



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts - Papers

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

2012

Hurt

Catherine McKinnon

University of Wollongong, mckinnon@uow.edu.au

Publication Details

C. McKinnon, 'Hurt', 2012, 26 August - Presented by Parnassus Den at SBW Stable Theatre, Kings Cross, Sydney.

RESEARCH IMPACT STATEMENT

Research Background

Post-dramatic theatre performance often investigates social traumatic events using diverse theatrical strategies, yet for many main-stage theatre companies investigating similar topics, the three-act realist play, with swift dialogue exchanges and coherent albeit unstable subjects, is still the dominant textual and theatrical mode. This research aims to investigate and disrupt the three-act theatrical realist form, and the idea of coherent subjectivity, to reinterpret and represent the effects of trauma on human beings, and their understanding of what it means to live and die.

Research Contribution

This research uses first-person poetic sequences and fragmented dialogue to investigate trauma and near-death events. The waiting room is employed as metaphor for change and transformation. In particular, the 'internal worlds' of characters are juxtaposed with interaction between characters; possible intent contrasted with consequential action; morality set alongside immorality. This text

Hurt

Abstract

Hurt from *The Hurt Trilogy*

The modern world is full of new technologies, fast cars, fast foods, fast internet speeds but does our focus on the politics of the now means we lose the opportunity to set current dilemmas against more philosophical questions about what it means to be human?

The Hurt Trilogy project queries whether our moral choices are important or whether we our lives are simply accidents being played out? Each of the plays examines whether, when faced with death—our own or the death of someone we love— ‘truths’ about our actions can be grasped? And more broadly, how shall we live and die?

Hurt, the first play of the trilogy, explores the concept of moral choice. Three people— Mel, Dominic, and Alex—await news about an injured child. In seeking to come to terms with the potential loss of a young life are Dominic, Mel, and Alex able to reveal previously hidden truths? Or, do they lay blame on each other, pushing already fractious relationships into darker territory?

Keywords

era2015

Publication Details

C. McKinnon, 'Hurt', 2012, 26 August - Presented by Parnassus Den at SBW Stable Theatre, Kings Cross, Sydney.

RESEARCH IMPACT STATEMENT

Research Background

Post-dramatic theatre performance often investigates social traumatic events using diverse theatrical strategies, yet for many main-stage theatre companies investigating similar topics, the three-act realist play, with swift dialogue exchanges and coherent albeit unstable subjects, is still the dominant textual and theatrical mode. This research aims to investigate and disrupt the three-act theatrical realist form, and the idea of coherent subjectivity, to reinterpret and represent the effects of trauma on human beings, and their understanding of what it means to live and die.

Research Contribution

This research uses first-person poetic sequences and fragmented dialogue to investigate trauma and near-death events. The waiting room is employed as metaphor for change and transformation. In particular, the ‘internal worlds’ of characters are juxtaposed with interaction between characters; possible intent contrasted with consequential action; morality set alongside immorality. This text creates a study of the potential of traumatic and near-death events to disrupt patterns of speech and thought, and through its form, seeks to question the notion of coherent subjectivity. In doing so, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the fragile social world we inhabit.

Research Significance

The writing of *Hurt*, as part of *The Hurt Trilogy*, was funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, in the Established Writer's category. This play was shortlisted for the 2011 Rodney Seaborn Award. A production of *Hurt* directed by Sarah Goodes was presented by Parnassus Den, SBW Stables Theatre, Sydney.

hurt

catherine mckinnon
c

characters

mel	female	in her thirties
alex	female	in her twenties
dominic	male	in his thirties

there is no scenery no props no furniture except perhaps a few chairs

character dialogue is continuous fast-paced and overlapping

names without dialogue indicate active silence between characters

*spaces between words indicate a silence a hesitation a pressure an expectation
the length hinted at by the space these active engagements by the actors will
alter with individual performers*

brackets around a word indicate that the word is thought not spoken

italicized words or brackets around italicized words indicate stage directions

This play was funded by the Australia Council of Australia

mel in shimmering light

mel day pushes up no sun heaviness in the air overwhelming like too much
perfume voices from other lives far away blasts

spinning here solid walls furnished rooms but spinning can't breathe no breath
a father missing children crying a mother me mother not mothering words
circling like vultures i seek

oblivion

a few hours no more but but wake to a world re-arranged

i step onto the pavement everything melting and then it isn't
another step

uncommitted

gravity gone the earth out of alignment no shade a single tree heat everything
blurred metal cars gleaming each step a new negotiation and then i i i see her

lying there

face a shiny button she came into the world that way her eyes on me
fixed alert in that moment a caterpillar to a butterfly a seed to a tree no one
else no place else

nonexistence on a different plane

2

alex and mel

hospital waiting room

mel you were asking

alex yes

mel about my

alex i didn't meant to interr

mel i heard you ask because suddenly it's like i can hear everything like a hot day on the beach when you can hear every sound

alex how is she

mel i was shaking so they said come out and calm down i wasn't helping

alex is she

mel you're the social

alex no

mel they said the social worker

alex i wanted to see how she was because the blood

mel the blood

alex because the skin on her arm

mel her arm

alex your daughter's arm

mel they don't know if she'll keep

alex oh

mel this big bump too this swelling on her head pressure

alex yes

mel doctors i couldn't see their faces but i could smell the worry

alex are you how are you

mel ah yeah i've been trying to ring my husband no answer is he checking and going oh no not her

alex some people leave them switched off

mel what

alex or the phone is out of range

mel he has children

alex driving
under a bridge or in a tunnel
you can miss a call or not hear the beep
because of the noise

mel you can't be out of range
distance needs to be negotiated
yes

mel so much noise in my head

alex i can't tell you i can't express

mel they said go to the waiting room wait but
i can smell her and there is this shimmering i keep seeing this shimmering just
before me as if everything else is blurred it just started to happen and I don't
know oh oh oh do you think is this i'm not religious but then who knows do we
know and is her soul

alex what

mel looking for me to say goodbye
can you believe in souls and not in god
is that possible

alex no no

alex i've heard this is a good hospital

mel is it

alex they know stuff medical experts

mel where did you hear that

alex my sister said yes her no well you don't want to hear your daughter is i'm sure
she is in safe hands

mel oh

alex safe

mel i don't know what to

alex what

mel it's like i'm falling through the earth floating down to the centre of the earth

alex yes

mel it's hot getting hotter all the time everything flaming nothing escapes
i'm falling through and can't catch hold of anything because if i did i'd burn

alex can i do you want water something cool to drink

mel this might sound strange because the thing is i'm so so sleepy that can't be
can it that in the face of danger all i want is is sleep

alex a coffee

mel her arm where her arm

alex what

mel you held her arm in the theatre

alex the blood was it was red red so red and

mel the policeman wasn't

alex what

mel not rude no very cordial but his face red as if he was angry underneath but on top

alex they have a manner police some police

mel could it not wait until
oh are you
oh no not police no no uniform
or plain-clothed

alex i'm not pol

mel he asked me how come your daughter is on the street
i don't know why
he says she's only four years old
yes i know her age she was in the house playing quietly and I was
resting her brother jack was with her

alex this was an (accident)

mel did he get confused

alex what

alex me yes a nurse was at the scene she lives in your street chance she was home she took charge when you couldn't be found

mel

alex everyone was concerned i said i work near the hospital and on my way back i'll go in check if she is if hanny is okay and i was only going to the front desk and then they sent me to the nurses station i only came because the blood and her arm you know i i i held her skin together on the road

mel oh thank you

alex no because

mel you could have phoned

alex oh

mel so the extra effort

alex i could have phoned why didn't i phone

mel

alex i have to go but i do hope you'll be

mel when i came out of the house the way people eyes

alex no they were everyone was

mel judging

alex no no not judging

mel once upon a time the neighbours were neighbours but my husband filled them with terror

alex what sorry terror

mel he's a brilliant liar

alex is

mel he casts spells on the neighbours weaves stories and so the monster looks like me and he says will you watch her like i'm incapable pathetic what

alex okay

mel people despise weakness don't they

alex not all

mel despise it but don't recognise it in themselves

alex possibly

mel despise it because they fear it in themselves

alex oh

mel despising is a virus that spreads mouth to mouth drifts like a unseen assassin through the air

alex don't you shouldn't worry

mel word virus can't be seen by light microscopy and only able to multiply in living cells of the host

alex okay

mel i love him of course

alex what

mel my husband

alex yes

mel and we get on so well

alex sorry

mel got i'm not sure if it's get on or got

alex

mel he's been staying with friends at a friend's but i'm not to know where because i might ruin his new story as if you can discard one and start another without leaving behind a trace until recently it was all one blood us mixing as one growing strong healthy blood

us four a tribe on our own a moat around us invisible shields one blood
there to face darkness and futility there to face disaster and past debts
there together to watch for cold moons threats from human animals always
warmed by (love)

and so can i be sure about this new need for adventure
because it happened once before more than once if i'm honest
it muddies and then it clears
but this now this
how will we cope with this hanny should not have
happened

alex i

mel i am too something too not something if you know what i mean it is all my
because i don't handle things in a way that that that

i thought i was a good mother but

alex you no mustn't

mel there are things he and i know about each other that nobody else can know secret
things things we don't tell anyone and how can that if we are not together how
can that all of those secret things about us about the two of us that are sitting there
between us what happens to all that fizz fizz i don't know why fiiiiiiiizzzzzz all
this is fizz spewing spewing sorry i don't even who are you

alex yes

mel yes

alex i

mel where is he alex i am

alex yes

mel at important times we are two far away planets
he is the father of my children
but in public one thing in private

alex i don't understand

mel no well you couldn't

alex i'm sorry i

mel you look too

alex too

mel you can tell people who have been well-loved as a child do you notice that you can see it in their eyes

alex can you

mel you were well-loved am i right

alex ah

mel loved through your childhood

alex yes

mel that's a gift your parents gave you something precious you would have glowed anyway each child does in their own way but a parent has it in their power to give something that can change futures not a tangible fixed thing no rules about how it comes packaged but it it is more precious than gold more precious than health i think yes more precious than health not life but you can get through most things if you are loved as a child

that gift is what i want to give my children

alex that's a

mel i want us both to give them that

alex yes

mel i am a i am a good mother

alex of course

mel not one who works and doesn't care i have to work but i'm with the children every other minute

alex i'm sure you're a very good mother

mel oh no it's happening again her smell and there can can can you see that shimmering

alex no where no

mel there

alex no nothing

mel oh oh gone gone

alex just dust just fine dust in the light

mel it's all my i can only blame myself
but see the front door was locked i made sure of that but jack jack is houdini
i should have i wasn't thinking straight but i locked it
i did lock it i

alex i'm sure you

mel i said stay playing with hanny jack is seven old enough to know better isn't he
isn't he old enough to do what i ask at least that
not outside i said
i lay down
when i told that to the policeman he said asleep in the day but but the
way he said it ha ha gotcha

alex yes

mel if we wrote everything down the world would be different

alex oh

mel it's not just language it's tone or sound or the way a hand moves
like now you probably think i've got a nutter here

alex no

mel she's a nutter

alex no no

mel just a bit

alex not just a bit because you have reason

mel so just a bit

alex maybe just a bit but

mel it's okay
it's good to be honest
you seem honest
i'm rambling to stop myself from thinking of things that i don't think i can
stomach
sometimes i just have to keep talking because the silence is too noisy i want to
cover the noisy silence

alex okay

when the neighbours couldn't wake you everyone thought just for a moment
that something serious had happened to *you*

mel happened to me

alex there was confusion not judgment your neighbours were concerned for
you

mel

alex i should go would you like me to before i go get you coffee tea

mel all i can worry about is hanny i spoke too much

alex no i (must go)

mel if i could pray or

alex yes

mel can i ask you something

alex go ahead

mel you'll tell me the truth

alex i'll try to

mel why wouldn't you

alex no i will ask

mel when i came out onto the road how did i look

alex how did you

mel yes

alex dazed

mel dazed

alex scared

mel i don't really i can't it's like i can't remember

alex you can't remember

mel a mist around events

alex oh

mel no memory

alex because

mel please don't tell anyone

alex no

mel promise

alex

mel hits at her temple unnaturally hard she may bang her head against a wall

alex no don't don't do that shock you must be in shock

mel promise myself that is what i promise

alex i won't tell of course i won't tell it's shock you have no need
no need of i promise not to tell
is that what you want don't please don't
it is just pain and worry for her
she will be okay
i'll get a nurse

mel no no no no no no no no they are all judge and jury and a pain in the arse with
their efficiency and whispers about and tone oh yes the tone

alex ssh ssh no one is judge and jury not at a time like this

mel they blame me the nurses the way they looked at me when i came in
like they knew as if someone had phoned ahead

alex but they couldn't know know what think practically

mel i keep wanting to shout at them all i did was have a rest
two kids they run and run

mel starts to shake

alex ssh ssh you can't be it's obvious you can't be alone
can i call someone

mel my brother i've spoken to my brother he has jack i've left messages for
dominic but where is he
i only want to think of hanny
but everything is swirling what if what if if only if only

alex ssh we'll just think good thoughts we don't know what is going on with hanny
they are finding out the doctors and nurses experts are doing all they can
to make her well so we'll wait and see

mel you're a kind person i can see that feel that

alex i'm not no

mel do you have kids

alex no my sister she has four kids

mel four

alex it's okay hanny

mel hanny

alex is in good hands try not to think about what might happen
not yet hold your metal

mel hold my metal

alex hold your metal my sister says that all the time her expression

mel are you close

alex not really kind of could be closer

mel i had a sister

alex you don't anymore

mel i never thought someone could die from asthma

alex she died that's oh that's not good you were close

mel i could tell her anything and everything she didn't judge never
why are you looking at me that way

alex no not at you not
i was thinking how easily things get messed up
and confused and in a moment everything slips
and it's like you are in another world
you've lost your sister and now this

mel when i stepped onto the road i stopped breathing and i only breathed when i saw
she was alive

alex yes

mel i couldn't ask the police i was ashamed to ask about

alex what

mel you saw

alex i had just been to the corner shop

mel the paramedics said she was calling for me

alex she called for you

mel i could hear her in my dream
i remember now hearing her call me

alex when i saw her there lying on the road she looked as if she was resting
and that was and then she started talking mum she said i want to go inside to
mum we ran to her another woman with me your neighbour shelley shelley
says oh she's talking that's a good sign shelley spoke to jack your son jack
was just standing there still he was so still shelley ran to get you pete with me
he called the ambulance all happening so fast i knelt on the road next to hanny i
saw she had a terrible cut on her leg but she looked fine apart from that then

she moved she was trying to get up and i saw her arm the car had bumped her along i took hold of her arm and oh my god and i had to pull the skin from each side across the bone pinch it together to stop the bleeding

mel thank you

alex no no just to stop the bleeding no

mel thank you

alex a car stopped and this man and woman got out the man was he had some medical knowledge he wanted to stay and the woman wanted him to go i had this sense that they were they frightened of something police i think statements he spoke with an accent french or but they stayed and this man gestured for someone to get a blanket and there were more people around and another of your neighbours six foot very tall man he ran and came back with a blanket and a pillow shelly came back came back and that was terrible because she thought you had she couldn't wake you she thought something was wrong because the bedroom door was locked and she had banged on it

mel it jams

alex she banged on the door

mel with the weather hot and cold the timber swells jams

alex she was desperate because jack he thought you were you were dead

mel no no he why

alex we were waiting for the ambulance it wasn't a long time but it seemed forever shelly and some other women they climbed the side fence to see through the bedroom window to see if you were all right you were lying on the bed at first shelly said they couldn't see you breathing then you breathed shelly called out she's alive and it was passed on back to the road she's alive she's alive shelly knocked and knocked on the window yelling out trying to wake you but they couldn't

a firetruck arrived and stopped all the traffic no cars going either way there were more people that came and stood around i was holding hanny her arm i was pinching her skin together the man with the medical knowledge was checking her body for anything broken jack was not crying he said mum took pills

mel no no pills oh just a sleeping pill a stupid health food shop sleeping pill

alex the man said no bones broken but don't move till the ambulance gets here and that's when the nurse came she walked through the crowd because now there was quite a crowd and she called out the nurse called out i'm a nurse and everyone parted for her she's a big woman

mel i don't know any nurse

alex jeanine she needed help to get down on her knees but it was like she had so much strength jeanine it was like she needed her weight like it was armour i had been trembling but i felt now that jeanine was there that it would all be all right the man stood he said no broken bones and he left jeanine called for a bandage we hadn't done that because i don't know why in the panic no one thought and she said to hanny don't move darling don't move someone ran for a bandage

jeanine said pinch that skin tighter if you can people i heard them talking about you yes i remember but they were only concerned that you were okay someone another man said he'd break the door down

mel i don't remember the door only someone shaking me

alex jeanine bandaged hanny's arm hanny didn't flinch jeanine has that wonderful confidence that says to everyone oh yes wounds can heal this will all mend language yes you are right because now i think about it so much was just in the tone of how she said whatever she said she exuded confidence and that confidence in a time when everyone was in need of it that was something really something

she told me to keep talking to hanny i told hanny a story the only story i could remember of the mouse who drank too much

mel the driver alex and
drinking

alex oh they did a breathalyser

mel because you are only meant to alex when the police got there
go slow they did a breathalyser they
but they speed along

alex there was no speeding

mel and drink drivers from the pub

alex it was an acc

mel and

alex and i

mel i don't know jeanine

alex even more people gathered around you'd think that would be awful all these people but it wasn't not awful it was protective like they were willing hanny to be okay people kept murmuring she'll be okay she'll be okay just this murmuring i've never experienced anything like it like they were chanting her to wellness they wanted only for her to be well

mel oh

alex i don't think people are deep down they're not selfish not in a crisis

the ambulance arrived and someone had your door was jammed and they'd pushed it open and they were bringing you out

mel people do spit spit venom in a crisis whenever

alex i think no everyone was focused on hanny i wouldn't have thought this before i've never felt this sense of i can't think of the word wonderful like a chorus

mel hanny is always she is sunny sunshine like a little drifty bit of something in the air that is her oh oh oh

alex yes

mel i can smell her again as if she was here but i can't see there's no shimmering

alex don't this is you can't dream this or not dream this is you can only wait and see you can't predict what will happen

mel overwhelming

alex breathe

mel sorry

alex breathe

mel yes

alex and

mel yes

alex

mel

alex

mel

mel yesterday i went to the shop it was raining and grey and and as i came back the rain stopped for a few seconds the clouds parted this brilliant sun shone through lit up the street so that everything gleamed there were pools of water on the road the light hit the pools and they shone orange and red and yellow this glimmering light

and then a cloud covered the sun it was dark again grey then greyer in minutes it was night rain began to fall it had only been a few seconds of this this wondrous light

when i came inside the news was full of utter horror and it just felt like we we are so deeply fucked up completely fucked up so that all a person has is is family but when that gets messed up completely messed up then it's like there's

alex yes

mel like there are no

alex pools of light

mel no pools of light

alex

mel

alex

mel i think a hot drink would be

alex yes coffee real coffee

mel coffee

alex real coffee do they have that in hospitals i doubt it i'll get it and don't think about don't worry just

mel *(smiles)* breathe

enter dominic

mel dom

she goes to him he puts his arms around her

dom i went straight up there they said you were here

mel hanny

dom i know

they want you to fill out some forms

mel this is this is

alex alex

dom yes

alex

dom

mel

alex i

i

i was the driver

3

alex a bold strip of light

we both screamed howled shock a child a child
hair like spraying water and for a second her face then gone
brakes screeching out on the road ran to the front no body oh my god
i've run over run over oh my god we scramble to the back of the car the exhaust
no body oh oh oh oh look under the car no no like a riddle where is she pete
screaming here here here her arm is under the wheel back it up back it the fuck
up and i jump in back it up out again and she is on the road lying there so so
quietly so so sweetly animal sounds from my mouth pull yourself together alex
pull your shit together this is not a time for not the time i knelt down next to
hanny road hot worried about that but the man said don't move her pete
rang an ambulance then he rang dominic then he rang the police pete couldn't he
faints when he sees blood the client was with us he was in shock standing to the
side jack came up to me like a lost lamb stood there not a word for ages other
people came quickly helping and i felt because could i have done was i doing
everything i could (when driving) my lungs felt burnt

i was on the road and holding her skin skin like a piece of cling wrap
so fine holding pinching it together and watching her hanny's face and
feeling all the people around me murmuring it was like going deeper
and deeper into a place beyond beyond words

who would believe that out of something so terrible there could also be this this
other something

4

alex and dominic

hospital waiting room

dom she ran onto the—

alex i was driving twenty-five k's no more

dom yes

alex i really

dom this is so so

alex she was hidden by the cars i was driving slowly because i'd just pulled out from the curb in front of the corner shop pete was still strapping himself in and she ran out from behind a car straight onto the road

dom the policeman yes he said yes that is what he said i know

alex i couldn't nothing i could i want you to know that witnesses confirmed

dom right

alex she didn't look just ran straight out such a tiny thing

dom my little yes

they both stare into the distance

dom they were meant to be at a party

alex oh

dom if she just for once did what she said she was doing

alex

dom why were they on the road

alex it was a blind spot i didn't couldn't see there was a car parked on the left blocking the view of the pavement any view and then suddenly there was in front of me this no time to stop

dom they're not allowed on the road they know that jack knows that

alex yes

dom i've told mel never to leave them alone like that she can call me anytime

alex i'd just pulled out saw jack on the road

dom on the road

alex he was standing in the middle of the road i think he was calling to hanny mel was upset when she came out from the house she shouted at jack and i think he is frightened he'll get into trouble

dom he would be because he shouldn't be on the road

alex but kids on the road don't please don't blame him i slowed down even more watching to see what he would do

dom yes

alex i was watching jack cars coming the other way i was driving

dom yes i know you drive the other day when you yes i know how you drive

alex so then and then

she must have been down on the curb because i didn't see her on the footpath or because she was so small i don't know a blind spot and then an

i just wanted no one could reach you and mel seemed pete
and i were in a taxi going back to close up the office not to work who
could work i said drop me off and i'll check how she is

dom they keep saying wait wait

alex her arm

dom it's not her arm i'm worried

alex what

dom her life

alex her life

dom she's my

the policeman said last month a boy was knocked down right in front of the station he looked fine no visible marks two days later the boy was dead

alex they think

i'm (so sorry)

are you (okay)

dom yes

alex good

dom thank you

alex no god no i feel

i should go

dom yes

alex she wanted coffee mel i said i'd get

dom you talked to her why were you

alex she heard me asking at the desk she started talking and she she needed someone to talk to

dom fuck

alex yes

dom i don't this is very very fucked up

alex it is i know very very fucked up

dom how did this

alex i don't fuck i don't know fuck fuck fuck

dom don't you

alex no

dom you mustn't
not your fault
she is the mother and meant to be fuck
fuck meant to be watching guarding

alex no
i feel

alex the neighbours all your neighbours so nice one woman came up and she said as if she knew how i was she said i saw her run out straight out it was chance chance so you're not this is an accident this you mustn't worry but but i do i do

dom i'm going ahead with it you can set it all in motion

alex don't don't think about that now

alex i don't know but when you described her to me the other
dom what
alex and it is hard with two young kids at that age they're so
dom oh she's good mel is even at a time like this she is so good at getting
people to see things her way
alex it's between you two it's just i can empath
dom what did she say exactly alex what I didn't no it
don't trust anything she says is this situation and seeing her so
dom what
alex i mean maybe everyone in a relationship it gets warped doesn't it
dom why didn't she call me
alex she said she did
dom pete did why not her
alex she said she did call
dominic checks his mobile
dom no nothing
alex are you sure
dom she's always been a storyteller
alex oh
dom sorry sorry
alex no dom to
i i was the driver fuck
alex fuck
dom shit

dom why is this happening

alex i want to die i never i mean i really want to die god i hope hanny is

dom fuck

alex we were taking a client to see a house nearby he didn't like it and i said let's just go and look at the outside of yours pete was with me but it was so off the cuff why today pete was going to drive and then i said i would but a different driver a few more seconds at the shop

dom yes fuck yes

alex it's so random

i just want hanny to be (okay)

dom

alex

dom i shouldn't be so volatile

alex no no

dom we're all worried

alex yes

dom but i have to think of the kids
don't i
that would be the responsible thing irresponsible not to
considering

alex i feel like it's wrong for me to be here and this is all so complex and strange

dom did she say something to you

alex what

dom what did you talk about

alex nothing just how

dom did she say she was sleeping or what did she say

alex she said resting

dom because i can never trust her with them again pills she takes pills

alex she didn't not specifically say about she said health shop sleeping pills

dom what

alex health shop dom mel hates health food shops

alex she hates does anyone hate health food shops

dom hates the smell of them

alex don't think about any of this now it's not the time

dom ever since jack was born all she has said day in day out is i'm tired it's her
mantra my mother had five kids and i've never once heard her say i'm tired
never once has she blamed her kids for how her life has been she's not perfect
but her kids are everything whereas mel

alex

dom

alex i tried to tell her i was

dom

alex it's natural she should blame me

i didn't mean to shock her that way

dom she'll be okay don't worry about mel

alex i should go

dom i'll call you tomorrow

alex tomorrow

dom tomorrow

alex don't you think it will be that will be too soon

dom no i don't no

alex i know you've said you can go ahead without her but

dom it's in my name
i had it before we were even together

alex but you want to get her a place right

dom we both need a home for the kids
i'll set her up

alex so why not tell her

dom she'll fight it i haven't the energy she'll say it's their home and with all the
disruption she'll use this this will be perfect for her to delay and delay and
cut off all possibility of another way

we'll be grounded never able to take off
and she and i we'll keep going on with things the way they are

but that's not a way for us to live

alex i have to think this way i don't like thinking this way but i have to this is
not me i'm trying to sort out what is best for the kids i need to act fast you don't
know me! she's a master at manipulation don't try and because the other day
when we had coffee you were so that was sweet but don't now try and sway me
because it's hard enough for me to stay firm as it is

alex okay yes i'm sorry i shouldn't get involved i've got to
this is such a terrible

dom if i leave my kids with her she'll kill them

alex you don't mean

dom it keeps going through my

alex really i mean really

dom she's unstable

alex do you really think no she's not that no dom no surely not

dom she says to me you can't visit on saturday because

and there is some reason
okay i say thursday
she says you can't take them thursday because
and there is always a reason
and then she complains i don't take them enough

alex you need to set up regular days non negotiable

dom she has a paranoid drugged-filled vision of the world

alex

dom i didn't tell everything the other day not her history she has a history
fact today she wasn't having a rest fact today she popped too many pills
fact today she locked her door so her children our children couldn't get to her

alex she is adamant jammed

dom the police said it was locked this cop was pissed off pissed off with seeing
kids hurt fourth accident
so called accident he said
fourth this month
and it's parents letting kids

alex but no-one not on purpose

dom mel says don't go out and play on the road but he is a kid a boy he thinks up all
sorts of if its not sword fights with sticks its a play or some game his
mind is active not to be cooped up in a room

alex maybe this was a dark

dom she just wants to live in lala land

alex i see

dom i see

alex please don't this is a mess and maybe she is something mad or something
but don't you think that requires because she is a human being

dom i'm not convinced of that

alex she seemed to have a great deal of love for her hanny for her children

dom but she doesn't know how to look after them

alex and then she lost her sister

dom she told you what

dominic laughs

alex what

dom she lost her sister fifteen years ago

alex oh

dom i lost my dad five years ago do i use that to explain everything that goes wrong in my life and she didn't have a sad childhood by the way her parents loved her

alex

dom

alex there's a secret some secret between you in public one thing in private

dom no

alex she didn't tell me she

dom that's a tactic

alex she wasn't lucid enough to be planning tactics

dom fuck

alex she didn't even know who i was

dom she's a demon

alex i can't believe she can't be that she's just a woman

dom you're putty in her hands

alex you think i don't know people i know people

dom maybe fuck her sister

alex when you first said about the house and selling it and how she is a (monster) i thought yes fair enough and then then today at first i thought this woman is mad self-indulgent and then i thought no lonely she's lonely she needs help but then i thought no she's just just different because she sees things differently she doesn't quite fit

we don't seem to allow that the world doesn't allow difference and then sometimes she seemed helpless that position that helpless position is the worst thing that can happen to someone to be and losing your confidence that happens to women when they have kids

dom where did all this come from

alex no it's my sister had after her first there was this depression and you have to be in that position to really understand

dom no one made mel helpless i didn't make her be that way

alex maybe she is unable

dom not unable
unwilling
no excuses

alex to be what she wants
be and she's trying

alex

dom

alex i should go

dom yes

alex okay

dom okay

alex you understand the situation it's true i don't if she can't look after them and if she is all these things you say because you are the one that has lived it so you would know i just feel as anyone would that this is a terrible day and maybe no decisions should be made today or tomorrow or for some time that's all i've been trying to say

and if anyone should be to blame then

dom no no

alex and and i think you should tell her

dom let me handle this

alex it may not be but the other day when we talked we talked and there was you were very open

dom you were so it was so easy to talk to you and you're quite wise

they smile

alex wise

dom for someone so

alex oh my don't say it

dom what

alex for someone so young

dom you are young

alex not that young younger than you

dom

alex we shifted somewhere else that day

dom yes

alex so i feel i need to say that about the house just that i think you should when you know how hanny is and this is sorted then i think it would be okay to tell her what your plans are

dom alex
i can't

alex yes

alex but

dom not until i've sold the house

alex but

dom if i tell her who knows what it could set off in her

alex but

dom i'm serious

alex really

dom this is for jack and hanny's sake

alex okay

dom their safety

alex oh

dom do you see

alex i yes see

dom go home

alex

dom i'll call you

alex

dom

5

dominic

in pulsing light

dom it was a day of heat after days of summer storms black bruise clouds and water
drops big and hot splashing on the pavement and then the heat searing down
drying the rained on earth
the night before i'd lay on the balcony staring up at the moon that limped
through the sky
had turned everything off my mobile my computer
pulled out the land line
had the ocean in my ear forgetting the argument
the banality of it souring my soul

i wanted to be cleansed

because i was done done with talk

i wanted to dream again

we are born into this world not even able to crawl and yet we can dream

we are our dreams

all i ask is for the space to dream and is laughing such a bad thing

6

dom and mel

hospital waiting room

dom staring out at

mel mm

dom pitch black

mel there's this light see

dom how long more

mel she's going to be fine the nurse

dom what

mel when she comes out they'll take her to recovery and the surgeon will

dom where is the (surgeon)

mel what

dom why is it taking so long

mel nothing we can

dom what makes you so calm

mel stop

dom nurse give you drugs

mel i said stop

dom i don't get it

mel hanny is going to be okay

dom you don't know that

mel the nurse said

dom is the nurse in theatre with her

mel no but

dom the nurse is not the nurse is *not* the one who is performing the operation

mel she wouldn't say if she didn't have some idea

dom yes to keep you calm

mel no

dom just like you're saying it to keep me calm

mel that's not

dom but being calm doesn't mean things aren't going on you should have learnt that lesson by now being calm can mean you don't see the danger coming your way

mel i

dom yes

mel i needed to rest

dom rest

mel rest

dom a rest *calms* me

mel why can't i say you should have been there so i could rest

dom spare me

mel you should have been home looking after your

dom i said i'd take them to the party but you said no as usual no no no the word for you is no

mel

dom and then you didn't go

mel i was

dom tired (*laughs*)
i'm the one working my butt off to pay the

mel i work

dom you call it work

mel i earn and i do the looking

dom you don't do

mel most

dom not all

mel i didn't say all i said most what do you want me to say

dom if you'd asked me to come over i would have you wanted to punish me

mel not punish

dom no

mel no

dom see where that attitude got you got hanny

mel i think you've been punishing me for so long you've been punishing me

dom for

mel for

dom no answer

mel

dom

mel when you said you wanted to go to the party i thought we could both go

dom what

mel i thought that's what you were suggesting

dom oh

mel so when i realised it wasn't
you didn't
i said no i'll go but then

dom then

mel you think you're meant to have some wonderful life every day it has to
be that way but life's not like that it can't be and you blame me

dom only you are depressed all the time so that doesn't

mel you have unrealistic expect

dom i just want to be happy

mel we all want

dom a crime to want to be
some of us make an effort smile

mel i smile

dom when there are people around

mel not just when

dom just us

mel just us

dom then you're sullen

then you're mean

dom when you walk around looking like someone has just died

mel a family is close and tender

dom i try tender you push me away

mel not early in the morning when the kids are your timing is always based around you your needs what

dom you want everything clean and running to schedule

dom but then it's a joke because there's no order the place is a pigsty

mel order you try order with things need to be done

dom no one is happy

dom i'm not going to win

mel it's not about winning

dom you have to have the last word

mel you are just not used to *not* having the last word so you miss

dom see see

mel this is stupid

dom yes

mel why are we

dom stops the worry

mel i wish

dom wish

mel i wish this hadn't happened

dom

dom i know

i know

mel dom

dom yes

mel if she doesn't have the use of her arm that's not the worst thing as long as she's

dom oh god which arm i don't know which left or right mel alive

mel left

dom oh

mel she's alive

dom yes yes

she'll have to do one arm things like one arm skiing

(they smile)

mel not the worst

dom

mel

dom what's out there

mel night

dom night

mel and a single light

dom mm

mel less noise at night less confusion just the buzz of the hospital
mending people healing people

dom what
mel the driver
dom gone
mel why did she come
dom the police said it was unwise
mel police
dom until the facts are known
mel facts
dom of the case
mel we're a case
dom everything needs to be investigated
mel what everything
dom what
mel
dom
mel she said didn't she told you when you two were
dom what
mel nothing
dom no what

okay don't speak
mel she was watching jack on the road
dom yes
mel you said she said

dom yes

mel so maybe

dom what

mel have you thought that

dom thought

mel maybe she wasn't watching in front of her

dom when you do that i always feel like a balloon with the air let out

mel dom

dom like you are going to say something that means something and then you don't

mel i'm just saying

dom the police said witnesses saw no chance because hanny ran straight out

mel oh

dom it's always someone else's fault

mel no

dom why were they on the road mel

mel okay

dom can't blame the driver

mel hanny is going to be okay dom our daughter is going to be okay

i trust the nurse

let's leave off blaming each other

dom why did you wait so long to call me

mel your mobile was off

dom no message

mel yes

dom no

mel it was

dom no message

mel let me see

dom don't trust me

mel let me see

he gives her his mobile

dom no message

mel i don't know i rang i did i rang and left a

dom okay mel you rang

mel you could have deleted it

dom why would i do that

mel to send me mad

dom send

mel

dom

dom it just keeps coming back to me how quickly

how long will she

mel i don't know

dom so we wait

mel yes

how have things how is it on your own

dom okay

mel are you going to tell me where you've been staying or is it still a secret

dom at max's

mel i rang max i rang your mother

dom there till he gets back from japan

mel so your mother knew

dom yes

mel you told your mother but not

dom you can get me on the phone when you need to

mel no i

dom yes you

mel you are a

dom what

mel mystery

dom what

mel mystery to me now

dom i think i should take jack tonight

mel what

dom one of us needs to be with him

mel i'll be

dom i want to be

mel it'll be better if it's not a strange place

dom okay we'll both go back to the house

mel dom

dom i need to be there for

mel you can't just

dom this is not about us

mel you can't just come and go without you can't just decide

dom let's not argue

mel let's not

dom you need me there

mel see this is the problem i have no real say in anything and do you not remember yelling at me like i was the devil incarnate

dom because you're paranoid

mel you are always (saying) no no i'm not para i worry about the kids

dom i'm happy for us to both stay at the house that or jack with me

mel why are you being like this now here

dom you said you need help i'll help i'll take jack move back in with mum she can look after him when i'm at work or when i need to come to the hospital to see hanny

mel no i don't want your mother you know what she is like with me no
dom

dom i offer solutions you don't like them

mel no reasonable solutions

dom you use the kids against me

mel no

dom you do

mel do i

dom yes

mel i don't mean to it's just they are with me more

dom you keep saying it's too much but then you don't like me taking them

mel i like you taking them i hate you feeding them shit and them coming home all overtired and grumpy and high on sugar

dom and when we go to my mother's you are like

mel because she tells them things about me she why can't she tell them children's stories or something but they come home with stories about me

dom and they are always hungry you don't feed them enough

mel i give them vegetables proper food not chips and ice-cream

dom they tell me they're hungry

mel come on

dom and it's not a crime to have ice-cream

mel you always undermine me with them

dom what

mel i tell them not to do something you tell them it's okay to do it you can't do that

dom you're not reasonable they need a little fun

mel that's why they don't do what i say

my mother used to lock us in a room when we were kids

dom what

mel the doctor ordered her to do it told her lock the door and go have a rest

dom lock you in

mel we were fine we played

dom but you locked yourself in mel can't you see the difference

mel no i just they were playing

dom we can't risk rests pills

mel i don't take those any more

dom maybe not all the time but now and then you pop one or two so in your mind it doesn't even count that's what you tell yourself

mel just a health shop herb natural

dom opium is natural

mel that's all

dom okay

mel that's it

dom okay

mel that's true

dom

mel

dom

mel this is awful

dom fucked

mel she's in danger and we keep fighting

dom fucked

mel let's just not not

dom okay

mel okay

dom

mel

dom okay

mel

dom

mel remember when we took the kids bushwalking

dom huh

mel it was like they were bursting out of their own skins they had somewhere for their energy to go

dom so we go for more bushwalks and that (solves it all)

mel and we'd always come onto the heathland and the wind would hit us but it was so it always smelt clean or it didn't smell of ash and smut and petrol fumes

that's what we need for hanny she's tiny like my sister and she coughs all the time and we need to go more often to places with clean

dom we

mel remember we saw that echidna and you spent ages explaining to them how

echidnas can't see how they sniff for food instead and how they freeze up and stay still whenever they get frightened hoping no one will notice them

i feel like there is this one world here and now but close by it's like there is another there's an invisible screen somewhere and if we pull it apart then we can step into this other world where all of this didn't happen

do you know what i
do you get what i

dom yes i get what you

mel i'm not mad and i love you

dom

mel

dom maybe there is somewhere we can

mel i feel

dom find a place with clean air mel frightened

mel we

dom we could sell up and buy further out

mel you said we

dom the kids need a place to run around we need

mel we

dom yes because

mel because

dom we're on a path and our next step decides it all

mel maybe when we've got through this we can

dom frightened

mel what

dom you said you feel frightened

mel did i

dom yes

mel i've stopped living stopped breathing stopped seeing stopped
remembering stopped understanding stopped no haven't stopped loving
we need to breathe

dom you haven't answered

mel what

dom do i move back in or take jack with me until hanny comes home you choose

mel what happens then

dom when hanny

mel can we be honest with each other really honest

dom we can think about clean air

mel are you saying

alex comes in with two coffees

alex sorry it took so long i'm going now i was before but then i walked past the
italian restaurant and i'd promised you coffee and so i went to get it and i'll put
it here and i'll be yes have you heard something or is it just me being here

dom we haven't heard anything

mel yes we we have

alex what

mel the nurse says that it's all going well that hanny is going to be well

alex that is i am so relieved that is

mel before
when I found out you were alex no
i'm sorry

alex oh no no don't be

mel and we're thinking dom and i we might move out somewhere to the country
and maybe
what is it

alex no

mel i can see it on your face

alex nothing

mel tell me

alex i have to go but i hope all goes well for hanny

mel what is it

alex dom please

dom alex

mel dom dom how dom

alex i don't think i can dom this is a mess but it has to come into the open

mel what open

alex dom

dom you should leave alex alex i think
leave now

mel what do you

alex it's not fair

dom not for you to mel what
not involved

alex i am involved dom now is not the

never is this never is there a time
for this but

mel what you both of you

alex no

dom no

alex not what you

dom no

alex i meant about the house

mel how you let me talk tell you all

dom tell you all what

alex i was listening a listener

mel what were you doing in our street alex i was
spying you were spying

dom don't go getting hysterical

mel hysterical this is how people a woman this woman reacts when she finds out
her daughter has been run over by the the the sick sick person
do the police know

alex no it's not

dom the police are more interested in you

mel what

dom than alex and

alex it's not there is no alex and mel what

dom your negligence

alex this won't help the

dom if we are looking to blame mel you told him

alex no i didn't say

mel because sometimes it's just over-tired a blanking

alex i didn't say

dom say what

mel nothing

dom say unfit or unable or

mel both of you

dom if we're being honest

mel honest

dom can you say honestly

mel yes

dom mel i want the kids safe

alex no

dom what

mel why were you

alex tell her dom

dom you took too many pills and you were going to leave them on their own and who knows what could have happened you locked your door and left our children unattended
what did you take mel for fuck's sake admit it how many what exactly

mel (to alex) you you you

alex i didn't tell because i didn't know you didn't tell me you were vague so what could i

dom it's not going to look good when i tell them about what happened before about the time before about all the nervous or whatever you want to call it after jessie

mel no don't say her name don't use her name for

dom i will say it i will use it

mel not jessie please i can't not today

mel lashes out at dom

mel you don't get to bring her back whenever you want to use it against

dom i'm not bringing her back nothing can bring her back

dom pushes back they struggle it's physical

dom but i've had enough of this this nonsense

mel your your

alex help can someone help

alex tries to stop them fighting

alex no not this not this

*mel hits out at alex dom attempts to stop her they all get off balance
unseemly*

alex your daughter is stop stop this

alex falls they stop

eye each other

*dom walks a little way away walks back bends over and goes to scream
doesn't*

all we hear is breathing for some time

dom i want to i'm going to sell the house

mel what

dom we need to separate properly

mel we are separ

dom sell the house divide assets

mel why were you in our street

alex i am going now

alex starts to leave

mel if we're being honest

alex stops

alex pete my business partner pete and i were taking a client to look at a house that we have up for sale and then we decided to show him the outside of your place i wanted him to see the lake view

mel you're a

alex real estate

mel real estate

alex we walked around the front to the foreshore took in the view and the client said yes to next week to coming to a viewing next week and then we all got in the car

this is an awful situation this is a terrible situation and given the circumstances i think pete will agree with me we should not be involved with selling your house and if you both decide to sell some other agent will gladly

dom it's in my name

mel it's our home

dom house not home

mel was our home

dom not anymore

mel not since you left

dom before that

mel the children's our children's home

dom (to alex) see see

mel the family home

dom it's a mortuary

mel we all feel safe there

dom but you are not all safe there

are you

are you

if we're being honest

mel

dom

alex goes to leave

mel it's me he blames but i bet i bet
(to dom) yes you've yes haven't you you've

dom no

mel you've borrowed against it

dom over that is way over

mel is it

dom don't twist

mel me twist

dom grab at

mel you've lost money again

dom not why i'm selling

mel did he tell you about that about what he does mr investor mr boom and bust

alex i wouldn't that doesn't concern

mel put money actually my money into schemes and lose it all lose it all and then how dare you then say your house we our home did he tell you about what

alex what

mel what did he tell you

who are you

who the fuck are you

alex i'm someone who is good at my job
i knew my client would love your house yours would be the one he'd want
so i took him to see the outside i explained that the house wasn't even on the
market yet he'd be the first in i explained that the owner wanted a quick sale

i'd seen the house i'd seen it some weeks back

i'd been taking dom to see different properties

he'd briefed me he was separating from his wife he was looking to buy two
places a suburb away from each other both needed rooms for the kids and a
garden to play in both needed lots of light and a good kitchen i thought he
was amazing still looking after his family even as he was splitting up from his
wife

i had found a couple of places that interested him but i could tell i hadn't found
the place every client dreams their future and my job is to understand what that
dream is and help make it happen

pete calls me the dream-maker cos i'm good at finding exactly what my clients
want

dom wanted me to do a valuation of his place of your place i went there one

wednesday saw the photos on the wall i saw the kids bedrooms

i saw the comfortable solidness of it all the curtains thick and protective

i saw the colours deep reds and browns

when we went in the first thing he did was open all the windows pull back all the
curtains all the doors were shut but he opened them all up

after that i knew what to look for

the next week i took him to see a place a street back from the ocean but from the
deck you could see the horizon windows everywhere the house was a little
ramshackle but big and open and easy to renovate
dom was ecstatic
after we went for coffee that's when he told me about what had happened
between you two
you were a character in a story to me
he told me how your first child how jessie had died and after how you had fallen
ill
and they gave you these pills that made you numb numb to everything but you
and dom went on and had another baby and then later another and for a while
you were a tribe a family but dom said you were never happy

something was always wrong

that's it that's what he told me

none of us are perfect we are all these opposite energies
we all search for for pools of light but we can't ever be sure we'll
find them

alex leaves

mel

dom

mel

dom

mel you took her into our home

dom i wanted to sell and then set you up i wasn't going to *not* set you up

mel my say

dom i didn't want to argue

mel not the

dom no

mel completely not the point

dom no

mel i feel like my all those private

dom i

mel like i'm naked in front of

dom yes

mel no choice and naked

dom i

mel in front of of her

dom i

mel and you told her about

dom it just happened

mel oh

dom not planned it was i didn't mean to tell her but it just came out

mel this is oh god

dom i

mel and before when you said to me before about clean air

dom sometimes i think we can go back and find what we had
it's not like it's only you
sometimes i want to go find what we had and reignite it but then then i realise
no it's all ash nothing left to reignite

mel i didn't think we were here yet separation didn't mean the end just
but we're here aren't we

dom yes

mel yes

dom

mel

dom i'll help you find your place

mel i'll find my own place

dom yes

mel yes

dom so what do we do now

mel hanny is our priority

dom yes

mel we must think only of

dom hanny

mel and later

dom our shit

mel our shit

dom so

mel we wait to hear how she is

dom i want the kids safe

mel they are safe

dom today was not safe

mel

dom

mel hanny was playing she was telling a story a mummy and daddy story

to her teddy bear and jack was lying there listening hanny was being me
will you go to bed will you go to bed children and the children went to bed
then mummy was saying come on daddy
and daddy was saying in an angry voice hanny was doing this angry voice of
daddy saying i hate you i hate this i hate everything about this family and she kept
repeating it i hate you i hate this and i just i got overwhelmed i couldn't go to
the party i said jack please look after hanny and i went into the bedroom and i
took it was one herb pill two maybe and i cried so hard and so long and so
deep and i didn't want them to come in and see me in that state so i locked the
door my face was all blown up and red and my eyes like puffy pins
i fell asleep just exhausted just overwhelmed it just it happened i wasn't
thinking straight if we have our home then it's still our home but if that goes

dom i'm it's not home

mel no

dom no

mel come early in the morning if you want to drop jack at school have breakfast
with us if you want but leave the night routine the same have dinner with us
too but you can't stay i'm sorry but no and leave it like that until hanny is
well

dom and then

mel and then we sell

dom i didn't mean this to

mel please done done later we can

the nurse said the surgeon would come to us as soon as the operation they would
take hanny to recovery and the surgeon would come to see us

dom shortly

mel i don't know why it is taking so

dom maybe hanny is already in recovery

mel yes

dom we could sit by her bed

mel we should ask

dom yes

they go to leave but stop

mel

dom

mel you were so pleased when she was born
you were so pleased she looked like you

dom look in the mirror and there i am

mel my hair

dom yes

mel the way they look at the world how new everything is for them

dom yes

mel living that newness that's what you want isn't it
that way of seeing

dom childish

mel innocence freshness newness not bearing the weight of other thoughts
presence absolute presence i do get that part of it

dom

mel we can never go back and try again it's gone

dom i guess

mel this is it's so clear this is

dom yes sorry

mel i didn't see it coming i mean you were still wanting me and

dom no well i'm good at

mel hiding

dom yes hiding

mel we both i guess

dom we both

mel we are both good at that

mel we need to do something

dom what something

mel i feel like we have to

dom to

mel decide what our something is
not leave it completely

dom maybe we don't have to decide

mel i feel like we do

dom we should go to her

mel i need to know about jack and hanny

dom what do you

mel i mean we are together whenever it's to do for them we still work together
not one parent battling the other not undermining because it
changes it for them it changes everything they do in life how they see
i want us to give them to offer them a way of seeing that is clear

dom we don't have to need to decide more than

mel even that won't be easy

dom no

mel but we we both agree

dom yes

mel yes

dom it's not much

mel it's a lot actually

dom is it

mel yes it is

they exit

the end