

A SEPARATE ROAD TO REALITY

Un camino aparte a la realidad

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TIME AND PLACE

Actual time is not of prime importance. Sometime in the last fifty or sixty years, or so. In barren lands lying south of the Mexican-American border.

Center stage is the dry, dusty, biscuit-brown central plaza of a small town in the mountainous area of Mexico. A monument or two. Trees. Perhaps a fountain with sprinkling water. Old, wooden benches, and tables and chairs around. At the rear of the plaza stands a large, wide, thick arch, having a flat top and a closed door in the center. It is covered with pictures of Our Little Roses of Honduras.

Stage right is something of a large combination flower garden and outdoor art gallery with reproductions of Judithe Hernández artworks displayed throughout.

Stage left is a little shack on a mountainside, with wattle-and-daub walls, thatched roof, and a ramada, outside of which is a fire pit surrounded by rocks, with a metal pot suspended in the middle, and larger rocks in a semicircle around it, used as seats. Nearer to the shack are a couple of straw mats lying on the ground. A kerosene lantern and some roots and herbs are hanging from pegs on the ramada. Behind the shack is a scrim on which pictures can be projected.

CHARACTERS

don JOAQUIN, 50s to 70s, a Yaqui Indian of medium height. Strong and fit. Round, dark face with deep wrinkles. Short, white hair, down a bit over his ears. Wearing khakis, a straw hat, and homemade sandals (huaraches).

DAVID MIGUEL, 20s or 30s, a man seeking knowledge and his purpose in life. He carries a notebook with him, and regularly takes notes in it.

A MAGICIAN, female narrator.

DELORES, 30s, an emigrant mother and widow. Nearly starving.

TRANSLATOR, female, speaking from behind the Judithe Hernández reproductions. Can be played by the same actor playing the MAGICIAN.

YOUNG GIRL, in her teens, daughter of Delores (non-speaking part).

LIBERTY, wearing a Statue-of-Liberty crown and carrying a Statue-of-Liberty torch, but dressed in the manner of a Honduran woman of poverty. Can be played by the same actor playing the MAGICIAN.

... in the dialogue indicates a thoughtful break.

... // signals the starting point of interrupting (but **not** overlapping) text.

Don Juan era ciertamente un intermediario entre el mundo natural de la vida diaria y un mundo invisible, al cual él no llamaba lo sobrenatural, sino la segunda atención. Su tarea de maestro fue hacer accesible a mí esta configuración. En mis trabajos anteriores, he descrito los métodos de enseñanza que usó con este propósito, al igual que las prácticas que me hizo ejercitar, la más importante de las cuales fue, sin lugar a duda, el arte de ensoñar.

Don Juan sostenía que nuestro mundo, que creemos ser único y absoluto, es solo un mundo dentro de un grupo de mundos consecutivos, los cuales están ordenados como las capas de una cebolla. Él aseveraba que aunque hemos sido condicionados para percibir únicamente nuestro mundo, efectivamente tenemos la capacidad de entrar en otros, que son tan reales, únicos, absolutos y absorbentes como lo es el nuestro.

Don Juan was indeed an intermediary between the natural world of everyday life and an unseen world, which he called not the supernatural but the second attention. His role as a teacher was to make this configuration accessible to me. I have described in my previous work his teaching methods to this effect, as well as the sorcery arts he made me practice, the most important of which is called the art of dreaming.

Don Juan contended that our world, which we believe to be unique and absolute, is only one in a cluster of consecutive worlds, arranged like the layers of an onion. He asserted that even though we have been energetically conditioned to perceive solely our world, we still have the capability of entering into those other realms, which are as real, unique, absolute, and engulfing as our own world is.

– Carlos Castaneda, *The Art of Dreaming* (1993)

SCENE 1 – THE ROAD TO KNOWLEDGE
El camino al saber

Center stage: Late afternoon in the town's plaza. People sitting, who, for the most part, are mannequins. (Occasionally cats, or other animals, may appear to be walking on the top of the arch at the back of the square.) The sound of crows, other birds, and church bells can be heard.

DAVID enters, looks around, takes a seat, waits, and watches.

An actress enters, at first appearing to have butterfly wings. She sits, picks up a flat stone, reads it, puts it back down on the ground, gets up and leaves. Her wings have disappeared.

Time passes. Strange shadows cross the stage. (Some may resemble clockwork wheels spinning.) People begin leaving. Mannequins are escorted offstage by stagehands. Eventually, the only ones left are DAVID, don JOAQUIN (who has been sitting, almost invisibly, in a corner of the plaza all along), and a MAGICIAN, who comes **downstage center**.

MAGICIAN

Joaquin is a Yaqui Indian.

His apprentice, David Miguel, sometimes calls him *don* Joaquin out of respect. He's sitting over there.

See? Inconspicuously.

David Miguel hasn't seen him yet. He's been waiting.

Here. In this plaza. In Mexico.

Don Joaquin is a man of knowledge. A brujo.

You'll see. And how the silent consistency about don Joaquin's acts holds David like a magnet, like moon to Earth.

We believe behave bestir because messages dream to us from a separate reality.

Messages that make mold our lives with whispers of air, truth, and knowledge.

Perfectly whispered mists of awe, anxiety, and fear of death.

Gentle, silky breezes that weave about, unseen.

But seeable nevertheless. You'll see.

A world of Toltec spirits ancestral. Unseen, but seeable.

We believe behave bestir because we are intermediaries in a fluid of existence.

Living in a life this close to supernatural glue.

Luminous, egg-shaped clouds, stretching out in fine lines over angels' wings, from our abdomens to our heads. Upwards and downwards.

Disconnected. As two lovers disconnect, one from the other, as lovers do.

MAGICIAN

There's a separate reality breathing all around us.
We believe behave bestir because we are taught to perceive objectively.
Without internal eyes, except in states of dreaming or sleights of consciousness.
And in that separate reality move beings as real to themselves as you are to me.
Able to think. Able to communicate. Able to believe.
Think about it. They are thinking all about us.
Our single access to them is through our brain, which is only marginally reliable.
And then, only through *seeing* and *hearing*.
Don Joaquin *sees*.
Other brujos *hear*.

All the world's a stage; but all the stages are not the world.
We believe behave bestir because we think we know what we know is knowable.
But it's not.
Across the lines, into other realms, are knowables we know nothing about.
Illusive. Shielded. Shadowed. Silenced.
Accessible; and inaccessible.
Describable; and indescribable.
A world of ashes that remakes itself in the face of fire in an instant.
Peopled through itself. By itself. Of itself...
You'll see.

The MAGICIAN exits. DAVID stands and walks to JOAQUIN.

DAVID

¿Joaquin? ¿don Joaquin? What are you doing here?

JOAQUIN

At your service, David Miguel.

DAVID

It's been hours, waiting. Looking for you.
You called me here; and I thought you hadn't come.
Have you been hiding from me?
Why wouldn't you say something?

JOAQUIN

Not hiding. Just sitting, not to attract attention. Patiently.

DAVID

You've been here, all along? ¿Todo el tiempo?

JOAQUIN

Sí. Todo el tiempo.

DAVID

Why didn't you say something? I couldn't see you.
I mean, I had a strange and certain *feeling* you were here, as you said you'd be;
but I couldn't see you.

JOAQUIN

Sí.

DAVID

You knew?

JOAQUIN

Sí, David Miguel.

DAVID

Then why didn't you come to me?

JOAQUIN

Waiting is good for you. It's a road you need to know more about.
It helps develop patience in impatient souls like yours.
Be thankful. Don't fuss. You're here now.

DAVID

[*impatiently*] I *have* been patient. And learning. And working.

JOAQUIN

I know you have.
But your patience has butterfly wings. It's fragile.
You will learn.

DAVID

[*pause; staring*] Your eyes, today.

JOAQUIN

They *are* mine. Indeed.

DAVID

They're like burning crystals. Clear. Brilliant. Alive. Penetrating. On fire.
I never saw them in this light before.

JOAQUIN

My eyes are disciplined. They're a warrior's eyes. They're a warrior's tools.

DAVID

Disciplined, you say?

JOAQUIN

Eyes are the gates of a warrior's consistency. Gates of peace that way.

DAVID

They don't make *me* feel at peace. Not today.

JOAQUIN laughs, heartily.

DAVID

And now your laughter makes me feel melancholy.
What's happening to me?

JOAQUIN

You're about to meet someone new. And you know it.
And say "adios" to someone old.

DAVID

Who?

JOAQUIN

You will remember. When it's time.

DAVID

I wish, don Joaquin, your instructions had fewer riddles.

JOAQUIN

I wish they did, too. And they will. When you are ready.

DAVID

When?

JOAQUIN

You are such the fortunate traveler, David Miguel. More than you know.

DAVID

I had *one* great fortune. In my travels. It was finding you. What else?

JOAQUIN

You will see. And I promise you:
It will feel like the pale kisses collected from a pearl's shell,
when you stop to remember me.

Pause.

SCENE 2 – THE ROAD OF FALLING TEARS

El camino de las lágrimas cayendo

DELORES enters, **stage right**, through an array of flowers intermingled with reproductions of the artworks of Judithe Hernández, many of which she lightly touches as she passes slowly through. Behind the flowers and reproductions stands a TRANSLATOR, virtually hidden from audience view. Accompanying DELORES is the YOUNG GIRL, who silently walks alongside her, clutching a rag doll to her chest. Roadside dust encircles them.

DELORES

Ella debe estar perdida. Y ciega.
¿A dónde piensa ella que va? quien no tiene a dónde ir.

TRANSLATOR

She must be lost. And blind.
Where does she think she's going? who has nowhere to go.

DELORES

Ella debe ser sorda también. Hablando para sí misma, sola.
Nadie escuchando.

TRANSLATOR

She must be deaf as well. Talking to herself, alone.
Nobody listening.

DELORES

Ella hizo todo lo que pudo. Ella hizo todo lo posible.

TRANSLATOR

She did everything she could. She did everything she possibly could.

DELORES

¿Qué es este lugar? donde nadie le habla. ¿Un globo?

TRANSLATOR

What is this place? where no one talks to her. A balloon?

DELORES

Su marido, ella vio asesinado. En sangre fría. Ante sus ojos.

TRANSLATOR

Her husband, she saw murdered. In cold blood. Before her eyes.

DELORES

¡Oh Dios con Dios con Dios! Cómo ella anhela sus besos calmante.
Sus ojos eran como estrellas en la noche. Sus manos, como el salmo del pastor.

TRANSLATOR

O God with God with God! How she craves his soothing kisses.
His eyes were like stars in the night. His hands, like “the Lord is my shepherd.”

DELORES

Ella no sabe qué hacer. Nadie la escucha. Nadie la escucha.
Ella no sabe a dónde ir. Ella hizo todo lo que pudo.

TRANSLATOR

She doesn't know what to do. No one listens to her. No one hears her.
She doesn't know where to go.
She did everything she could.

DELORES

Y su niña que violaron.
Y su hijo a quien secuestraron. En su pandilla.
Dejando atrás sus libros escolares.

TRANSLATOR

And her little girl they raped.
And her son they kidnapped into their gang.
Leaving his schoolbooks behind.

DELORES

Y ella los amaba.
Y ella hizo todo lo que pudo.
Y ella no podía protegerlos.
Ella no podía amarlos lo suficiente.
Ella no pudo salvarlos suficiente.

TRANSLATOR

And she loved them.
And she did everything she could.
And she couldn't protect them.
She couldn't love them enough. She couldn't protect them enough.

DELORES

Los perdió en el polvo.
Toda su vida se ha submergido en mareas de polvo. Al lado del camino.

TRANSLATOR

She lost them in the dust.
Her whole life has sunk into tides of dust. By the side of the road.

DELORES

¿A dónde se va todo? ¿Dime a dónde?...
Pero ella hizo todo lo posible para amarlos. Y para protegerlos.
Y ella no pudo. Suficiente.

TRANSLATOR

Where is everything going? Tell me where?...
But she did everything possible to love them. And protect them.
And she couldn't. Enough.

DELORES

Ella tiene una marioneta de piedra, en un lugar dentro de su cabeza.
Asesinaron a su esposo. Violaron a su niña. Secuestrado a su hijo.
Asesinaron a su esposo. Violaron a su niña. Secuestrado a su hijo.
Y nadie hizo nada. Nada más que agua cruel lamiendo a su alrededor.
Nada más que congoja. Un océano de agua, tragándose a sí mismo.
Cenizas del infierno, cegando el viento, y su congoja.
Como un camino seco, elevándose y sofocando las campanas en el polvo,
mucho después de que las manos católicas y sogas hayan hecho sonar su metal.

TRANSLATOR

She has a stone puppet, in a place inside her head.
They murdered her husband. Raped her little girl. Kidnapped her son.
They murdered her husband. Raped her girl. Kidnapped her son.
And no one did a thing. Nothing but heartless water lapping around her.
Nothing but grief. An ocean of water, swallowing itself.
Ashes of Hell, blinding the wind, and her grief.
Like a dry road, rising and smothering church bells in its dust,
long after Catholic hands and ropes have made their metal sound.

DELORES

Ella hizo todo lo posible, para protegerlos.

TRANSLATOR

She did everything possible, to protect them.

DELORES

Y ahora ella está sola. Hablando para sí misma. Sola. No es más útil para su niña
que la muñeca de trapo a la que se aferra, fuerte a su pecho.

TRANSLATOR

And now she is alone.
Talking to herself. Alone.
No more help to her little girl than the rag doll she clings to,
clutching tight to her chest.

DELORES

¡Tan malditamente sola!
Hablando a nadie.
¿A dónde pueden ir?

TRANSLATOR

So damned alone!
Talking to no one.
Where can they go?

DELORES

Ella hizo todo lo que pudo.
Ella hizo todo lo que pudo.
Ella hizo todo lo que pudo.

TRANSLATOR

She did everything she could.
She did everything she could.
She did everything she could.

DELORES

¿A dónde irá ella? quien no tiene a dónde ir.

TRANSLATOR

Where is she going? who has no place to go.

DELORES

¿Qué es este lugar a dónde irá ella? ¿Es el infierno?

TRANSLATOR

What is this place she is going? Is it Hell?

DELORES

Su marido, ella ve asesinado.
En sangre fria. Ante sus ojos.

TRANSLATOR

Her husband, she sees murdered. In cold blood. Before her eyes.

DELORES

¡Oh Dios mio! ¡Oh Dios mio! ¡Oh Dios mio!
Cómo ella anhela sus besos calmante.
Sus ojos eran como estrellas en la noche. Sus manos, como el salmo del pastor.

TRANSLATOR

O my God! O my God! O my God! How she misses his gentle kisses.
His eyes were like stars in the night.
His hands, like the twenty-third psalm.

DELORES

Ella no sabe qué hacer. Ella no sabe a dónde ir. Ella hizo todo lo que pudo.

TRANSLATOR

She doesn't know what to do. She doesn't know where to go.
She did everything she could.

DELORES

Ella ve a su niña violada.
Ella ve a su hijo atado y secuestrado.
Dejando atrás sus libros escolares.

TRANSLATOR

Her little girl she sees raped.
Her son she sees tied and kidnapped.
Leaving his schoolbooks behind.

DELORES

Y ella los amaba.
Y ella hizo todo lo que pudo.
Y ella no podía protegerlos.
Ella no podía amarlos lo suficiente.
Ella no pudo salvarlos lo suficiente.

TRANSLATOR

And she loved them.
And she did everything she could.
And she couldn't protect them.
She couldn't love them enough.
She couldn't protect them enough.

DELORES

Perdidos en el polvo.

TRANSLATOR

Lost in the dust.

DELORES

Ella hizo todo lo posible para protegerlos.

TRANSLATOR

She did everything possible to protect them.

DELORES

Ahora ella está sola.

Hablando a nadie.

No es más útil para su niña que la muñeca de trapo a la que se aferra,
fuerte a su pecho.

¿De dónde son? ¿De dónde, en el nombre de Jesucristo, vinieron?

Ella no puede recordarlo.

TRANSLATOR

Now she's alone.

Talking to no one.

No more help to her little girl than the rag doll she clings to,
clutching tight to her chest.

Where are they from? Where, in the name of Jesus Christ, did they come from?

She can't remember.

DELORES

¿De dónde?

¿De dónde?

¿De donde *eres*?

TRANSLATOR

Where are they from?

Where are they from?

Where are *you* from?

DELORES

¿Dónde fue secuestrado? ¿Dónde fue violada?

¿Dónde fue asesinado?

¿Dónde ella convirtió en naufrago?

TRANSLATOR

Where was he kidnapped? Where was she raped?

Where was he murdered?

Where did she become a castaway?

DELORES

Ella no siente nada.
Ella no recuerda nada, aparte del dolor.
¿Por qué vivir? ¿Por qué llevar una vida desperdiciada, sin sentido?
¿Por qué seguir sufriendo en esta condición si ella no siente nada por ello?...
Ella hizo todo lo posible para amarlos. Y para protegerlos.

TRANSLATOR

She doesn't feel a thing.
She doesn't remember a thing, other than grief.
Why live?
Why lead a wasted, pointless life?
Why keep suffering in this condition if she feels nothing for it?....
She did everything she could to love them. And to protect them.

DELORES

Es un sueño que la mantiene viva. Solo un sueño.
Maltratadas en la noche.

TRANSLATOR

It's a dream that keeps her alive. Only one dream.
Battered in the night.

DELORES

Ella vive porque se permite olvidar cuánto quiere morir.

TRANSLATOR

She lives because she lets herself forget how much she wants to die.

DELORES

Ella vive porque hoy se olvida.

TRANSLATOR

She lives because today she forgets.

DELORES

Mañana ella recordará cómo en todos partes la tristeza es libre. La pobreza es libre. El dolor es libre. Mañana ella recordará cómo en todos partes las ollas y sartenes golpearán a las ocho, protestando contra al hambre.

TRANSLATOR

Tomorrow she will remember how everywhere sadness is free. Poverty is free. Pain is free. Tomorrow she will remember how everywhere pots and pans will bang at eight, protesting hunger.

DELORES

¿Como se llama el reino entre el hambre y el inanición?... ¿Honduras?
¿Como se llama el reino entre el miedo y la muerte?... ¿Honduras?
¿Como se llama el reino entre la vergüenza y el suicidio? ¿Honduras?
¿Como se llama el reino entre Honduras y el infierno?

TRANSLATOR

What do you call the realm between hunger and starvation?... Honduras?
What do you call the realm between fear and death?... Honduras?
What do you call the realm between shame and suicide?... Honduras?
What do you call the realm between Honduras and Hell?

DELORES

El pueblo de Honduras no es libre.
Voces tan débiles como el llanto de un tren, desapareciendo en la noche.
Esclavos de la pobreza y las pandillas comunistas.

TRANSLATOR

The people of Honduras are not free.
Voices as faint as the cry of a train, disappearing into the night.
Slaves to poverty and gangs of communists.

DELORES

Ella tenía un ser querido, antes de que fuera asesinado.
Ella tenía una niña, antes de ser violada.
Con una muñeca de trapo a la que se aferra. Apenas reconociendo nada más.

TRANSLATOR

She had a beloved, before he was murdered.
She had a little girl, before she was raped.
With a rag doll she clings to. Barely recognizing anything else.

DELORES

Ella tenía un hijo, antes de que los comunistas lo secuestraran.
Dejando atrás sus libros escolares.

TRANSLATOR

She had a son, before the communists kidnapped him.
Leaving his schoolbooks behind.

DELORES

¿Como puede alguien sobrevivir a eso?
¿Quién? *¿Una mujer Hondureña?*

TRANSLATOR

How can anyone survive that?
Who? *A Honduran woman?*

DELORES

Pero por un sueño. Caminando ciego en manos de un sueño.

TRANSLATOR

But by a dream. Walking blind in the hands of a dream.

DELORES is momentarily lit in a way to show strands of light emanating from her abdomen and circling up, over her head, like a luminous egg-shaped cloud of colored fibers.

DELORES

Ella ya no quiere vivir.
Pero ella no quiere perder ese sueño.
Y la muerte, ella lo sabe, seguramente se la quitará. Como todo lo demás.

TRANSLATOR

She no longer cares to live.
But she doesn't want to lose that dream.
And death, she knows, will surely take it from her. Like everything else.

DELORES

Él viene a ella, en su sueño. Y la guarda en sus brazos.
Hasta que una mariposa enloquecida desde la Luna
dardos locos en su mente.
Molesto. De esta manera y de la otra.
Tratando de liberarse de un parásito que se ha comido en su cerebro.

TRANSLATOR

He comes to her, in her dream. And holds her in his arms.
Until a crazed butterfly from the moon darts madly across her mind.
Unwelcome. This way and that.
Trying to free itself of a parasite that has eaten into its brain.

DELORES

Ella no quiere perder ese sueño.
Ella quiere llevarlo al Norte.
Donde ella puede protegerlo.

TRANSLATOR

She doesn't want to lose that dream.
She wants to take it North.
Where she can protect it.

DELORES

Es todo lo que ella tiene. En el mundo.
Y una niña, caminando en un aturdimiento de piedra.

TRANSLATOR

It's all she has. In the world.
And a little girl, walking dazed, like a stone.

DELORES

Fluyendo hacia el norte, caminando en un aturdimiento de piedra.
Todos los demás, como un río de arena a su alrededor.
Como un desierto tragándose a sí mismo.
Ella no sabe a más dónde ir.

TRANSLATOR

Flowing north, walking in a daze like a stone.
Everyone else, like a river of sand around her.
Like a desert swallowing itself.
She doesn't know where else to go.

DELORES

Ella rasga las páginas de su nacimiento.

TRANSLATOR

She tears apart the pages of her birth.

DELORES

Ella devora las cadenas de la pobreza en su corazón.

TRANSLATOR

She devours the chains of poverty in her heart.

DELORES

Ella traga la lluvia que cae como una loca.
Se parece a ella.
Se parece a ella con su ritmo largo, bajo y tedioso en el camino sediento.
Se parece a su búsqueda por una razón para vivir.
Se parece al olor de los cementerios verde y morado.
Y ella desprecia los cementerios.

TRANSLATOR

She swallows the falling rain like a mad woman.
It resembles her.
It resembles her with its long, low, tedious beat upon the thirsty road.
It resembles her search for a reason to live.
It resembles the odor of green and purple cemeteries.
And she despises cemeteries.

DELORES

La vida en un cementerio es tan sin sentido como una piedra mojada.
Las tumbas están llenas de huesos sin voz,
piel como uvas chupadas,
y la humedad penetrante de las raíces, que se extiende hacia abajo,
en las entrañas de la tierra.

TRANSLATOR

Life in a cemetery is as senseless as wet stone.
Graves, filled with voiceless bones,
skin like sucked grapes,
and the penetrating moisture of roots, spreading downward,
into the bowels of the earth.

DELORES

No es en un cementerio donde quiere plantarse.
Sueños tan fríos y negros
como las aplastante olas del mar en la noche,
con sus inhumanas garras,
y dientes.
No. Ella quiere plantar su sueño en paz.
Donde ella puede mantenerlo vivo.
Es todo lo que le queda.

TRANSLATOR

It is not a cemetery she wants to plant herself in.
Dreams as cold and black as the soul-crushing waves of the sea at night,
with their inhuman claws,
and teeth.
No. She wants to plant her dream in peace.
Where she can keep it alive.
It is all she has left.

**TRANSLATOR exits. DELORES and the
YOUNG GIRL slowly wander the stage as**

**though visible through a cloud of dust —
DELORES from time to time lit like a
luminous, egg-shaped, colored cloud.**

SCENE 3 – THE ROAD TO A WARRIOR’S LIFE
El camino a la vida de un guerrero

Twilight of the same day. JOAQUIN and DAVID have made their way out of the plaza, up, to Joaquin’s house (**stage-left**), where they build a fire in the pit outside the house, pour water into the pot, clean and cut vegetables, boil them (stirring with a large wooden spoon), and eat them (they’re steaming) with smaller spoons made from gourds. They sit on the stone seats. The fire draws strange, dancing silhouettes, sometimes in a reddish glow, sometimes greenish, and sometimes brilliantly white. Occasionally large sparks, the size of tennis balls, explode out of the fire, with unusually loud sounds of crackling wood.

JOAQUIN

The road is long and dry, Honduras to America.
Everything flies in the face of the wind. What’s not stolen is like to be.

DAVID

Your voice and the fire make me, dizzy, don Joaquin.... I pity her.

JOAQUIN

Her name’s Delores. Pity the wall-builders.

DAVID

She’s only a woman. And her poor daughter

JOAQUIN

You’re talking about yourself, David, when you talk like that.

DAVID

What do you mean? I’m meaning *her*. I’m thinking of *her*.

JOAQUIN

“She’s only a woman....” Like, you’re only a man. Isn’t *that* what you mean?

DAVID

What else can we be?

JOAQUIN

I’m only a man. But I don’t mean it the way you do.

DAVID

How, then?

JOAQUIN

I'm a Yaqui Indian, who has chosen to live my life as a warrior.
And unlike you, a warrior doesn't live by his problems. He vanquishes them.
Granted, it may be unfortunate how short our lives are.
But unfortunate only, not something that defines our being.

DAVID

But life in poverty. It's more than just short, and unfortunate.
It sweeps away all of a person's opportunities.

JOAQUIN

Not for someone who welcomes life as a challenge.
Poverty's a teacher.
Living in poverty is a life a warrior would choose.

DAVID

What?...
What can poverty possibly teach that has any value?

JOAQUIN

Poverty teaches humility.
Poverty teaches the taste of salt.
Poverty teaches the Earth.
You don't get fat, like you, on poverty.

DAVID

You think I'm fat?

JOAQUIN

You could stand to lose some weight, amigo.
You feel too important about yourself. Too damned important.
And that makes one clumsy.

DAVID

Maybe.
But what I'm saying is that poverty's worse.
It makes you struggle, and pain, and grieve for the rest of your life.
For what?
A rich man can still make something of his life.
A poor man ... what chance does *he* have?

JOAQUIN

He can embrace poverty the way Delores embraces grief.
It's el camino a la vida de un guerrero. It's the way to a warrior's life.
Maybe the only way.
Y Delores vive porque ha hecho de su dolor su aliada.

DAVID

She lives because she's made her grief her ally? What the Hell does that mean?

JOAQUIN

She forgets the pain. She forgets how much she wanted to die from it.

DAVID

What kind of life is that?

JOAQUIN

The road is long, Honduras, North.

DAVID

The road is long? You mean, *life's hardships* are long.
Isn't that what you're trying to tell me?
That life's hardships are long ... and hard?

JOAQUIN

A warrior knows what a road means. And what North means.
North toward a wall whose hunger for drugs devours lives of those south.

DAVID

Say what you will, I still pity her.

JOAQUIN

¿Porque?... Why do you pity her?

DAVID

Because ... because I pity everybody who's that poor and can't have a dream.
Especially children. That's just me. That's how I am.
Children, at least, should have their dreams, and a life that's not ugly.
That's what I want to fight for. And use my knowledge for.

JOAQUIN

How do you know their life is ugly? How do you even *think* you know?
If you've never tried poverty yourself?

DAVID

I can see what's going on.

JOAQUIN

¿Qué? ¿Que puedes ver?

DAVID

Well, if I can't *see* it, at least I can feel it.
Just look at the opportunities life in America gives.
Infinitely more than theirs.

JOAQUIN

To do what?

DAVID

To find the American Dream.... And honesty.... And truth.

JOAQUIN

And what, in your opinion, is the greatest truth a man can find?

DAVID

In my opinion, to become a man of knowledge, like you.
That's why I'm here.

JOAQUIN

[*laughs*] And you think your rich American life helped *you* to find *me*?...
And will help you to become a man of knowledge?

DAVID

I don't know. I hear you laughing.
But let me tell you something.
When I first started looking for you, don Joaquin, almost two years ago,
I had car trouble; and it took me three days to get it fixed.
I stayed in a hotel in the town, and ate every meal inside, in the restaurant.
There were tables outside, by the street.
But out there were shoeshine boys I saw, sitting on the curb;
and I didn't want to be hassled. So I ate inside, and watched.
And, as I thought, whenever men would take a seat, the boys would flock them.

JOAQUIN

And?

DAVID

Well, if they were told to, they politely left the men alone, and sat back on the curb.

JOAQUIN

Yes?

DAVID

When the men finished eating and got up,
I watched the boys rush to the table to devour the leftovers.
They cleaned the plates. Quite orderly, mind you. Never breaking a thing.
Ate everything, even ice cubes and lemon peels.
It happened, over and over, so I asked.
And was told that the hotel had an agreement.
The boys could stay out there, for what money they could earn,
provided they didn't bother anybody, and didn't break anything. And when the
car was ready and I drove away from town, I felt depressed by all of it.

JOAQUIN

You pitied them.

DAVID

Of course I did. What hope does their life give them for something better?

JOAQUIN

And el camino Americano does?

DAVID

Of course. Absolutely.

JOAQUIN

To become a man of knowledge?

DAVID

Well, not without you, of course.

JOAQUIN

Then how can you pity those boys?
Any of them could become what you seek.
All the men of knowledge I know were just like them, when they were young.

DAVID

[reflecting] Is that my weakness?
Thinking of myself, like that, privileged?
My parents always told me I could do anything I wanted with my life.
Because of who I was, and where I came from.
Which made me feel I was special. Superior, I guess.
So special, I had a burden, to do something,
that the whole world would admire.
Like becoming another Albert Schweitzer, in my time.
And it's something I've never gotten over.

JOAQUIN

Should you have?

DAVID

I don't know. Maybe yes. Maybe no.

But not if it makes me feel I want to weep with those who weep. Because I do.
Or mix with the poor; and help them in carrying their burdens.... Oh, shit!...

JOAQUIN

What?

DAVID

I've screwed things up, haven't I? thinking so much of myself, selfishly.
Thinking what *I* want to do for the world. To make it a better world.
Like I know.

JOAQUIN

I'm no judge.

What I am is simply a man with knowledge to pass along to you.

DAVID

It's odd. How one little thing.
One little slip. One little night.
Can change the whole orbit of a person's life.
Even a person who cares.
Even a person who wishes with all their might that that night never was.

JOAQUIN

What do you really want? David Miguel?

DAVID

I want to be like you.
I want to make a difference in the world.
I want to be known. And remembered.
I want to become a man of knowledge, and be able to change the lives of the poor.

JOAQUIN

You can't.

DAVID

What do you mean I can't?

JOAQUIN

If you could *see* them, you'd know there's no way to change a thing about them.
There's nothing you can add. And nothing you can subtract.

DAVID

You keep saying that ... about *seeing* things.
Seeing them how?

JOAQUIN

People appear in a different way when you *see* them.

DAVID

Why?... How? How do they appear?

JOAQUIN

Like a luminous, egg-shaped cloud of colored fibers.
Stretching from their abdomen, up, around their head. Circulating.
With arms and legs like luminous bristles.

DAVID

They appear like colored eggs?

JOAQUIN

Cobwebs of light, bursting out in all directions,
connecting everyone with everything with a pale, white glow.
Like strands of microscopic lightning bolts.
Everyone.
So ... how do you suggest changing that?
What can be changed in a luminous egg? What?

DAVID

[*beat*] Everybody?

JOAQUIN

You will see.

DAVID

When? When will I see what you can see? How long does it take?

JOAQUIN

When you find silence. When you forget the name of what you're looking at.
It's the noise inside your head that keeps your eyes from seeing.

DAVID

What am I supposed to do? Stop thinking?

JOAQUIN

You have the will to see. I can see it. So much so it appears that you *do* see....
But you don't, of course. You simply need to find the patience. Maybe in the dark.

DAVID

See in the dark?

JOAQUIN

Darkness can be the best time to *see*.

DAVID

You can *see* me? Now?

JOAQUIN

Of course I can.

DAVID

And *see* that I will have the power to see someday, when it happens?

JOAQUIN

Yes.

DAVID

And can other men of knowledge see that in me?

JOAQUIN

Why do you ask?

DAVID

Well, about a year ago I was driving through Durango, and I met a man... an Indian named Vicente, who ... //

JOAQUIN

Vicente?

DAVID

Yes? He said he knew you. Do you know him?
He had only words of praise for you. He said you're a man of great knowledge, while he has only lyric knowledge.

JOAQUIN

Lyric knowledge, my foot.
The Vicente I know is a brujo.... You were lucky, mi amigo.

DAVID

Well, he seemed to look at me, you know, the way you do, sometimes.
And he told me something.

JOAQUIN

¿Qué?

DAVID

He sold me a sack of plants and told me to plant them in a special way. Because I'd told him about the university project I was on, working with medicinal herbs, and mushrooms, and peyote. You know.

JOAQUIN

Mescalito. Y humito. My little friends. Yes, I know....
And what were his instructions to you? To do with the plants?

DAVID

It was just one of them.
To drive well outside of town, and find a field of cacti, and, well, plant it there.

JOAQUIN

And? What happened?

DAVID

I was on my way to Aguas Calientes when I stopped, at the top of a hill. I made sure there was no one around, like he told me. For at least ten minutes. No one in sight. No one. I could see all around.
And, like he said, I went on the east side of the road, into a cactus field, maybe three/four hundred feet from the car, and planted one of the plants, and watered it with a bottle of water I had with me. When I came back to the car, I found three Mexicans there. I have no idea where they came from. Two men and a woman. One of the men was sitting on the front bumper with a bundle on his back. He had black curly hair, old slacks, a tattered, pinkish shirt, and shoes that were too large for him. Sweating. Profusely. The other man, the older one, was standing a few feet away, carrying a smaller bundle, and not sweating, at all. The woman was in her forties, fat, with dark complexion and a transistor radio.

JOAQUIN

How observant of you.

DAVID

Thanks.... Well, as I walked up, they asked me for a ride. I told them I didn't have enough room in the car. And they said they could ride on the outside, if I didn't drive too fast. I offered them money for bus fare instead. But they said they weren't interested in money, just a ride. Or, maybe some food or water.

DAVID

I told them I had no food or water to give them; and eventually they walked off.
When I tried to start the car, the engine was flooded, and I couldn't start it.
The younger man came back, and offered a push.
I began to feel very uncomfortable.
Panting, actually.
But finally I got the car started, and drove away.
And that's what happened.

JOAQUIN

You're blind. And lucky to have survived.

DAVID

Why? Why do you say that?

JOAQUIN

Because you never *saw* them; that's why....
[beat] You're either a damned fool, or damned lucky, or both.... *Vicente*.

DAVID

Why? He wouldn't hurt me. He was a beautiful man.
I could see that. And harmless.

JOAQUIN

He wouldn't harm you himself.
But knowledge is a powerful power.
And once a man starts down the road to knowledge, he's not responsible for
idiots like you who look like they know how to defend themselves and don't.

DAVID

But why would he give me something that could harm me? Couldn't he see?

JOAQUIN

No. He couldn't see that you don't know anything.
You look as though you do. But you don't, really.

DAVID

I wasn't trying to put him on.

JOAQUIN

I didn't mean you were *trying* to fool him.
He easily could have seen through that.
No. When I see you, you look like you know a great deal.
But when I talk to you, like this, I realize what a novice you still are.

DAVID

I lost something?

JOAQUIN

You pissed away one of the greatest gifts a man of knowledge could ever receive.
I've never been given a gift like that.

DAVID

What? What did I waste?

JOAQUIN

Didn't it ever strike you that running into three people,
appearing out of thin air, right after planting Vicente's plant ...?
Those young shoeshine boys you talked about wouldn't have been that blind.

DAVID

Blind to what, exactly?

JOAQUIN

I told you, when I *see* you or other people,
I can see an eggshell of color, surrounding them.

DAVID

Yes.

JOAQUIN

But those three you met, if you could have *seen* them,
you would have known immediately, they weren't people.

DAVID

They weren't people?

JOAQUIN

No. They weren't people.

DAVID

That's impossible.... What were they, then?

JOAQUIN

Not people.

DAVID

You're wrong. They were just like you and me.

JOAQUIN

No, they were not. I'm certain of it.

DAVID

If they weren't people, what were they? ghosts?

JOAQUIN

Not ghosts.

DAVID

Spirits? Guardians?

JOAQUIN

Call them forces.

DAVID

Forces?

JOAQUIN

Forces that exist in a separate reality.

Off, away from the world your personal society can see and define.

Forces a brujo learns to see and harness.

DAVID

[*beat*] Allies?

JOAQUIN

Yes. Allies, of a man of knowledge.

DAVID

Allies you can see?

JOAQUIN

Sí.

DAVID

And I can see them, too?

JOAQUIN

Your problem is, you talk too much.

DAVID

But I saw them.

JOAQUIN

To your eyes allies take whatever form they want.

DAVID

What would they have looked like to you?

JOAQUIN

Like they looked to you. Three people.
But when I *saw* them, they wouldn't.

DAVID

How then?

JOAQUIN

I told you. Real people look like luminous eggs with fibers emanating like strings.
Some have taut strings. Like a drum. Some are bent, like grass, in the wind.
But when you *see* forces like that, they're already in your mind.
They just look like what they're making themselves look like to you.

DAVID

Like people.

JOAQUIN

Or like little birds, or coyotes, or even tumbleweeds, sometimes.

DAVID

Do they have substance? like people?

JOAQUIN

When one struggles with them, they are solid, but soon lose their tension.

DAVID

Why? Why do they make themselves look different? like that? Is it a joke?

JOAQUIN

We're the joke. Not being able to train our eyes to see.
Ordinary people see like spiders, without a strand of understanding.

DAVID

Why? Why do they want to trick us?

JOAQUIN

They do what they do.

DAVID

Then what's their purpose in life?

JOAQUIN

That's like asking me, what's *your purpose* in life? What's *mine*?
I really don't know. Or my mother's.
And if it's questions like that you want answered, find a different road.

DAVID

Your mother? What about your mother?

JOAQUIN

My heart felt destroyed, when I was a boy and the Mexican soldiers killed her. A poor, humble Yaqui woman. I kept asking, why? What's the purpose in life?

DAVID

I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

JOAQUIN

Don't worry about it. There's no need. I didn't bring it up to take us off the path. It was long ago. We were talking about allies. Stick to that in your mind now.

DAVID

Why? Why are there things like allies out there?

JOAQUIN

They're here. We're here. That's all there is to it.

DAVID

Are allies around a lot? I mean, on the street. Where people can see them?

JOAQUIN

There are plenty of them around.

DAVID

On the streets? In crowds?

JOAQUIN

Why do you have to think everyone in a crowd is human?

DAVID

Because I do.

What else *is there* for a man to think?

And if they're not out to hurt us, what am I missing?

By not *seeing* them?

JOAQUIN

You're colorblind, and you're asking me what you're missing, not seeing all the colors in the world?

DAVID

No. I'm just saying: Even if I am colorblind, does that stop me from doing my job in the world? like fighting evil?

JOAQUIN

Fighting evil is *your road*.
And *how* you fight evil is *your* decision.
Making decisions is what a warrior does.
That's the thing of importance.
Making the decision; and wearing it. Like a hat. Like my teaching you.
But whether you can see evil depends on whether you can see at all.
And if you never see, your marathon will be over sooner than the finish line.

DAVID

Okay. I can't argue with that.
But, as to allies, what am I missing? Not being able to see them?
What do *you* get, watching them? When you do.

JOAQUIN

[*pause; then laughing*] It's agreeable, to me. To sit, and watch.
In parks. At bus stations.
Sometimes I might wait hours. Once I saw two together.
Sitting side by side. That was the only time I ever saw two together like that.

DAVID

And did it teach you anything?

JOAQUIN

Even if a brujo doesn't have an ally of his own,
he can learn by watching how to handle power.
My benefactor taught me that.

DAVID

And that's what *you* are? My *benefactor*?

JOAQUIN

Power desires to be shared, not hoarded.
Whether we live, or we die, benefactors share power.

DAVID

And allies are power?

JOAQUIN

Allies are not power, and don't control it, directly.
They act upon men, in more indirect ways.
And that's why they can be dangerous.
Because they can bring out fear and evil in a person, beyond the person's control.

DAVID

Like Satan?

JOAQUIN

That's why the apprenticeship of a man of knowledge is so long.
He has to gain clarity.
He has to become crystal clear.
He has to live by choosing *deliberately* to do things. Everything.
And it takes time. And it takes effort.
He has to reduce what's unnecessary to a minimum in his life,
in order to be able to withstand his encounters with the allies.

DAVID

And then he can *see*?

JOAQUIN

My ally pushed me into a fire.

DAVID

Pushed you?

JOAQUIN

Drove me to do it to myself.

DAVID

How many times?

JOAQUIN

Just one time.
And the scars disappeared when I became one with the ally.

DAVID

Is death a force like that?

JOAQUIN

Death is a friend. Not a force.
The only completely honest friend you have in your life.
Always over your left shoulder.
And if ever you feel things are getting desperate,
you can turn to your friend, and ask it if you're about to be annihilated.
And death will tell you: Nothing really matters outside of its touch.
And you're not dead yet.

DAVID

I *am* afraid of death.

Lights dim, and DAVID is lit in a spot of red-golden orange light (like the light of a sunset). There is a steady “om” sound in the background as the light spreads out from DAVID, changing to a pink luminosity surrounding him and the space immediately around him. Then normal lighting returns; the spot goes out; and the “om” sound stops.

DAVID

What just happened?... Something happened.
I remembered something my mother told me, when I was a child.
Like a dream.
I could hear her voice calling me. Clear as the sky.
Speaking to me. Calling: “David. David Miguel.”
And it saddened me, profoundly.
I felt all alone, all of a sudden.
Needing to be held.
Needing to be understood.
Needing to bear the weight of her love for me.
And knowing I never....
Knowing I never did and never could love her that way.
Thoughts of love and thoughts of not loving her.
But more than thoughts. Complete cells of pure emotional image....
Did you hear her, don Joaquin?

JOAQUIN

[*laughing*] *You are too blessed*, my friend. Simply too blessed.
And I don't know why.
Mescalito likes you.
That's why.
He hovers over you.
It's a clear omen. I couldn't have wished for a better one.
Mescalito has chosen you.
You are alone. In this world. Almost completely alone. We all are.
And Mescalito has come to you; and been gentle with you; and given you light.
With no more effort from you than one, two, three, pancakes.

DAVID

One, two, three, what?

JOAQUIN

One, two, three, pancakes....
Life is what you choose to make of it.
And once you realize that life is yours, alone.
Once you realize that *you are* alone in it.
Life is the road *you choose, with your heart*, to reality.
Like your very own cloud, to carve and draw upon.
Like your very own stack of pancakes.
And if you feel you need to change, change.
No mañana. Now.
With faultless intentions.

DAVID

And what does life feel like then, to a man of knowledge?

JOAQUIN

Nothing.

DAVID

Nothing?

JOAQUIN

Life to a brujo is unconnected to emotions.
A brujo chooses when to act, and where to act,
and lets the chips fall where they may.
Outcomes are nothing. Intention is everything.

DAVID

And a brujo doesn't care?

JOAQUIN

And a brujo doesn't care.

DAVID

Then, why live?

Pause.

What's our purpose?... [*beat*] Do you understand what I'm asking you?

JOAQUIN

Every single time I act, I act with purpose.

DAVID

But if your acts don't matter ...? Do *I* even matter to you?

JOAQUIN stands, laughing heartily, and goes over to DAVID. DAVID stands; and JOAQUIN hugs him.

JOAQUIN

If you mean anything to me, it's because of my will.

They sit back down.

DAVID

I've always thought you cared for me.
Or, why else would you be teaching me?

JOAQUIN

I *do* care for you, because I *will* myself to care for you.

DAVID

And if you didn't "will" yourself to care for me, you wouldn't?

JOAQUIN

Correct.

Pause.

My will controls all the follies of my life.
Which includes you, and my teaching you.

DAVID

Then *my will* controls what I learn from you?

JOAQUIN

Sad, isn't it?

DAVID

Sad?

JOAQUIN

Sad that you're thinking, and not *seeing*.

DAVID

Seeing what?

JOAQUIN

When a man learns to see, he finds himself alone.
With nothing but his folly. And his will. And he is content.

DAVID

Seeing is learning unimportance?

JOAQUIN

Sí. When we see, we see ourselves thinking how important we are.
Feeling how important we feel we must be.
And it makes us laugh.

DAVID

I think it would make *me* cry.

JOAQUIN

Some, it makes laugh.
Some it makes cry.
Some, sing.
Some, dance.
Some, eat tacos and beans.
Some, be silent....
Not you, of course.

DAVID

I think it would make *me* cry....
Or drive me to despair.

JOAQUIN

Seeing how sadness and despair are such indulgences of yours,
all I can tell you is, talk to death about it.
Like I said. Death is your friend.
It's the one thing that can give you strength,
to withstand feeling sorry for yourself.

DAVID

But ... //

JOAQUIN

Shhh.

DAVID

I think I could be braced for dying ...
but losing my homeland, not ever seeing any ... //

JOAQUIN

Be quiet, now.

A period of silence.

DAVID

If *seeing* is seeing our unimportance, is that funny to you?

JOAQUIN

When I *see*, everything is equal, and nothing is important.
But when I look, I see the humorous side of you, and I laugh my ass off.

DAVID

What? What's the humorous side of me?

JOAQUIN

You remind me of a bushy-tailed rat, sticking its tail in another rat's hole.
To frighten it away. In the desert.
If you're not careful, you could lose your tail, what with all your questions.

DAVID

And it makes you forget.... My being with you helps you forget.
Then what happens when someone you love, like your mother, dies?

JOAQUIN

Maybe we shouldn't talk about this.

DAVID

I mean, say your grandson. What if he were to die?

JOAQUIN

My son died.

DAVID

Your son?... I don't know about him.

JOAQUIN

He was killed. Building the highway. Through the mountains.
Crushed by rocks.

DAVID

Hell! I'm sorry.
Maybe we *shouldn't* talk about this anymore.

JOAQUIN

When I got there, to the blast site, he was nearly gone.
His body was mangled; and I just stood, along with the others, looking.
Then I shifted my eyes, and saw his colors expanding, out, like a cloud.
That's how I saw his death. And knew he was still within the Earth.
Had I looked, I would have felt myself crying.

DAVID

[beat] I'm sorry.

JOAQUIN

It was nearly ten years ago....

And I could have screamed, knowing I would never see his fine form walk again.

But I shifted my eyes, and I saw him expanding out, into the all of life,
everything filling him, to the brim.

Pause.

We are luminous beings, conceived of energy.

Our will is our fundamental power.

We are not objects. We are conscious. We are continuous. We are boundless.

And consciousness is at the core of Creation.

You just need to shift your eyes to see it.

DAVID

You're lucky. To be able to shift your eyes like that.

JOAQUIN

Lucky?!

Bullshit.

It's hard work.

DAVID

What's it like?... To die?

JOAQUIN

Death is a whorl. A foggy blindness, at first.

You can no longer touch your face.

Or your mouth.

Or your eyes.

Or your nose.

Or your ears.

You're enveloped, like in a cave. Or in a whale.

And you long for a friend's arms around you.

And then you know: This is what you worked a lifetime for.

A freedom you could never have imagined.

Colors, everywhere. Bright. And bells. And flight. Like a crow. In the air.

Through the mind of a crow.

Seeing. Seeing that not a single thing is in any way the same.

When we see, nothing remains as we used to know it.

DAVID

Is that how *I* will experience it?

JOAQUIN

Let's get some sleep.

They stand and exit into the shack.

SCENE 4 – THE ROAD TO SEEING

El camino para ver

Afternoon of the next day. JOAQUIN and DAVID are returning to Joaquin's house after a walk in the hills. DAVID is a little out of breath. They sit on the ground, and JOAQUIN begins to show DAVID how to assemble traps for small animals – cutting and cleaning branches, and assembling them. Time passes in quiet. DAVID breaks the silence.

DAVID

Do you ever doubt yourself, don Joaquin?

Pause.

I guess not....

Why did I come here?

Not to learn how to make animal traps, that's for sure.

Pause.

I came here to learn to become a man of knowledge.

And to learn to see. But I'll never learn to see, will I?

JOAQUIN

You came here because you decided to come here.

That's the way of a warrior.

DAVID

Does a warrior worry, don Joaquin? All the time? Like me?

JOAQUIN

There are only two of us here. ¿No es eso cierto?

DAVID

True.

JOAQUIN

And only one of us who can work his hands and mouth at the same time. True?
So, please stop talking. It will relax you.

To learn to see you must learn to stop talking all the time.

**After a while in silence they move to the
rocks to sit and take a rest. JOAQUIN
starts a fire in the pit.**

JOAQUIN

A warrior lives by acting impeccably. Not by thinking about acting. But by *acting*.
And he takes responsibility for his actions. All of them. That is his confidence.
Haven't I taught you even that?

The confidence of a warrior is *not* the confidence of the average man.

The average man seeks certainty in the eyes of others. And in words.

The warrior seeks impeccability in his own eyes, and calls it humility.

Once you make a decision, don't stew over it. Before, if you must. But never after.

DAVID

But how do I know if I've made the right decision?

JOAQUIN

You turn it loose. Into the sky.

DAVID

That's not very reassuring.

JOAQUIN

Think of your death. That will help control your urges, words, and regrets.

DAVID

How can I trust in a logic like that? It's, so weak.

JOAQUIN

In a world where death is the hunter, mi amigo, there is no time for regrets.

DAVID

I wish it were easier.

JOAQUIN

The spirit of a warrior is not geared to attachment. It is geared to struggle, as if
each struggle is the warrior's last. Embrace that, and nothing will seem easier.

DAVID

When your son died ... was crushed ... you told me

JOAQUIN

¿Sí?

DAVID

That you shifted your eyes.

Is shifting your eyes the only way a warrior combats sorrow?

JOAQUIN

No.

DAVID

How else?

JOAQUIN

Another way is to put yourself down on the ground, and howl like a coyote.

DAVID

You're joking.

Like a coyote?

JOAQUIN

I'm not joking.

When a coyote howls for a while he forgets the other world exists.

He forgets his sadness.

He only feels the warmth of the Earth....

Sí.

DAVID

Explain it again.

How does a warrior make decisions that he knows he will not regret?

JOAQUIN

He follows the beat of his heart. Its whispers, sounds, and *seeing*.

He choose his path with heart.

DAVID

I've chosen more paths with curiosity than with heart.

JOAQUIN

Sí. I know you have.

DAVID

Because I've been more attracted to variety and newness,
than to the patient warmth of the Earth.

Because I'm drawn to learning and doing new things. All the time.

JOAQUIN

And just this morning you've learned to make animal traps, with your hands.

DAVID

Possibly I've had bigger things in mind.

JOAQUIN

Trust in the little things, and let them satisfy you.

DAVID

If things like that are what a warrior lays his trust in ...
I mean, out into thin air like that ... is life fulfilling?

JOAQUIN

Everything in life is filled to the brim.
You don't have to make up excitement or competition.
Life needs no victories and defeats to be fulfilling.
Living as a warrior puts man fully into the presence of life's miracle.
It's what he has. And it's all he needs.
Together with his death, what else can a man ask for?

DAVID

Maybe a little more certainty? Maybe a little more love?

JOAQUIN

Look life in the eye. Like an artist. What more love do you need? It's all there.
Becoming a man of knowledge takes years of striving.
Without whimpering like a child. Without giving up until you learn to see.
And then you realize, that nothing really matters.
And *certainty* certainly doesn't matter.

DAVID

Some things matter. Some things *have* to matter.
Like hunger, for example.
It's real, and here, and now.
And how do you look at that?

JOAQUIN

With patience.
Patience is a warrior's gentle companion.
Patience is the way of a warrior.
A warrior knows what he is waiting for, and he wants for nothing else.
If he needs to eat, he finds a way to food because he is *not* hungry.
If something hurts his body, he finds a way to stop it because he is *not* in pain.

DAVID

Tell that to the poor.

JOAQUIN

Being poor is only a thought.
Like hunger, and anger, and disappointment, and hatred.
They're all just thoughts, and only thoughts.
Without the knowledge and power to set his thoughts straight,
man is mere dust, or love, in the wind.

DAVID

Forget about the warriors.
What about the others?
What are *they* supposed to do?

JOAQUIN

You want to be *their* protectors? At the expense of enlightening yourself?

DAVID

I believe in social justice, and social action, and social conscience, and love.

JOAQUIN

You want to connect your life with others.

DAVID

Is there anything wrong with that?

JOAQUIN

Fine. But the only way to be part of someone else's life is to be fully part of your own first.

DAVID

Social justice and equal rights for all *is* a part of my life. A *big* part.

JOAQUIN

Then have the confidence in them that your heart does.
Stop being blinded by consequences. Stop thinking *animal traps*,
when they might just as well be spirit traps, for allies to fall headlong into.
The world will always have people challenged by social injustice.
Your Jesus said so. So don't let their misfortune take away *your power*.
The world's weaknesses mean nothing. Like victory and defeat mean nothing.

DAVID

What can I do, don Joaquin? I feel so powerless where I am right now.
So inconsequential; and I can't help it. It's just me.

JOAQUIN

[*a thoughtful beat*] If I can't guide you to *see* color,
maybe I can help you feel it.

DAVID

How do you mean?

JOAQUIN

There's a story about California's farm workers ... //

DAVID

César Chávez? ... //

JOAQUIN

Who were hired on, at the going rate, at the beginning of the harvest.
And then there were others, hired on later, when time was running short.
And they all got paid the same amount of money.

DAVID

What do you mean, the same amount?

JOAQUIN

The exact same dolares.
Those who worked a month. Those who worked less.
It didn't matter. They all received the same cash.
And there were complaints. Workers said it was unfair.

DAVID

Well, wasn't it?

JOAQUIN

No.
Not from a warrior's perspective.
It's *socialism*, they bellowed.
It's my right, the landowner said, as long as I paid you what I promised you.
Do you see less, he asked them, because my eyes see more?

DAVID

Are you saying socialism is social justice?

JOAQUIN

I say, the prize is the work, not the Yankee Dollar. Because work is knowledge.

DAVID

I'm not following you.

JOAQUIN

The light, I've told you about, that shines out,
like a luminous, egg-shaped cloud of colored fibers, around a man?
With arms and legs like luminous bristles?

DAVID

Yes?

JOAQUIN

Well, in addition, there's a set of especially long fibers,
emanating right from the middle. Right around his navel.

DAVID

Oh?

JOAQUIN

And those who can *see* them can learn to work with their fibers.
To train them to be tentacles, to grasp hold of things.
Like onto boulders, or bushes, or buses.
To give themselves superhuman balance.
Like a fly on a window pane.

DAVID

Everybody can do that?

JOAQUIN

No. It takes years of hard work.
Not everybody who can see has the same inclinations.

DAVID

What inclinations?

JOAQUIN

Yours is a love for justice. It's what is most true to your nature. Not mine.
And someday you'll see how unimportant it is.
Because when you can *see*,
you will see that everything is equally unimportant.

DAVID

That's my problem, isn't it?
I don't want everything to be equal like that.

JOAQUIN

Your problem is, you don't want to slow down....
Slow down. Let go. Forget about taking notes.

JOAQUIN takes a dry twig and moves it, as though sketching dancing figures in the air. He then stands, throws the twig into the fire, and enters the house, to return with what looks like goggles with opaque lenses.

JOAQUIN

Here. Put these on.

JOAQUIN hands the goggles to DAVID, who puts them on; and while he does so, JOAQUIN throws something into the fire, which makes it flare up for a moment, and then smoke.

DAVID

I can't see a thing, with these things on.
Is this a trick? To make me see something?

JOAQUIN

Yes. It's a trick. Like life is.
And knowledge.
Like I'm a trick, and learning's a trick.
Now, just breathe in, and take my hand.... Trust me.

JOAQUIN leads DAVID over to one of the two straw mats lying on the ground at the side of the house, and spins him around a number of times.

JOAQUIN

Lie down. Here. On the mat.

DAVID lies down on the mat, with Joaquin's help. There is a pause.

DAVID

Is making me sick part of the trick?

JOAQUIN

Silencio.

Long pause.

JOAQUIN

Find it in the darkness.

DAVID

Only the blind can see? Is that it?

JOAQUIN

No. The blind cannot see. Watch.

DAVID

For what?

JOAQUIN

For the guardian.

Pause.

DAVID

Am I allowed to go to sleep?

JOAQUIN

If you do, you will die.
Now, *no more questions.*

DAVID remains, lying quietly on the mat. In a few moments an image appears on a scrim situated behind the shack. At first it's nothing more than a gnat, flying through smoky air and landing on a straw mat like David's. But as it approaches, it grows larger and larger, until it becomes a brilliantly black monster, some 20 to 25 feet high, with slick, shiny scales, and a mouth drooling green slime. The sound of its wings buzzing grows louder and louder. Its body is a patchwork of tufts of black hair and white bulges. The creature eventually takes to the air, circling and circling through the smoke, and temporarily flying out of sight, only to reappear, flying directly toward them. DAVID lets out a shriek, sits up, and tears the goggles from his eyes.

DAVID

O, my God. O, my God. It hurt me. Bad.
I going to die.
It hit me, right between the eyes. And blinded me.

JOAQUIN immediately moves to David's side, rubbing David's forehead, arms, and legs with brown and green leaves. Next, JOAQUIN dumps a bucket of water over DAVID. DAVID relaxes, tries to speak, but finds it impossible to say another word. He clears his throat, and still no words. JOAQUIN takes David's head in his hands, and helps him to lie back down again, on his side, on the mat.

JOAQUIN

Shhhh. Close your eyes now.

DAVID closes his eyes.

JOAQUIN

Stretch your legs out.

DAVID stretches out his legs.

JOAQUIN

Now, rest.

DAVID relaxes. JOAQUIN sits down on the other mat to wait. There is a substantial pause.

DAVID

That creature I saw, in front of me....
[beat] Who said that?

JOAQUIN stands and laughs.

DAVID

It was a hundred feet tall, and going to kill me.

JOAQUIN

You're lucky it was only a hundred feet. For some the guardian blacks out the sky.

DAVID

Who's talking? Am I? Who am I?

JOAQUIN sits down, laughing so hard he has to hold his sides.

DAVID

Get up.

Springs to his feet.

Joaquin?... Joaquin?... don Joaquin, are you there?

JOAQUIN

[*standing*] Sí.

DAVID

Put me down.

JOAQUIN

Put yourself down.

DAVID

How?

JOAQUIN

Tell yourself, "Down."

DAVID

Down.

DAVID collapses, on his face, on the mat. JOAQUIN goes over and turns DAVID on his side again.

DAVID

Gracias.

JOAQUIN

De nada.

Pause. DAVID sits up.

DAVID

I feel ... what? Unknown. Totally unknown. Totally spaced. Unbalanced. I don't understand a thing.... Why don't I just go away?

You will. **JOAQUIN**

Will I? **DAVID**

You will.... And you'll return. **JOAQUIN**

Will I? Why? **DAVID**

Because there's no other way for you to live now. And you know it.
The same reason I could not stay away when I was younger.
And because you want to *see* before you die. **JOAQUIN**

Did I just *see*? **DAVID**

**DAVID covers his face with his hands.
Then he brings his hands down.**

What did I just do? **DAVID**

You got up.
You sat down.
You talked to yourself like a baby. **JOAQUIN**

I didn't know I could do that. **DAVID**

Of course you did. **JOAQUIN**

I swear to you ... // **DAVID**

Nonsense. **JOAQUIN**

**JOAQUIN gets up and starts to walk
away.**

DAVID

[*calling out*] If I believe what I saw was real ... //

JOAQUIN

[*turning*] And if you don't? What do you think hit you?

DAVID

You?

**JOAQUIN walks back to DAVID,
laughing heartily.**

JOAQUIN

That's nonsense, and you know it.

DAVID

If that monster, the guardian, can hurt me that bad, how can I go on?...
Do I try to kill it?

JOAQUIN

You can't kill the guardian. Or make it disappear.
But you can will it not to hurt you again.
And then you'll be free to find your sight.

DAVID

I don't understand. I don't understand. How can I ever understand?

JOAQUIN

You can't. Not your way.
That's your problem. You build scarecrows. With words. And writing.
You say you want to become a man of knowledge. More than anything.
But you continue to believe that everything in the world can be explained to you.
And when you insist on understanding, you're not considering your real life.

They both sit.

DAVID

When I have the knowledge, can I explain life?

JOAQUIN

Can you explain the guardian?
You saw it.

DAVID

I can't.

JOAQUIN

Because most things in the world can't be explained your way.
When I tell you the guardian can hurt you, can knock the Hell out of you,
I know what I'm talking about.
When I tell you that you can move out of its way by your own will,
I know what I'm talking about.
You just won't believe me.

DAVID

What's my problem? Is it just in my mind?

JOAQUIN

Everything is just in your mind.

DAVID

And *seeing*? Is *that* just in my mind, too?

JOAQUIN

Everything is just in your mind, I said.

DAVID

Then why can't *I* see?

JOAQUIN

You can, you fool.

Pause.

DAVID

Don't you ever doubt yourself, don Joaquin?

JOAQUIN

The brain can be a stallion, standing over your body. Untamed and unrestrained.
Tame it. Use your will to control it.
Hold it in your mind's eye. See it shivering its muscles. See it rearing up.
Call out to it with a force and energy from within.
That is what you must master to become a warrior.
The power of a wild horse.
The power of fear.
The power of a force you must tame with your will.
Imagine it's a battle for survival.
On the verge of death.
At the precipice of death.
And jump.... Into the abyss.

DAVID

That I could *never* do.
But I'll try.

JOAQUIN

It's imperative, if you try, you *do it*.
A half-assed jump, and you could become a captive for life.

DAVID

It will kill me?

JOAQUIN

No. But if you choke, you'll never feel truly alive again.

DAVID

[*sarcastically*] Great.

JOAQUIN

En serio. Feeling truly alive and seeing are birds of a feather....
Let me tell you a story.

DAVID

About?...

JOAQUIN

There's something a little less than eight billion people living on this planet.
Right?

DAVID

So?...

JOAQUIN

One day each one is given a special coin, to use for flipping.

DAVID

Babies? too?

JOAQUIN

Parents and computers will do the flipping for them.

DAVID

[*unconvinced*] Weird.

JOAQUIN

The first day eight billion coins are flipped; and half match that day's choice.
So, four billion are eliminated, day one.

DAVID

Where's this going?

JOAQUIN

Day after day, for three weeks, contestants keep flipping their coins, until there are only about thirty-eight hundred left in the world with perfect scores. And a few begin writing books.

DAVID

Books?

JOAQUIN

About how their lives are so full,
because of their special, amazing coin-flipping powers.
And another week goes by; and now only thirty-two are left in the world.
And one of them begins to have religious followers.
Until the sun has set on the thirty-second day.
When there are only two people left in the world still perfect.

DAVID

Or think they are.

JOAQUIN

You get my point. Because on the thirty-third flip, one of them is eliminated.
Leaving a world champion.
Who loses the next day.
And asks: What's it all about? anyway?

DAVID

What is it all about? anyway? Your story?

JOAQUIN

It's about knowledge. What any warrior would know.

DAVID

Which is?

JOAQUIN

You need to lose weight, Miguel.
You think too much about yourself, and your comfort. Like the rest of the world.
Flipping coins, or amassing fortunes, or winning world championships,
it all keeps you from seeing the truth around you.

DAVID

Which is?

JOAQUIN

How life is lived. Like Delores is doing.
To be a warrior you need to be light and flexible. All the time. Not heavy.

DAVID

By doing what?

JOAQUIN

By finding the road your heart chooses for you. And following it. Impeccably.
Once a warrior decides something, he puts fears and worries aside.
His decision closes the door to them. Impeccably.

DAVID

What road?

JOAQUIN

A warrior knows what roads.
And they are not world fame, or coin-flipping, or other obsessions, or excuses.
They are filled to the brim, with heart.

DAVID

But how? How does a warrior *know*?

JOAQUIN

From within. Without worrying himself about his own importance.
The spirit within will always answer a warrior's questions, when he's quiet.
He is crystal clear on that. Nothing is important.

DAVID

I'm not following this.
If nothing's important, how in the world can *anybody* make a decision?

JOAQUIN

We've talked about this.
A man of knowledge lives by acting, not by fretting.
He chooses a path with heart, and follows it.
He chooses it because it is unimportant to him.
He sees it. It's as though nothing ever happened before.
All is new. The world's incredible. And he laughs.
Because his heart sees what is important to him.
The problem with others is that they choose paths to make themselves feel
important. Which is utterly unimportant. Like flipping coins.
People look at themselves already thinking they're important.
And that makes them need to *feel* that they're important.

DAVID

How can something be important, and of no importance, both at the same time?

JOAQUIN

We have two brains. Three actually.

The third keeps us breathing,

What's important is what's important in your heart-brain,
and not what's important in your ego-brain.

When you see the folly of choosing for your ego-brain,
the chatter inside goes away, and you can begin to hear clearly. And see clearly.

DAVID

And dream? Does it change how people dream?

Does a warrior dream? In a normal way?

JOAQUIN

Warriors most certainly dream.

DAVID

What's it like? when warriors dream?

JOAQUIN

It's a passageway carrying them miles over land, water, and sky.

DAVID

I had a dream, maybe, like that, a few nights ago.

JOAQUIN

You did? Do you want to talk about it?

DAVID

I was walking past a lake where a small fishing boat was tied up.

It had a pool of bilge in it, with oil spreading over the top,
like a rainbow around its rusted engine, to its oarlocks.

Hanging beside the boat, half out of the water, was a fish.

A tremendous brown fish, striped and speckled with even darker brown.

Eyes like dinner plates. And yellow.

A hook, fast in the corner of its mouth. Bleeding.

I pulled it off the hook, to release it,

when suddenly it jumped out of my hands, twitched for an instant at my feet,
and then flew, like a bird, into a nearby eucalyptus tree. Flew. Like a bird.

But still a fish. Its brown battered skin had been transformed into rainbow colors.

I stared. And everything started becoming rainbows and rainbows, everywhere.

And the thing itself turned into a rainbow, of pure light, and was gone....

JOAQUIN

Was that all? to your dream?

DAVID

No. It caught me. Like, on a hook.
And I followed it.
Into the rainbow. Into another world.
I felt suddenly weightless.
Sprayed out, at the end, like from a hose, onto a massive mound of dirt.
Taller than a house.
Taller than a monument.
Taller than a Grand Canyon.
And the hook was gone. From the corner of my mouth. Bleeding.
I was in another world, and terribly heavy, all of a sudden.
Gravity held me so tight I couldn't move. Not a muscle.
Just lying there, helpless, and drowning, when the bird-like fish came back.
And freed me. Like I had done to him.
I could feel its touch, but not fingers, or a hand. Just energy, pulling me.
Ripples of energy going through me, to get me on my feet.
And I was free.

The mound of dirt, I could see, was more like a monstrous sponge.
Porous, rough, and cavernous. Darkish brown.
And right in front of me the bird-fish turned into a bee, and flew in.
Because that sponge had become a beehive.
And I flew in behind it.
Tunnel after tunnel, turning left and right, off at all angles.
Getting darker and darker.
And a voice I could hear, somewhere inside, telling me,
"Choose a tunnel, and live in it forever.
You can learn everything here, you want to learn. Even learn to see."
And I woke up screaming, "Get me out of here!"

[*beat*] What did it mean, don Joaquin?

JOAQUIN

Be aware. I can tell you that. Be very aware.

DAVID

Why?

JOAQUIN

It's the force of an ally, wanting to take command of your consciousness.

DAVID

Why me?

JOAQUIN

Because you are vulnerable, and they are predators. And you are willing.

DAVID

Willing? Is that what makes me vulnerable?

JOAQUIN

You are willing to abandon yourself. And that, indeed, makes you vulnerable. Because you seek knowledge over everything else. And have gained just enough to be dangerous. And because you indulge yourself in a belief that you are unique.

DAVID

Am I? unique?

JOAQUIN

Of course not. We all have been down that road.

DAVID

But could it actually take control of my mind?
If I didn't want it to?

JOAQUIN

Just watch out. Be prepared. A man who observes that he has power, and believes he is unique, is unquestionably vulnerable. Because power and uniqueness are unbeatable as a combined corrupting force. They make you feel you have absolute control, with impunity. That you can stop at any time you want. But you can't, once you've gone too far. And you can be taken, right out of this world.

DAVID

How can that be true?

JOAQUIN

The consciousness I have, and that you so much desire, compels us to grow. It won't let go. It gets in our blood. Its presence is indestructible. It knows that it knows no pain, no hunger, no anger, no lust, and no impatience. It's powerful enough to make us fly, while the rest of us stays below. It's powerful enough to detach itself and connect with the energy of the whole enchilada. And that's how it attracts allies. But knowledge without freedom is the eternal unborn. And a warrior must make certain that his growth is through work. Not short-cuts. Facing life. And hardship. And life-or-death confrontations. Not a Siren's song.

DAVID

So, how could an ally use it against us?
To move us out of the world?

JOAQUIN

Consider a mask, whose face reminds you of grief and loss.
How emotions can make you feel like you're moving in air above the ground.
It's like that. It's a lure like that. Sadness. And despair.
It catches you unexpected, in an emotional way.
And, before you know it, you lose your balance.
And an ally can whisk you away into in its world.
Because a man of knowledge knows enough to consent.
Unlike an ordinary person. And can become trapped through his will.
And the reason one can get trapped can be an honorable one.
Like the indulgence of saving another. Or mankind in general.
Or furthering knowledge.
With our powers as brujos, we can inadvertently cooperate with them.
To our own imprisonment.
And yours wouldn't be the first time.

DAVID

You're exaggerating.

JOAQUIN

Not at all. It's a death before death. Or a life not ever being born.
Because, when a brujo *lives*, and then dies, if he's honed his will, his will doesn't die. It crosses to eternity.
And everything from then on that happens to him is no longer his.
It belongs to everything and everyone. It's the true joy of created consciousness.
The sorcerers I come from use the term "infinity" for what happens.
It's the shadow of the dark sea. The infinite female.
Earth's mother womb. The endless dream. The Toltec trail.
And giving yourself to an ally works the same way, but in reverse.
You live in a contrived womb, safe, and protected, and neutral to life.

DAVID

Like a dream? Is it like a dream?

JOAQUIN

What?

DAVID

That kind of death?

JOAQUIN

No more so than an ordinary person's life is like a dream. Ignorant wisdom.
You gain wisdom, and yet, you have no way of knowing how you got it.
And no reflection of yourself in it.

DAVID

I wish, sometimes, you could talk to me like a normal person.
Not always in parables.

JOAQUIN

And *I* wish you could see better with your ears, David Miguel.
I wish you could understand better that your world of common-sense reality,
is merely a product of what people wish, and hope, and preach.
No more than bags of stories, with no truth of the elements.

JOAQUIN stands, and begins collecting various plants which he carefully places in bags (or small gourds) hanging from a belt fastened around his waist. He likewise picks up three eagle feathers. DAVID remains seated, watching. JOAQUIN then returns to DAVID.

JOAQUIN

A warrior is always careful to talk, kindly, to plants before plucking them.
Hearing what they have to say.
Wishing them peace.
It's very important.
For the warrior's own health, and theirs.

A crow's call can be heard.

Even the crow agrees.
This is my last wisdom to you, mi amigo:
If the sacred mountain won't come to you,
you must come to the sacred mountain.
To continue now down any other path would be ruinous for you.

JOAQUIN laughs, claps his hands in pleasure, and then removes his hat, letting it hang on his back by its cord around his neck. He puts on a multi-colored wool headband, into which he

places the three eagle feathers. Then, he commences climbing up the steep mountainside, stage-left of the shack. DAVID stands, watching. At times JOAQUIN seems to lose his footing. From time to time he stops, to look down at DAVID. And at a summit point JOAQUIN throws his arms up suddenly, giving DAVID one last, long look, and appears to flip his body off into space. He is covered with light around his body, and temporarily disappears behind a giant boulder, only to reappear in a few moments, seeming to float across from stage left to center stage, to stand on top of the flat-topped arch, and then gone.

DAVID

[reflective pause] Sooooo? This is your quaint goodbye to me, don Joaquin? You're gone? Without another word? Or hand? And me? What? You're leaving me? Out here? Never being able to get back to normal? A warrior's burden. On my back. For life. Right?

Pause.

Well, goodbye then, my friend. And to your awesome mountains. I shall miss them. And you. No matter how far my roads carry me away. I shall miss their roundness. Their enormous softness. Their soulful silence. I may learn to be more calm; but never to be cold. No. Not cold. A warrior has heart. I will always be led by my heart, warm....

Pause.

You're not coming back, are you? I don't understand. How a man like you can do this to me. Like. How can life pull the rugs out from under us all of a sudden? And, no warning. Absolutely no warning. What's it all about? This thing, inside, ripping me apart? Jesus Christ! I feel so alone and abandoned.

Pause.

DAVID

But I'll always feel you inside me, won't I? don Joaquin?
And someday, in the distance, I shall see you again. Won't I? And I'll call out.
And you'll wave. Won't you? Maybe with your hat. And smile.

DAVID closes his eyes and takes his hands, with great force, to the middle of his chest, pressing them in as though pressing a dagger into his heart with both hands. Then he stretches his hands out, toward the arch. Small iridescent spheres, the size of balloons, begin to float down and touch him. He opens his eyes to see them, filled with strands, like miniature balls of light. Silvery cobwebs. Stars. The Milky Way. Jupiter and its moons. Saturn and its rings. Earth. Mirrors reflecting eyes staring at eyes, and everything else in the theatre. Snow. Flowers. Escher prints. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

DAVID descends down to the town plaza.

DAVID

There is no truth in ordinary truth. End quote, don Joaquin.
A warrior's life makes no sense to a computer.
You knew all along, didn't you? And that I'd made my choice, forever.
Such long words in the mountains of Mexico.

Pause.

Did you find me? Or just trick me into finding you?
Trick me into trying, for the life of me, to see a person's luminous egg-shape.
Yaqui-faced, red-faced, brown-faced, black-faced, white-faced, two-faced.
Trick me into seeing the essence of things. The love of it. Life. Knowing. And you.
And if *I* ever want to disappear I'll do it as you have. Jumping. Into the abyss.
Just refusing to be in other people's worlds. And I'll be gone. In silence.

For so long a time I didn't understand much of anything you were telling me.
That life is a bird is a bird, that's all birds. That time is a nagual.
Whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference ends nowhere.

DAVID

What I'm hearing is that I will become a writer. Marginally.
One who will speak with the nagual in silence, to hear its completeness.
Everyone will shun me.
And belittle me.
Because I am mad. They'll say. And I frighten people.
And I will walk with aloneness.
On my chosen road.
With you.
Impeccability.

Stage center: The door in the arch opens, and out through it comes LIBERTY. She walks along the arch, lovingly touching the children's faces. Then she turns to face DELORES and her child, who are approaching her.

LIBERTY

We are a diaspora of ourselves, America.
We are the immigrants, of our time.
We are the immigrants along the way.
We are the blood and sweat and fears,
rehearsing chords of the free and the brave.
The weight of life is the work of a nation.
The truth of life is its foundation.

DELORES and the YOUNG GIRL come to LIBERTY. She takes them into her arms, and escorts them through the door, which then closes behind them.

Night descends. DAVID disappears. The MAGICIAN enters from the side and steps center stage under a spot.

MAGICIAN

Now is the witching time of night when churchyards yawn,
and fires die, and allies pass unseen.
When coyotes* howl, the moon above, and mountain cougars scream. * kī-oats
Now is the witching time of night when Hell itself breathes out a silent scream
of shadowed mysteries.

The scrim behind the shack, stage left, is lit with a dot of red in the middle, which grows, spinning or splashing, into a full, blood-red blotch, covering the entire surface.

MAGICIAN

If some shadows have offended, let their vision be attended.
And in the moments of your reverie, imagine one thing more, you're sitting here:
Imagine being by yourself, alone in a garden, or in a field.
And a blue jay flies, to perch itself a few feet away from you.
It gives you a thought that strikes you nonsensical. Magical.
That in the universe only energy exists. Not good. Not evil. Only energy.
What would you say to the bird?

[*beat*] I'd whistle.

END