Hurt

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Recommended Citation
McKinnon, Catherine, "Hurt" (2012). Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts - Papers. 248.

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Hurt

Abstract

Abstract 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 mean 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


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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.

This creative work is available at Research Online: [https://ro.uow.edu.au/lhapapers/248](https://ro.uow.edu.au/lhapapers/248)
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

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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
he has children

you can’t be out of range

distance needs to be negotiated

you can miss a call or not hear the beep

because of the noise

so much noise in my head

i can’t tell you i can’t express

they said go 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

what

looking for me to say goodbye

can you believe in souls and not in god

is that possible

i’ve heard this is a good hospital

is it

they know stuff medical experts

where did you hear that

my sister said yes her no well you don’t want to hear your daughter is i’m sure

she is in safe hands

oh

safe

i don’t know what to

what

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

yes
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

can i do you want water something cool to drink

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

a coffee

her arm where her arm

what

you held her arm in the theatre

the blood was it was red red so red and

the policeman wasn’t

what

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

they have a manner police some police

could it not wait until

oh are you

oh no not police no no uniform

or plain-clothed

i’m not pol

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

this was an (accident)

did he get confused

what
mel who was the mother and who was the driver

alex oh yes mel he treated me like i was the driver as if it was my fault

alex oh

mel hanny

alex yes

mel her name

alex yes

mel she is small for her age why was she was on the road i say don’t go on the road i say the road is a fire-breathing dragon i say the road is a mechanical monster that gobbles and groans oh god why was she on the road

alex kids are unpredictable

mel i’m trying to because there’s spaces in our house in all houses silent spaces where things brood quietly brood and if you stand and listen because you have to be still and listen its only then you understand about the hurts those small hurts that the people of the house keep sorry i shouldn’t be

alex it’s hard to be calm i know but mel so much troubling hereabouts and it’s

mel and i’m with the children the most out of the two me most i work too so there is a bone weariness a mind fatigue like when you trash something in the computer and it’s gone

alex kids can

mel everything is spinning spinning i can’t find stillness you saw her

alex i wanted to to be sure she was okay it all happened so fast and after the statements were taken one of your neighbours offered tea to the nurse and

mel nurse
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 staion i only came because the blood and her
arm you know 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 fiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii 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
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

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

happened to me

there was confusion not judgment your neighbours were concerned for you

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

all i can worry about is hanny i spoke too much

no i (must go)

if i could pray or

yes

can i ask you something

go ahead

you’ll tell me the truth

i’ll try to

why wouldn’t you

no i will ask

when i came out onto the road how did i look

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

but they couldn’t know know what think practically

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

mel starts to shake

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

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

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

you’re a kind person i can see that feel that

i’m not no

do you have kids

no my sister she has four kids

four

it’s okay hanny

hanny

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

hold my metal

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

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 shelley 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 shelley 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 shelley said they couldn’t see you breathing then you breathed shelley called out she’s alive and it was passed on back to the road she’s alive she’s alive shelley 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 drinking alex and

alex oh they did a breathalyser

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

mel 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 one 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
yesterday I went to the shop. It was raining and grey and as I came back the rain stopped for a few seconds. The clouds parted, and the brilliant sun shone through, lighting 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 wondrous light.

When I came inside, the news was full of utter horror. And it just felt like we are so deeply fucked up. Completely. Completely messed 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...
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

ey 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
**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

alex 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

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

alex


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

alex yes

alex


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

alex


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

alex


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  alex  no
     not your fault
     she is the mother and meant to be fuck
     meant to be watching guarding

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
i have to manage this situation
right
i can’t wait
but she seemed
unfit
not
what was she taking

i’ve got to go ahead and soon if hanny gets thru this i want her and jack with me
everything is in my name so we can

you’re in shock so you should take some time
this is all too fast now

she nearly she may have got my daughter killed
oh god

she takes these pills and then she drinks
no blame accident i feel blame me

drinks i don’t think there was no smell

what did she say
what
she said something
no just
what
she was nothing like i expected
what did you
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
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 f u c k
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)

alex

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 mel  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
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 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 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  yes  alex  i can’t

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 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

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

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 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 mel alive

which left or right

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

  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 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
this is awful

she’s in danger and we keep fighting

let’s just not not

okay

okay

okay

okay

okay

remember when we took the kids bushwalking

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

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

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

we

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 mel frightened with clean air

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
before when I found out you were
i’m sorry

no don’t be

and we’re thinking dom and i we might move out somewhere to the country
and maybe

what is it

no

i can see it on your face

nothing

tell me

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

what is it

dom please

alex

dom

dom dom how dom

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

what open

you should leave alex
leave now

what do you

it’s not fair

not for you to not involved

i am involved

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
spyin   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
before that
the children’s our children’s home
(to alex) see see
the family home
it’s a mortuary
we all feel safe there
but you are not all safe there
are you
are you
if we’re being honest

alex goes to leave

it’s me he blames but i bet i bet
(to dom) yes you’ve yes haven’t you you’ve
no
you’ve borrowed against it
over that is way over
is it
don’t twist
me twist
grab at
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

dom 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
i’ll help you find your place
i’ll find my own place
yes
yes
so what do we do now
hanny is our priority
yes
we must think only of
hanny
and later
our shit
our shit
so
we wait to hear how she is
i want the kids safe
they are safe
today was not safe

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
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