

**Samuel Beckett, Cascando**

a radio play, translated from the French by the author.

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(This script is provided for disability access for the 2021 production of *On the Cusp* by NON:op Open Opera Works and is solely for the purposes of disability access.)

OPENER (dry as dust): It is the month of May . . . for me.

*Pause.*

Yes, that's right.

*Pause.*

I open.

VOICE (low, panting): —story . . . if you could finish it . . .

you could rest . . . you could sleep . . . not before . . .

oh I know . . . the ones I've finished . . . thousands and

one . . . all I ever did . . . in my life . . . with my life

. . . saying to myself . . . finish this one . . . it's the

right one . . . then rest . . . then sleep . . . no more

stories . . . no more words . . . and finished it . . . *and*

*not the right one . . . couldn't rest . . . straight away another . . . to begin . . . to finish . . . saying to myself*

. . . finish this one . . . then rest . . . this time it's the

right one . . . this time you have it . . . and finished it

. . . *and not the right one . . . couldn't rest . . . straight*

*away another . . . but this one . . . it's different . . . I'll*

finish it . . . then rest . . . *it's the right one . . . this*

time I have it . . . I've got it . . . *Woburn . . . I resume*

. . . a long life . . . already . . . say what you like . . . a

few misfortunes . . . that's enough . . . five years later

. . . ten years . . . I don't know . . . *Woburn . . . he's*

changed . . . not enough . . . recognizable . . . in the

shed . . . yet another . . . waiting for night . . . night

to fall . . . to go out . . . go on . . . elsewhere . . . sleep

elsewhere . . . it's slow . . . he lifts his head . . . now

and then . . . his eyes . . . to the window . . . it's darkening

. . . the earth is darkening . . . it's night . . . he gets

up . . . knees first . . . then up . . . on his feet . . . slips  
out . . . *Woburn* . . . same old coat . . . right the sea  
. . . left the hills . . . he has the choice . . . he has  
only—

OPENER (with VOICE): And I close.

*Silence.*

I open the other.

MUSIC . . . . .

OPENER (with MUSIC): And I close.

*Silence.*

I open both.

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —on . . . it's getting on . . . finish it  
. . . don't give up . . . then rest . . . sleep . . . not before  
. . . finish it . . . it's the right one . . . this time you have  
it . . . you've got it . . . it's there . . . somewhere . . .  
you've got him . . . follow him . . . don't lose him . . .  
*Woburn story* . . . getting on . . . finish it . . . then  
sleep . . . no more stories . . . no more words . . .  
come on . . . next thing . . . he—

OPENER (with VOICE and MUSIC): And I close.

*Silence.*

I start again.

VOICE: —down . . . gentle slope . . . boreen . . . giant aspens  
. . . wind in the boughs . . . faint sea . . . *Woburn* . . .  
same old coat . . . he goes on . . . stops . . . not a soul  
. . . not yet . . . night too bright . . . say what you like  
. . . the bank . . . he hugs the bank . . . same old stick  
. . . he goes down . . . falls . . . on purpose or not . . .  
can't see . . . he's down . . . that's what counts . . .  
face in the mud . . . arms spread . . . *that's the idea*  
. . . *already* . . . *we're there already* . . . *no not yet*  
. . . he gets up . . . knees first . . . hands flat . . . in the  
mud . . . head sunk . . . then up . . . on his feet . . .  
huge bulk . . . come on . . . he goes on . . . he goes  
down . . . come on . . . *in his head* . . . *what's in*

*his head . . . a hole . . . a shelter . . . a hollow . . .  
in the dunes . . . a cave . . . vague memory . . .  
in his head . . . of a cave . . . he goes down . . . no  
more trees . . . no more bank . . . he's changed . . .  
not enough . . . night too bright . . . soon the dunes  
. . . no more cover . . . he stops . . . not a soul . . . not—  
Silence.*

MUSIC: . . . . .  
*Silence.*

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —rest . . . sleep . . . no more stories  
. . . no more words . . . don't give up . . . it's the right  
one . . . we're there . . . nearly . . . I'm there . . .  
somewhere . . . *Woburn* . . . I've got him . . . don't  
lose him . . . follow him . . . to the end . . . come on  
. . . this time . . . it's the right one . . . finish . . . sleep  
. . . *Woburn* . . . come on—  
*Silence*

OPENER: So, at will.  
They say, It's in his head.  
It's not. I open.

VOICE: —falls . . . again . . . on purpose or not . . . can't see  
. . . he's down . . . that's what matters . . . face in the  
sand . . . arms spread . . . bare dunes . . . not a scrub  
. . . same old coat . . . night too bright . . . say what  
you like . . . sea louder . . . like thunder . . . manes of  
foam . . . *Woburn* . . . *his head* . . . *what's in his head*  
. . . *peace* . . . *peace again* . . . *in his head* . . . *no*  
*further* . . . *to go* . . . *to seek* . . . *sleep* . . . *no* . . .  
*not yet* . . . he gets up . . . knees first . . . hands flat . . .  
in the sand . . . head sunk . . . then up . . . on his feet  
. . . huge bulk . . . same old broad-brim . . . jammed  
down . . . come on . . . he's off again . . . ton weight  
. . . in the sand . . . knee-deep . . . he goes down . . .  
sea—

OPENER (with VOICE): And I close.

*Silence.*

I open the other.

MUSIC: .....

OPENER (with MUSIC): And I close.

*Silence.*

So, at will.

It's my life, I live on that.

*Pause.*

Yes, that's right.

*Pause.*

What do I open?

They say, He opens nothing, he has nothing to open,  
it's in his head.

They don't see me, they don't see what I do, they  
don't see what I have, and they say, He opens nothing,  
he has nothing to open, it's in his head.

I don't protest any more, I don't say any more, There  
is nothing in my head.

I don't answer any more.

I open and close.

VOICE: —voice . . . of the land . . . the island . . . the sky  
. . . he need only . . . lift his head . . . his eyes . . . he'd  
see them . . . shine on him . . . but no . . . he—

*Silence.*

MUSIC (brief): .....

*Silence.*

OPENER: They say, That is not his life, he does not live on  
that. They don't see me, they don't see what my life is,  
they don't see what I live on, and they say, That is not  
his life, he does not live on that.

*Pause.*

I have lived on it . . . pretty long.

Long enough.

Listen.

VOICE (weakening): —this time . . . *I'm there . . . Woburn*

... *it's him* ... *I've seen him* ... *I've got him* ...  
come on ... same old coat ... he goes down ... falls  
... falls again ... on purpose or not ... can't see ...  
he's down ... that's what counts ... come on—

OPENER (with VOICE): Full strength.

VOICE: —face ... in the stones ... no more sand ... all  
stone ... that's the idea ... *we're there* ... *this time*  
... *no* ... *not yet* ... he gets up ... knees first ...  
hands flat ... in the stones ... head sunk ... then up  
... on his feet ... huge bulk ... Woburn ... faster ...  
off again ... he goes down ... he—  
*Silence.*

(weakening): .....

OPENER (with MUSIC): Full strength.

MUSIC: .....  
*Silence.*

OPENER: That's not all.  
I open both.  
Listen.

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —sleep ... no more searching ... *to*  
*find him* ... *in the dark* ... *to see him* ... *to say him*  
... *for whom* ... *that's it* ... *no matter* ... *never*  
*him* ... *never right* ... *start again* ... *in the dark* ...  
*done with that* ... this time ... it's right ... we're  
there ... nearly ... finish—

OPENER: From one world to another, it's as though they  
drew together.  
We have not much further to go.  
Good.

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —nearly ... I've got him ... I've  
seen him ... I've said him ... we're there ... nearly  
... no more stories ... all false ... this time ... it's  
the right one ... I have it ... finish it ... sleep ...  
Woburn ... *it's him* ... *I've got him* ... *follow him*  
... *to*—

*Silence.*

OPENER: Good.

*Pause.*

Yes, that's right, the month of May.

You know, the reawakening.

*Pause.*

I open.

VOICE: —no tiller . . . no thwart . . . no oars . . . afloat . . .  
sucked out . . . then back . . . aground . . . drags free  
. . . out . . . Woburn . . . he fills it . . . flat out . . . face  
in the bilge . . . arms spread . . . same old coat . . .  
hands clutching . . . the gunnels . . . no . . . I don't  
know . . . I see him . . . he clings on . . . out to sea . . .  
heading nowhere . . . for the island . . . then no more  
. . . else—

*Silence.*

MUSIC: .....

*Silence.*

OPENER: They said, It's his, it's his voice, it's in his head.

*Pause.*

VOICE: —faster . . . scudding . . . rearing . . . plunging . . .  
heading nowhere . . . for the island . . . then no more  
. . . elsewhere . . . anywhere . . . heading anywhere . . .  
lights—

*Silence.*

OPENER: No resemblance.

I answered, And that . . .

MUSIC (brief): .....

*Silence.*

OPENER: . . . is that mine too?

But I don't answer any more.

And they don't say anything any more.

They have quit.

Good.

*Pause.*

I open.

*Pause.*

I'm afraid to open.

But I must open.

So I open.

VOICE: —come on . . . *Woburn* . . . arms spread . . . same old  
coat . . . face in the bilge . . . he clings on . . . island  
astern . . . far astern . . . heading out . . . vast deep . . .  
no more land . . . *his head* . . . *what's in his head* . . .  
*Woburn*—

OPENER (with VOICE): Come on! Come on!

VOICE: —at last . . . no more coming . . . no more going . . .  
seeking elsewhere . . . always elsewhere . . . we're there  
. . . nearly . . . *Woburn* . . . hang on . . . don't let go  
. . . lights gone . . . of the land . . . all gone . . . nearly  
all . . . too far . . . too late . . . of the sky . . . those . . .  
if you like . . . he need only . . . turn over . . . he'd see  
them . . . shine on him . . . but no . . . he clings on . . .  
*Woburn* . . . he's changed . . . nearly enough—

MUSIC: .....

OPENER (with MUSIC): Good God.

MUSIC: .....

*Silence.*

OPENER: Good God. Good God.

*Pause.*

There was a time I asked myself, What is it?

There were times I answered, It's the outing.

Two outings.

Then the return.

Where?

To the village.

To the inn.

Two outings, then at last the return, to the village, to  
the inn, by the only road that leads there.

An image, like any other.

But I don't answer any more.

I open.

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —don't let go . . . finish . . . it's the  
right one . . . I have it . . . this time . . . we're there . . .  
*Woburn* . . . nearly—

OPENER joined (with VOICE and MUSIC): As though they had  
joined arms.

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —sleep . . . no more stories . . . come  
on . . . *Woburn* . . . it's him . . . see him . . . say him  
. . . to the end . . . don't let go—

OPENER (with VOICE and MUSIC): Good!

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —nearly . . . just a few more . . . a  
few more . . . I'm there . . . nearly . . . *Woburn* . . .  
*it's him . . . it was him . . . I've got him . . . nearly—*

OPENER (with VOICE and MUSIC fervently): Good!

VOICE/MUSIC (together): —this time . . . it's right . . . finish . . .  
no more stories . . . sleep . . . we're there . . . nearly . . .  
just a few more . . . don't let go . . . *Woburn* . . . he  
clings on . . . come on . . . come on—