagine myself in Peter's last moments. He must have enjoyed the moment. The sea was warm and sweet in softness. He must have reached far out to then be able to float ashore so far away. I have discussed the matter with the doctor. Marcus agreed with me that death was probably Peter's life's highest enjoyment and moment of happiness if not euphoria. He could calmly float out there in the warm bosom of the calm soothing sea and in perfect peace and harmony take his last dose. He always had difficulty breathing, and datura was to him equal to paradise and a perfect foretaste of it. It allowed him to breathe in full. He could fill his lungs with air without pains and cramps and abandon himself to an ecstatic delirium at the same time and fade into the waves in absolute bliss.

*Laila* Stop it!

*John* I am only trying to reconcile myself with his memory.

*Laila* He let us down because we let him down!

*John* We did not let him down. It was his society which refused to accept him. All his life he felt refused and jilted by the society he wanted to serve and honour, while he never deserted us other outcasts and outlaws in exile. He wanted to have a decent life in society, and his society refused to allow him that human right because he was just a poet.

*Laila* I can't accept it.

*Michael* Neither can I, mostly because of Luke's disappearance. I can't accept that Luke would go the same way.

*John* So let's find him.

*Michael* What do you suggest?

*John* That we take the same train as he up into the mountains. Winter has passed now, so the spring season will soon start again in Himachal Pradesh in places like Manali and Dharamsala. I am sure he would be in either place. I have contacts there. Someone must have come across him.

*Mikael* Could you help me find him? We were just getting ready to both take up music again together, and we almost got there. We were just getting started, when we were interrupted by this incident, like the falsest possible disharmony in the middle of ascending music on the verge of magnificence. I can't take up my violin again until I have found Luke to get him on again. I am more responsible for him than you were, Laila.

*Laila* So let's find him together.

*Michael* Are you coming with us?

*Laila* Of course.

*John* Let's go all three together then. We have a mission to accomplish, Laila to atone for the debt she feels towards Peter, and you to help him and yourself back to music. It's a commendable enterprise which I would gladly do my best to take part in. My mission in life is to further life.

*Michael* When can we go?

*John* Tomorrow.

*Jonathan* Will you not join us grilling sausages? The party is in top gear, and Peter is almost all consumed. Unfortunately we couldn't add his meat to the barbecue, but we could save some ashes of him afterwards to put in a can, and we might even keep some urn with some fragments of his burnt out dust. What about that? Come on and dance with us, for heaven's sake!

*Michael* We leave tomorrow, Jonathan.

*Jonathan* Are you leaving us already? Do you think we are too rowdy? Do you think life here is too fleeting and easy? Don't you like it?

*Laila* We will find Luke, Jonathan.

*Jonathan* You'll never find him. He has given up. He is more lost than Peter. Peter took at least his life into his own hands, but Luke is just trying to get away from it.

*Michael* The more important for us to find him.

*Jonathan* Good luck. You are welcome to bring him back here afterwards, so that we then can go on with the party.

*John* If we find him we will surely come back and give him an even better party to the glory of life than this wild vigil.

*Jonathan* There are no better parties than funerals. That's when you really see life as it is and understand the value of it.

*Laila* You are stoned.

*Jonathan* Intentionally. I will smoke myself unconscious tonight.

*Michael* We are lucky to at least have Kletzmer musicians available. I could never stand electrical guitars.

*Laila* Reggae is not too bad either.

*John* We usually have softer music for funerals, never hard rock.

*Marcus (enters)* There you are. I was just looking for you. What solemnity! It's a regular bacchanal!

*John* Are you surprised?

*Marcus* Of course not, that's how funerals are conducted here, orgies of unleashed looseness, a demonstrative hullabaloo where everyone hysterically indulges in desperate intoxication. I assume they intend to go on dancing all night. Still the situation is timeless in its screwed up highness.

*John* What do you mean?

*Marcus* It is exactly as if I had had the same experience once before long ago. If I didn't know the dead body was Peter, I would take for granted it was Shelley.

*Michael* Were you present at Shelley's funeral?

*Marcus* I am afraid so, for that tragedy always fascinated me. It is as if I had never left the beach at Viareggio behind me.

*Michael* Who were you then?

*Marcus* Probably his best and most faithful friend Leigh Hunt.

*Jonathan* You get such clear insights when you really get high. Have you had enough, or do you want some more? (*offers him his pipe*)

*Marcus* Thanks, Jonathan, but I already had my daily ration.

*Jonathan* Then you can take some more. On a night of miracles like this everyone must let go of everything in absolute senselessness of inebriation.

*John* Good night, Jonathan. We go to prepare for our departure. (*takes care of Laila and Michael*)

*Marcus* Where are you going?

*Michael* We are going to find Luke.

*Marcus* Good luck. It will be an eternal search for a needle in a haystack. He went off to disappear and probably intends to remain in that condition.

*Michael* We will not give up until we find him.

*Marcus* Yes, musicians can be quite stubborn, and they never see themselves when it is time to stop. Luke did. My advice to you therefore is to leave him alone.

*Michael* No, Marcus, we were interrupted in the middle of a concert, and if you are a musician you finish the concert. (*follows Laila and John*)

*Jonathan* (*after them as they leave*) Welcome back! (*wobbles back to the party, where the dancing around the funeral pyre is reaching ecstatic heights*)

*Marcus* When the hippies got a move on in the 60s and gave rise to a new revolution of love, beauty, peace, music and perception, everyone thought it was something new, but it was just a renewal. The idea is easy to track down in history, and the first consistent "hippy" appears to have been the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl, later famous for his travel ventures across the oceans on rafts to demonstrate how ancient civilizations were connected. He wrote "Fatuhiva", the book of real hippy life of only nature on an island in the South Seas in absolute detachment from all modernities in consistent wild life livelihood like a Robinson with a wife. That was in the thirties, but he was not the first one. In the beginning of the century there was a hippy colony at Monte Verità by Swiss Ascona, where amanuenses from all Europe gathered. One of them was the pacifist Erich Maria Remarque, and already they were quite consistent in absolute detachment from all the back sides of modern civilization. Before them there was in old Russia the Tolstoyans, who likewise aspired to soundness in nature, inspired by the pacifism and vegetarianism of Leo Tolstoy. He himself abandoned all his property for poverty, but there were many similar communes, collectives and "hippy" colonies before that. In fact, they were always there throughout history. Even the freemasons started off as a detached underground movement for an alternative to the constantly passing disorder of the established world. The medieval monastery orders were the same phenomenon, like the essenes of Palestine, the origin of Jesus, while the monastery movement seems in fact to have originated by Ezekiel. Before him we had

the Pythagoreans of Greece, while before them we already had the Buddhist philosophy with its universal monastery rule, which gave all Asia civilization, a movement going on continuously unaltered even today, since the world still today is hopelessly derailed, out of joint and desperately in need of care. Who was it that said, "Humanity is like children who locked themselves up in a house themselves and then got rid of the key to by sheer ignorance set it all on fire for some pyromanic joy." No, it was no realistic pessimist, no philosopher from the age of enlightenment, no ancient Greek nor even Pythagoras, for it was only Buddha at the beginning of our age. And after the hippies, or by them came Greenpeace and the environmentalists, who with the global threat of the environment now consider it their responsibility and mission to in spite of the madness and bureaucracy of the politicians at least try to save what can be saved of our politically so sorely abused planet. The abusers of life, the world and our humanity have always been politicians and those in power, but we, who in spite of all carried on, furthered life and survived, pushed the world and its development forward, spiting political oppression, barbarity, violence, stupidity and shortsightedness, are the outcasts and outlaws, despised and impoverished as pariahs, who detached ourselves from the mundane morbid world of transient mortal vanity to rather take a stand for the eternal values of timelessness.

#### Act IV scene 1.

*John (alone)* They say about Goa, that all the best Indians are here but only the dregs of the worst westerners. Is it because of the notorious marathon parties, these orgies of looseness, that sometimes could go on for several days night and day now and then all the year round reaching a climax around the New Year's Eve? This was actually the first established hippie paradise in the seventies while around the same time Nepal and Bali became summer and monsoon oases for us constantly moving bums, adepts in the art of living and free bohemians, in winter at Goa, when it gets too hot up to Nepal and when too rainy away to Bali, a constant triangular escape, that goes on still today among the outlawed natural philosophers and outcasts, who prefer a life in poverty and freedom to any restriction in the straitjacket of a hard society with its enslaving capitalist worries and troubles and welfare diseases, like stress, unsound routines and rotting stagnation decay. Here the party just goes on indefinitely without ever tiring out non-stop in enviable freedom from responsibilities and concerns, while we are the more aware of our share of personal universal responsibility for all life of the planet and its cosmic order. Everyone is welcome here to share our eternal party, while we are already the third generation of free natural activists and peace and freedom fighters, rainbow crusaders and tree planters, faithful environmental caretakers and defenders of nature against all the human abuse of predatory greed; and the world is now gradually comprehending that we were the ones who always were most right, we who sacrificed vain

mundanity and careerism to live more for love and the idealism of beauty, as the only way to a decent future and any possibility at all for life to survive.

*Marcus (enters)* Are you sitting here alone raising the sun from the sea by silent singing?

*John* Someone has to do it. No, jokes apart, I am just thinking aloud committing the mistake of putting it into words that can be overheard.

*Marcus* I would love to come with you.

*John* Do it then?

*Marcus* May I?

*John* Of course. Who could stop you except yourself? If you feel the urge to break it up and move on to go away you have to do it, and nothing must keep you away from it, least of all yourself.

*Marcus* Where did you intend to start your search for the lost musician?

*John* In Manali, since that was his most probable destination. You could easily go there from Delhi, while it is considerably more tricky to find a bus or train for Dharamsala.

*Marcus* Aren't there many addicts there in Manali?

*John* That's where most of them are, since it grows wild everywhere.

*Marcus* Do you think Luke could surrender himself to that kind of thing?

*John* I am afraid, Marcus, that Peter's most unexpected suicide was a great shock to him, which he will find it difficult to get over. Yes, Marcus, therefore it is more than possible that he will seek oblivion and escape at any price. The datura is growing wild up around Malana, and if you have a large enough dose without dying of it, you could be free from this world and stay high over the clouds for two years, which Luke knew very well.

*Marcus* He would then in other words need medical care if things turn out really bad.

*John* That's why it's actually a good idea for you to follow us. (*enter Laila*) Laila, Marcus wants to come along with us.

*Laila* Splendid. Why?

*John* He has a feeling that Luke might need him.

*Laila* In what capacity? As a doctor?

*Marcus* I feel some calling.

*Laila* Only for Luke or also away from here to the mountains?

*Marcus* Your company, Laila, could inspire anyone to follow.

*Laila (to John)* Leave me alone with him, John. (*John leaves.*)

I have noticed, Marcus, how you have been watching me.

*Marcus* Is that so strange? Everyone has been with you except me.

*Laila* No, John respects me. I thought you did as well.

*Marcus* I respect Michael.

*Laila* Not me?

*Marcus* Thee I love.

*Laila* Then you must also respect me, if you really love me.

*Marcus* Of course. Everyone loves you, Laila, and can't help it. Just tell me your secret.

*Laila* Which one?

*Marcus* How do you manage to keep your hair so magically deep red glistening and at the same time so long and well kept?

*Laila* Ask John how he manages his. I manage mine in the same way. I never wash it except with water, but I always comb it.

*Marcus* John is almost getting middle-aged. Others grow bald at his age.

*Laila* He always massaged his hair roots by combing it carefully with the rods down to the roots. I always did the same. It's just natural.

*Marcus* Do you think Michael would have any objections if I loved you?

*Laila* Ask him.

*Marcus* Is asking you not enough?

*Laila* Do you think I could be enough for everyone?

*Marcus* You have the right to say no.

*Laila* I wish my love was enough for everyone, but it never can be. We all have our limits and so does love. So be content enough with my friendship at present, Marcus. Friendship is always durable and can stand tests, but love is more sensitive and can not be driven too far.

*Marcus* Set a limit, and I will keep out of it.

*Laila* That's what I am doing. I don't love you, Marcus, but I really love Michael and don't wish to expose that love to more strains than it already endured by Peter and his suicide, which I partly have to blame myself for. Therefore I never wish to let go of Michael, who is also a vulnerable musician, perhaps harmed already beyond repair. But I am fond of you as a friend and wish to hold on to you as such for always.

*Marcus* I am very grateful for it.

*Laila* Could you manage standing alone with your love?

*Marcus* I will have to try.

*Laila* If it is true you will make it. (*leaves*)

*Marcus* (*seeks deep in thought and then introduces his monologue*)

How is it possible to live with the awareness that you are a man and one of those who have ruined the entire planet, extirpating more than half of all its life as a murderer, monster and predator and butcher of his own kind above all? We are informed that we shouldn't have become more than five hundred million but have grown to twelve times as much and recklessly continue breeding like rats. How can you live with such a knowledge, which has to make you ashamed for what you are as a vermin and parasite partaking in exploiting the planet unto death and ruining all nature with everything that is beautiful and sacred, virginal and alive in all its divine freedom? You can't live without pious idealism, you have to have faith, hope and love and trust in man; but the actual politics of reality has ruined it all, and all you can do is just to stick to the individuals, the freedom of the outsider and the exception of beauty among those who managed to preserve their freedom and

integrity. Or else all you have is the bottle, the artificial intoxication, by which you can fool your carcass by making it believe that you at least momentarily feel better. But it is only an escape from reality, forever doomed to reach a terrible end.

*Michael (has entered)* What is your story, Marcus? Why did you abandon medical science and the most honourable of all professions?

*Marcus* You must be joking. Medical science is the greatest fraud in the world. 90% of all medicines are superfluous and more harmful than beneficial, and during the last hundred years medical science has been mainly busy making people dependent on them to be able to make money. Most illnesses are imaginary, and against them medical science has mobilized the most amazing faculty of invention in manufacturing drugs against imagined symptoms. Thereby the doctor has succeeded in establishing his profession as the most profitable business in the world. The only doctors who really do some good are the barber-surgeons, but there are almost none left. 90% of all doctors are good at getting money from their patients – nothing else.

*Michael* But with that faculty of invention medical science ought to find a way to resolve the global climate crisis caused by the population explosions.

*Marcus* Of course. It is simple. Let half of mankind return to cannibalism, and the problem is solved. When everyone has consumed his neighbour the survivors could start eating each other, so that no one needs to starve any more. They made that a system in China when Mao in his autocratic zest caused a famine to make people chastise themselves by fixing their hunger without any further assistance. Many problems could be resolved that way at the same time – the population explosion, the overpopulation, the supply problems and the starvation disasters.

*Michael* Now *you* must be joking.

*Marcus* But it isn't funny, for behind it is the sickest reality of history. All humanity is sick and can't be cured even by medicines. They try to cure themselves by artificial means like drugs and anything that offers a safe placebo effect but naturally only get sicker and worse off. Just watch the symptoms. Observe all the sick and crazy, deranged and dreadful films that are being mass produced in America with mainly mad murderers and monsters, violence and sex in as grotesque exaggerations as possible, pyromaniac self-destruction where hundreds of cars are being smashed, burned and exploded in every film with as extreme perversions as possible, just to make money and brainwash the great multitude and majority of uncritical audiences. Fewer and fewer are reading books and wish to learn anything about what's important in life, and those who do are almost only found outside society, like here in the hippie colonies of India. I have given up hope for humanity. It is thoroughly lost and ruined. I would gladly let it devour itself like the Chinese dragon by its own voluptuous greed in downright cannibalism.

*Michael* You are just lovesick. Am I right, that you just got turned down by Laila?

*Marcus* What has that got to do with it?

*Michael* I am just trying to understand your total negativism. Have you ever had anyone whom you could love?

*Marcus* A personal question must needs a personal answer. I am a hermit, Michael. I suffer from a special syndrome which makes me panic if I have too many people around me. That's why I was always alone, for I could not do without loneliness. I could never live together with anyone else. Don't you believe that I did not try. I have often been in love but was always attracted to women who suffered from the opposite syndrome – panic out of loneliness, so that they could not do without company, and any company would do. Laila is also like that. Therefore she accepts any lover. How many times has she deceived you already during your very short time together? Talk about unhappy love – my destiny is to only fall in love with cases of claustrophobia, while I myself suffer from agoraphobia...

*Michael* She hasn't deceived me once.

*Marcus* Bullshit.

*Michael* You don't know her. She will not be taken. She has any number of friends, but she never admits anyone into her inmost, since she prefers to enter the inmost of her friends instead to transform them and ennoble them. That's her mission in life. She can make anyone better, but no one can make her any better.

*Marcus* What about Luke then, and poor Peter? She feels bad about him herself. Don't you think he took his life partly because of his unrequited love of her? And Luke who just ran off?

*Michael* We will find him.

*Marcus* I don't think so. He will end up like another suicide like Peter, at best happily on a delightful drug trip.

*Michael* Your cynicism is rather antipathetic, Marcus.

*Marcus* It's because it is true. No one can stand the truth, Michael. It is always unpleasant, and a part of the truth is that your Laila is deceiving anyone with anyone.

*Michael* I don't think it is advisable for you to come with us.

*Marcus* It wasn't advisable for Peter either. He chose a better and nobler alternative. That's what we all should do, who have seen through humanity in their desperate position and made a correct assessment. What do we have to look forward to? A constantly accelerating worsening of the climate with constantly worse natural disasters for humanity, until a balance is reached in nature in at least two hundred years by the extermination of the greater part of humanity? To privately disappear without gestures is the most sensible thing you could do. These poor muslim suicide bombers who bring as many innocents as possible with them in their mass suicides are just clowns, comparable with the mass suicides of lemmings in the mountains, when they have become too many, and that could be the only way for all humanity.

*Michael* We will find Luke, Marcus. He needs Laila. She can take care of him and release him from a possible fate like Peter's.

*Marcus* Let me know in that case, but don't keep in touch as long as your search is without results. I take it for granted that I will never hear anything from you again.

*Michael* Take care, Marcus. We'll keep in touch.

*Marcus* Your optimism is pathetic in its tragic vanity, Michael.

Act V scene 1 (*the same as the introductory scene*)

*Michael* That's how it started. Since then I have wandered about triggering hooks and contacts to get some trace of Luke but without succeeding. But I am not giving up. I will search for him until I find him, and I will restore him and myself to music. It has become like an obsession, but I can't go back on it now. I cannot give up.

*Vincent* And what if you don't find him?

*Michael* That is unthinkable. He must be somewhere. (*takes his hand*) Help me find him, Vincent. Stay here and become one of us. There is a lot for you to do here. We can search for him together, and you can meet and get to know my other friends here. They are here from all over the world, philosophers, artists, poets, inventors, pioneers, future creators, outcasts and paupers, but the more liberated for their poverty. You will like it here.

*Vincent* And how could I help you find him, who has never seen him?

*Michael* Luke is just one among many lost souls here. You can help us with the others as well. Laila is devoting her life to their care. Society has scrapped, exiled and forgotten them, they are without families and live in limbo, most of them are completely without any roots, but we help them find their way and to create a new life for themselves and to find a new meaning of life. We are never bored here. The problem with the western world is that everything is so screwed up that it all becomes unnatural, artificial and therefore so boring. Here we live with nature.

*Vincent* Your suggestion is tempting of course, but I can't just let go of my life at home.

*Michael* That's what you must do. You have to let go. Only thus you could find yourself and a meaning with your life and the truth of your own existence.

*Vincent* That's perhaps what Peter did when he let go.

*Michael* Maybe also Luke. That's why I must find him before it is too late.

*Vincent* Very well, Michael, I will stay here for some time and help you and learn about your alternative life. Let me just inform those at home that you are alive and kicking.

*Michael* No, Vincent, don't. Let me be dead to them. Let me remain a mystery unsolved. They will never believe you anyway. Leave the dead in peace in their dead world of nothingness and mortality, and let us, who know life, live in peace.

*Vincent* As you wish. Naturally I am curious about your friends Laila and John.

*Michael* You shall meet them presently. You are already one of us, Vincent. Feel yourself at home and welcome in our midst, and I am sure that you, like most of us honest people, will remain here and forget the world that rejected us. (*takes him around his arms to go out. In that moment John makes an entrance.*)

*John* We have found him, Michael.

*Michael* What are you saying?

*John* There is not much left of him, but he is alive.

*Michael* But that is wonderful! But meet Vincent here, my old childhood friend. We have followed each other since the age of ten. He found me here by chance

without having looked for me, and is it the same kind of chance that has made Luke reappear?

*John (serious)* We made an effort, Michael. Laila is with him now. He is in a bad shape.

*Michael* What has happened?

*John* Everything we feared and some more. If the monks hadn't taken care of him in a mountain monastery, he would have been lost.

*Michael* Can we see him?

*John* It is all right, but don't expect him to recognize you.

*Michael* May Vincent come along? He knows the whole story.

*John* Of course.

*(They leave.)*

Scene 2. Inside a lamaistic monastery. The monks are dressed in the ordinary toga-like outfit. Luke is lying on a bed on the floor. Laila is sitting by him.

*Luke* I seem to recognize this soft sweet long hair that caresses my face like Mary Magdalene's when she dried the feet of Jesus. Haven't we met before? But it must have been ages ago.

*Laila* Yes, it was a long time ago, Luke. Do you remember that you used to be a pianist?

*Luke* You try to fool me. You are kidding me since you very well know that I no longer know anything about myself.

*Laila* Everything you have been and experienced can be recollected, reconstructed and rehabilitated. All you need is rest and to recover in the care of good old friends.

*Luke* Do I have any? Did I ever have any? I only remember that I never had any part in any human community, that the hard society always just kicked me out and rejected me with the excuse, that I was of no good to anyone.

*Laila* Common mortals never understand how useful creative spirits are, but eternity understands them and takes care of them.

*Luke* You try to fool me and make me imagine things.

*Laila* No, Luke, I am only trying to help you. For you were lost, but we have found you, and we will help you to come back.

*Luke* There is no way back for someone like me. I have burnt all my ships and should have been left to drown.

*Laila* No one is left to drown here as long as he can be saved. You are still alive, Luke, and therefore you can be saved.

*Luke* No, for a life like mine there is no hope.

*Laila* Yes, there is, no matter how much you try to suppress it.

*Luke* I am suppressed by the world and society. Therefore I should have been allowed to disappear and die. I am good for nothing. If once I was a pianist, I have forgotten it. I am buried alive. Why did you dig me up again?

*Laila* Because you were alive.

*Luke* No, I was not. I was a living dead like a zombie. Such should be evaded by those who belong to the living.

*John (enters with the others)* How is he?

*Laila* You can speak with him.

*Luke* Another one of those long-haired apes or angels who think they can save doomed souls. I tried to vanish. Why wouldn't you let me?

*John* We were not the ones, Luke., It was the monks who saved you out of the wilderness, where you were all but dead, but you have managed to survive and are still a man.

*Luke* That's what this angelic creature has tried to convince me of, but I can't believe her.

*Michael* Do you recognize me, Luke?

*Luke (examines him carefully)* I do recognize you. I thought you were dead. Wasn't your name – Peter?

*Michael* No, Luke, I was your colleague who was on my way to restore you to your life of music.

*Luke* But who was Peter? Wasn't he the one who made me get lost?

*Michael* We were just going to play together, when Peter came between as an element of disturbance by creating a false mood.

*Luke* Was that how it happened? I think you were looking for a violin. Did you find any?

*Michael* That's what we did.

*John* And we found a piano for you, Luke.

*Luke* What do you mean? Was I really then some kind of a pianist? Wasn't Peter the pianist?

*John* No, Peter was a poet.

*Luke* I have been brooding on this ever since it happened. I just couldn't accept it. I could not accept that Peter was dead. It was too upsetting, too unexpected, to revolting. No one expected that of him, although he often talked about it. But suicides who talk about their suicide usually never commit it or just fail to do it. But Peter committed it quite intentionally in the middle of the day without anyone being able to stop it or even suspect it. It hurt too much and struck too deeply! It hurt so outrageously both heart and soul! I could not bear it! Therefore I tried to drug myself to death, and when I just failed, I ran off to disappear into the wilderness among the most notorious paradises of drugs beyond Kullu and Malana...

*Laila* We have found you, Luke. You are saved.

*Luke* Do you mean to say that you came all the way from Goa just to search for me?

*John* Yes, Luke, that's precisely what we have done, and we really made hard enough efforts to finally succeed. Many others have disappeared the same way as you without leaving a trace and might remain lost forever.

*Luke* You should have let me go.

*John* No, Luke, we should not. As long as you can save one single human life, you can save the whole world, for each human life contains in itself all humankind, since all humanity is one community where everybody belongs.

*Luke* And what about the society that drives them away? The society which rejected Peter? The society which forced you, Michael, to partake in the audial destruction of the environment, although you were a musician?

*Michael* You know that it didn't work, Luke. All the mistakes and lies of society must pass and vanish. The atonal music never had any life, but the two of us are still living as musicians, although rejected by society.

*Luke* Help me back into music, Michael, the only possible help for my soul.

*Michael* That's why we are here.

*Laila* Can you get up, Luke? You need some exercise.

*Luke* I will try. (*manages with a great effort and a few helping hands*) Look! I can stand on my own! But my legs are wobbly like those of a newborn deer cub. I have been gravely poisoned, Michael. Peter had to take his drugs as a medicine against his breathing problems, but I took them without needing them. That's why I almost died and almost completely lost all my memory into the bargain, but now things are clearing up. You are right, Laila. The most important life source is in the soul, and by the soul anything could be restored to perfect life again. I am like Byron's Manfred, who went completely lost but still was finally redeemed, in spite of all his vices, his false steps, his suicidal efforts and his mental darkness. But I am not mad, my friends. I thought I was going mad, I tried to bereave myself of all senses, I actually tried to annihilate my soul and have done with it, but it would not let me go. Music still resounded in my soul, and it returned to me more alive than ever through you. I don't know if I deserved it, but I am still happy that you came.

*John* It was the monks who saved you.

*Luke* No, John, now I remember your name, the fact that saved me was that you never forgot me.

*Laila* Come, Luke, let's go out into the light. What you need is warmth and sunshine.

*(They help him out to a brilliant weather shining on a splendid mountain scenery outside.)*

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