

Movie Time

by

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A white room gone grey and dingy. Some cots and makeshift counters. A large duffel bag filled with cans of food, some porn, and trinkets. Throughout the play, PHILIP will compulsively unpack and pack and itemize the contents of the duffel bag. On one wall there is a large swatch of black fabric, and a smaller swatch of white canvas pinned to the black, forming a screen for video. Lights dim to black, revealing a video playing on the screen. Grainy, super-8 film that has been converted to digital and is being shown on a video projector.

Sounds of children playing, but the sounds do not correspond to the video.

TRACY sits with the computer that is connected to the video projector. The movie backs up, starts again. A young girl grins at the camera. The film stops. Tracy hums loudly a song from her childhood. The movie backs up further, then, as it begins to play, Tracy stands and moves toward the canvas which shows a rapid succession of times and places and people. Tracy approaches the canvas, detours to turn off the lights, then stands between the projector and the image as light plays and shifts. She touches the canvas. Then wrinkles it, to see how different textures affect the light and picture. She moves behind the black fabric, distorting the image from behind.

Philip enters. He has dark hair and a slight limp.

In the darkness Philip watches as Tracy deforms the image by slowly moving a fist outward from behind the black fabric.

Huh. Looks like-

Who-

Just me.

Whatcha doin?

Nothing.

Working on a movie?

Not really.

Looks like you are working on a movie.

Not really.

Any news?

About Allison or David?

Yeah.

No.

Has the sky turned back?

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

Tracy comes from behind the fabric and quickly turns on the lights, then goes back to her computer.

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

Pause.

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP  
No. Still red as blood.

TRACY  
Ahh.

PHILIP  
Oh, hey, I found something.

He searches his pockets twice before finding a wrinkled and greasy piece of paper. The writing on it is large enough to be seen from the audience, black and thick letters that, while childlike, were definitely made by an adult. He reads:

PHILIP  
The blood of one Fundamentalist mixed with the piss of a Democrat. Steep with licorice for twelve days—the magic number—then mix in eye of dog and liver of newt and one pinch of ginger.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Stir.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Drink.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Pray.

Pause.

PHILIP  
I was thinking. Just thought. You know, maybe. Umm. You . . . could use . . .

Pause.

PHILIP  
Whatcha doin?

TRACY  
Trying to . . . no. Sounds silly.

Philip comes close. Tracy edges away.

TRACY

Can you . . . turn off the lights. I want to see something.

PHILIP

Sure.

Philip turns off the lights. The video shakes, blurs and images of a girl shift from scene to scene. The majority of the video appears to consist of beginnings and endings of scenes: the light flaring, the film leader showing dust and scratches and dirt.

PHILIP

Where's all the stuff you used to have in there? The swings and stuff?

TRACY

Gone. Not necessary. Not for what . . .

PHILIP

What are you doing? Seems to be, if you don't mind my saying. Worse. Less, you know. Interesting.

TRACY

Philip.

Pause.

PHILIP

Tracy.

TRACY

How long have they been gone?

PHILIP

Allison . . .

TRACY

And David. Yes. How long?

Pause. Philip puts the lights back on.

PHILIP

Three months. Maybe four.

TRACY  
How long has the sky . . .

PHILIP  
Been bleeding?

TRACY  
Yes. How long?

PHILIP  
Six, maybe seven months.

Pause.

TRACY  
I'm trying.

Pause

TRACY  
I am trying to.

Pause

TRACY  
I am trying to make a crack. Trying to split some time. Not much, just enough for me . . . maybe us, but really definitely me, sorry. To slip back.

PHILIP  
Back where? There?

TRACY  
Yeah.

PHILIP  
Allison always said you were crazy.

TRACY  
It's not crazy. Just. Look.

She pulls Philip away from the duffel bag, sits him down as if he were a child and tries to explain.

TRACY  
Look. Ok. We think, and by we I mean, you, them . . . most people yeah, most people, but not all ok, not all, think that time can't be touched, can't be folded or stroked, that it is beyond us like the thrill you get from . . . from . . . from driving a really fast car really fast is beyond a cat. But no . . . really, just *think* about it.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

Time is always moving differently, it's like plastic: sometimes melty and soft and sometimes brittle, ready to crack. Time in sex, right, that time is different than doctor office time, right.

PHILIP

Well, yeah as far as-

TRACY

And sleep time, dream time moves even more different, right, like molten rubber, like the smell of oatmeal and blood while test time moves fast and smells like burning wires, a sharp toast smell. Time moves up, speeds down, twists and shouts all the time we just, I mean, you, them . . . most people, yeah, most people but not all, ok, not all, just never notice . . .

PHILIP

That time moves and changes?

TRACY

Right. Never notice.

PHILIP

But you do?

TRACY

Not always. Not ever. But sometimes and occasionally.

She turns off the light. Spliced moments appear on the white fabric, broken bits of film and just behind, appearing fragmentary and ghostlike, the image of a young girl. Smiling, playing rough, looking sad. Images that are moments in flux, broken doorways.

PHILIP

I remember a day, like that. I think. Were your days longer than grown up days? Like the sun was content to hang around and wait for you to get tired enough for night? The summers especially. Like time was yours instead of you being time's.

TRACY

You do understand.

The screen blanks to white.  
Philip approaches and stands  
in front of the screen, touching  
the blank white fabric  
tentatively, as if expecting  
cracks to swallow his fingers.  
They don't.

PHILIP

It's our internal clock, Tracy. Not time itself.

He turns. His face lit harsh  
by the projector light.

PHILIP

Our perception of time changes as our metabolism changes, as  
our neurons fire slower, time speeds up.

From far away, a music box  
plays and a child laughs. A  
car door slams. Silence.

Long pause.

TRACY

No.

PHILIP

Yes.

Philip turns the lights back  
on. Turns the projector off.

PHILIP

Nothing can crack time open, Tracy. Not four billion deaths.  
Not a wounded planet. Not the sound of a baby's first gasping  
cry of life. Time is not something other, something to be  
touched or molded or shifted or twisted. Time is. We are  
products of time. Perceptions touch nothing but the inside  
of our skulls, hollow bellies, and trembling arms.

He packs up the duffel bag.  
Zips it shut with a surprising  
violence.

PHILIP

Time is a constant. Like death. A series of deaths.

TRACY

No.

PHILIP

Yes.

Pause.

I'm going after them.  
PHILIP

Allison and  
TRACY

David. Yes.  
PHILIP

But you'll—  
TRACY

Probably. But the only way forward is . . . well, forward.  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

Do you want to come with me?  
PHILIP

Pause.

No.  
TRACY

I'm taking the rest of the food.  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

I'll leave you some water. But—  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

Goodbye.  
PHILIP

Silence. Philip walks out of the room. Tracy sits. Philip re-enters.

I do wish . . .  
PHILIP

He stops. Shrugs then leaves again.

Tracy sits. Time . . .  
stretches.

The lights go off. The projector  
lights up. Broken time plays  
on the screen. Silence.  
Playgrounds and blue skies,  
missing teeth and pigtails,  
puppies and mud. Tracy goes to  
the screen. A crack appears?  
She turns her head. Just enough  
to go through a crack in time  
as the projector goes black.

Silence.

A child's laugh. The sound of  
a swing-set.