

The audience enters.

A white screen separates audience from performer. We can see the **USHER's** upper body peeking out through the top right of the screen.

He has his mouth opened beyond human necessity and carries a red tray flooded with popcorn.

The audience sits.

The **VIOLIST**, stood on the balcony behind the spectators, starts playing.

The music fades to silence.

.

Long pause. Let saliva drip down.

**USHER: Here.** (Pause) **Look here.** (Opens and closes mouth) **Look.**

The **USHER** goes to grab some popcorn but stops



himself. Instead he opens his mouth again, closes it slowly and then continues his speech.

**USHER:** See her (long pause) and gaze upon her ruin. This child of man. Girl, a woman. No, not quite. A different kind. Different.

The **USHER** releases a retching noise. It's as if he's on the verge of throwing up. The **USHER** goes to grab more popcorn but stops himself.

**USHER:** My nerves are bad tonight. Something's up. I don't know what but...

Silence. The **USHER's** eyes widen, his mouth opens once again, inhumanly. Now it's as if he's screaming silently, we can only slightly hear

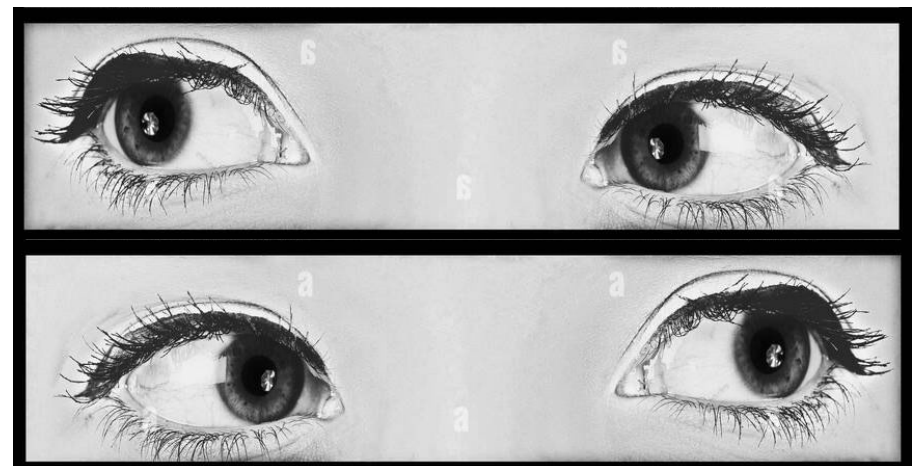


his whimpers. Then suddenly: **Red! Red! Oh, even in the blackest of night, through veils of shadows she still saw...** (Muffled scream; the USHER reaches to put a handful of popcorn in his mouth but stops himself) **Red! Look look look look look look look look...**

Blackout. The **USHER** releases a sharp breath.

Red light fills the room. A melody, played live, accompanies the lights.

**USHER** finally eats the popcorn: **Nothing on the right. Nothing on the left. Left, no. Right, no. Wait!** (Pause) **There she is. Look!** (Pause) **Squeezed. There she is. Look!** (Pause) **She's gone. Slithered fourth. Slithered fourth into, into... no! Not now. Not yet. Wait...** (Long pause) **I**



have no eyes. Or do I? There's no time for lies.  
It hears everything. It feels everything. It  
sees every... It's blind. It follows me blindly in  
the dark. Red! Oh sweet! A mouth.

Black out.

The **USHER** smiles in the darkness, the sound of  
saliva filling the room.

Back to white spotlight.

.

Pause.

The **USHER** blinks.

**USHER** (imitating Wendy's speech melody): **Sleep**  
**deprivation, that's what they called it... You**  
**see, to be deprived you have to be without**  
**necessity. It is, to be without, and it got me**



thinking - or it just made me think now - that  
I'm not deprived.

The **USHER** smiles while taking a cigarette out of  
the tray.

**USHER:** I'm not deprived, I've got everything I  
need in life. Gotten everything I want out of  
life... A cigarette. (The **USHER** stops to look at  
the exposed cigarette, freezes) **Maybe I'll have  
a cigarette. It'll calm me down.**

The **USHER** crushes the unlit cigarette onto the  
popcorn and coughs.

**USHER:** I hate the way it hits the back of my  
throat... **Wait.** (Speech melody inspired by NOT



I) Not going to dwell. I'm not going to dwell.  
Not tonight. Look to Her, Child of Mars.

The **USHER** looks to his right.

His gaze lingers before going back to the  
centre.

**USHER** (matching WENDY's energy but not the same  
melody): I saw **HER** again. The other day...  
(pause, hold breath and release) **Watching me.**  
**Again in that...** (pause, hold breath and  
release) **same coat and those red pumps. Just**  
**standing there. Watching me. It almost**  
**frightened me, almost...**

The **USHER** screams silently and then whispers:  
**She mocks me.**



Live music beings playing. The **VIOLIST** plays expertly.

The **USHER** opens his mouth again, this time lowering his head as saliva drips down, onto the tray.

Music stops.

The **USHER** raises his head back to its previous position.

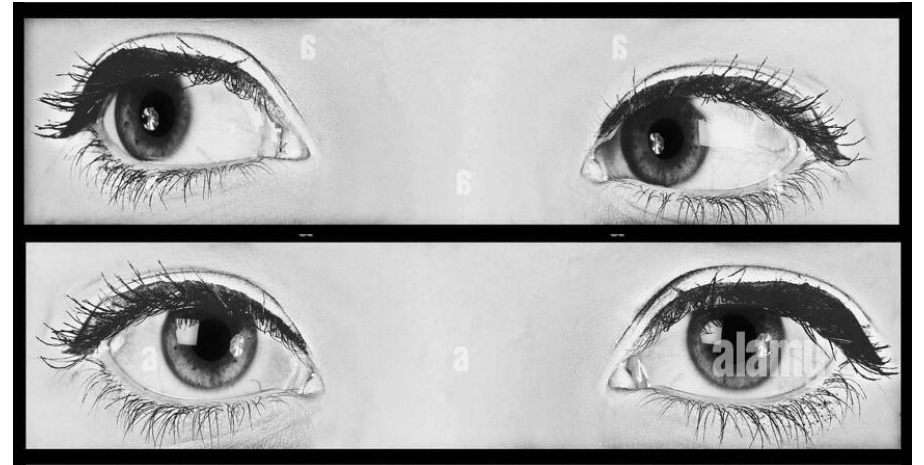
**USHER:** Wendy perks up with a deep breath. She picks up her makeup again and continues to apply it (The **USHER**'s eyes close, whisper) **Mustn't dwell. Not on HER. I'm not going to dwell on HER, I'm not going to think about HER, I won't even say her name...**

The **USHER** pauses his speech. He goes to pick up another popcorn yet stops himself.

**USHER:** Slowly, Wendy shambles on. (The **USHER** looks right to centre stage) She appears in an almost trance like state as she performs an aborted dance towards centre stage.

Silence. The **USHER** glares at the spot where Wendy is said to be. He extends this silence.

**USHER:** Her movements are steady and autonomous. She moves as if an animatronic. And, with a little grace, Wendy begins to remove her coat. (Long pause) She continues with this dance, a strange burlesque, until...





The **USHER's** hands start to shake, the tray follows.

**USHER** (watching): **Wendy, shaken, continues her dance. She is less mechanical now, her movements are more organic. Wendy's sultry guise begins to break. She is...**

The **USHER** stops his speech. His shaking slowly fades out before he continues: **She is pained.**

Silence.

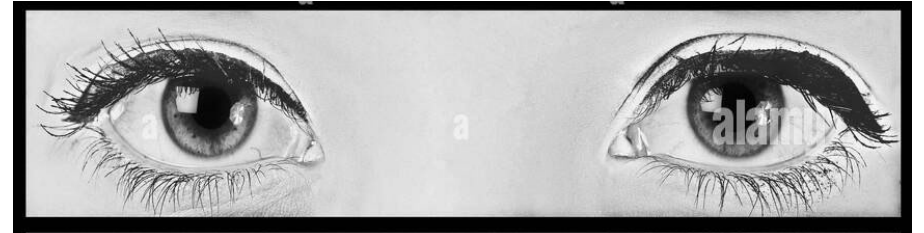
**USHER** (looking up): **Wendy dances and HER watches. Then, Mother appears. There's music, it intensifies. Until.**



The **USHER** struggles to breath, his face turns red. He moves to get another cigarette. He grabs it and, as soon as he does, coughs.



**USHER** (looking towards the audience): **The Mouth, bearing teeth.** (The **USHER** bares his teeth)



Long silence.

**USHER: Squeezed. From a single labouring orifice, slithered forth, without love and without exaltation into...**

The **USHER** looks right, towards **HER**, his gaze lingers.



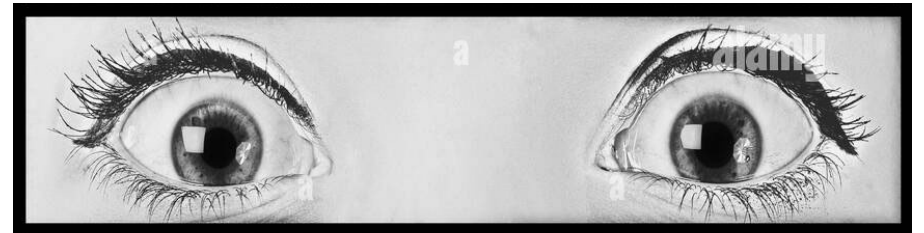
USHER (licks his lips, his gaze slowly moving to the audience, he plays with breath during this speech, he lets it guide it): **Squeezed. From a single labouring orifice slithered forth without love and without exaltation into nihil unto nihil, six-two-five-to-seven-four-zero, which by happy circumstance fell upon the contorted wreckage and blistered brightly booming beatitude unto Bacchae and bastard alike in bolts as defined by Helmholtz whose chromaticity is constituted by chroma and wavelength. Unforgotten was the colour and agonising was its consequence when MOTHER stooped so lowly into the white place and white mixed with red and red and red ruptured the glass and cracks shot outwards out and into the beyond, the landscape beyond the land of barren dust and white bones**



and dust, such as it were would be the remnant  
for we are but meat going from meat to mould and  
mould to dust and dust back into the  
postulations of liminality and the broader  
notions of revival and rebirth of organic  
matter, symbiotic or otherwise, to recompose or  
reconvene a physiognomy pale white, a slightly  
sad shade of...

The **USHER** pauses and bares his teeth.

**USHER:** ...pink but all the same all the same  
each enactment same as the last and just as it  
ever was that the dance of the seven veils was  
performed as if in a dream but a dreamer is one  
who lives to see the next dawn and another dawn  
shall break day after day in dynamic



dispositions of despair stagnant despondency,  
they yes they too devolve to mould and from  
mould to dust and from dust into . nothing . . .  
*nihil*. . just . . . nothing.

Long silence.

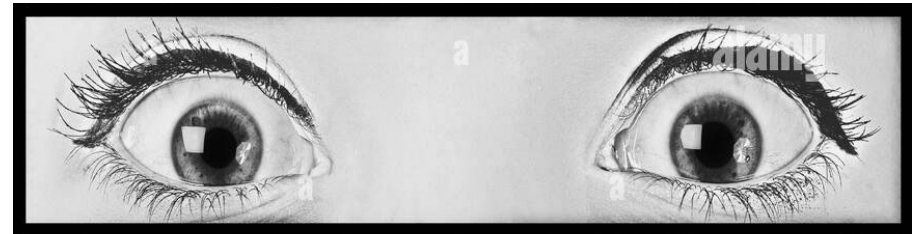
The **USHER** bares his teeth again, leans head back  
and slowly bites the air and head returns to  
previous position.

The **USHER** looks to his right.

**USHER:** Has her ruin come to pass?

Empty theatre space is filled with red light.

A melody, played live, accompanies the lights.



USHER: Red!

The USHER looks up.

USHER: Oh, even in the blackest of night, through  
veils of shadow she still saw (pause) red! And  
she covered as she does now, she sees it now,  
she smells it on the air, she tastes it on her  
tongue. Nothing on the right. Nothing on the  
left. Left, no. Right, no. Wait!

Silence.

USHER: Red, oh sweet...

The USHER licks his lips.



The USHER's gaze travels along the audience and stops at the centre.

USHER: You will see, you will look, and just as the girl, daughter of man, just as you, child of men, will see it. Look.

The USHER looks up: Behold. Red!

The USHER smiles widely, then shifts his attention to the tray.

The USHER's smile drops. He eats popcorn calm and silently.

USHER: Peace, the charms wound up.

Red light fades to darkness.

