

An Easter Play: Prelude Maundy Thursday

January 1945

In the ether-realm of speech

Cast

SPEAKER	dark blue clothing, head veiled
YOUTH (John 6:9)	clothed in white sheaths
RAPHAEL	
RAPHAEL'S EURYTHMIST	yellow, light blue
URIEL	
URIEL'S EURYTHMIST	red, violet
MICHAEL	
MICHAEL'S EURYTHMIST	green, peach-blossom
ANGEL	white, gold with bright wings
CHOIR	off stage

A cloudy landscape. MICHAEL, URIEL and RAPHAEL appear, each with their EURYTHMIST behind them.

SPEAKER [*appearing at right hand corner of the stage*]:

We warn human beings,
We summon their souls,
We shake up their spirits,
We waken the words
Which dreamlessly slumber
In the grave of mankind.
O world, wake up
And bring forth the essence
Of all-ruling love.
O mankind, awaken
To the bread, bestowed
And lying at your feet.

RAPHAEL: The bread has been bestowed.

URIEL: It lies here at your feet.

MICHAEL: O mankind, awaken!

O brothers in spirit,
When I see the image
Of multiplied bread,
I tremble with awe.

URIEL: O brothers in spirit,
When I hear the rustling
Of baskets and fishes,
My existence resounds.

RAPHAEL: O brothers in spirit,
When I grasp the goodness
Of living nourishment,
I awaken.

*[A YOUTH appears on the left, opposite
the Speaker.]*

YOUTH: Angels, do you call me here?

Ah, I still bear upon my hands
Imprints which are never-ending
Unto all eternity.
Bread and fishes did I bring once
And tables were filled with people
And all hearts flowed out in richness.
Yes, it was a precious offer,
Was a giving, a bestowal,
Was a most abundant feasting.
They were timeless great endowments
Which through me to men were given.
Never again I came to birth.
Chosen by His hands, my being
Was entrusted to the Spirit.
I am only voice and sounding.

*[YOUTH comes forward into
the middle of the stage.]*

Raphael	Uriel	Michael
	Youth	Speaker

YOUTH: The bread, bestowed
On the table of Earth;
The wine, offered up
At the altar of mankind.

RAPHAEL, URIEL, and MICHAEL: We shall receive them,
We shall transform them
Into offering deed,
Imprint them on man
As substance renewed.

YOUTH [*going to Raphael*]: The bread is rounding
In a brownish curve.
It breathes your striving
From man to the world.
From above to below,
From without to within,
The stream is outpoured
Which holds you in arm.
Man is breathing
And Earth is breathing,
Stars are breathing,
Worlds are breathing.
Translucent traces
Of breath are bearing
The course of planets
Into human hearts.
Man's blessed wishes, his holiest hopes
And bravest beliefs
Are through his breathing
Imprinted into
The book of the stars.

[*Behind Raphael RAPHAEL'S EURYTHMIST
appears, accompanying his speech with eurythmy.*]

RAPHAEL: The cycles of breathing
Would round within me
The strength of the bread.
The blessing of stars
Bakes in the grounds of my breath
The grace of the bread.

YOUTH [*going to URIEL*]: The substance of worlds
Is filled in the bread
With holiest light
From wisdom of stars.
The wisdom of light
Is guarding your being.
The starry gleaming
Of the wine is filled
With weaving warmth
From goodness of Heaven.
Your sheltering presence
Keeps watch over goodness.
You guard the wisdom,
You foster the goodness
In the stream of breath,
Transforming upwards!
Thus swim the fishes
Of the grace of the world
In translucent shining
From wisdom of stars
Blessedly onward.

[*Behind Uriel URIEL'S EURYTHMIST appears,
accompanying his speech with eurythmy.*]

URIEL: The light of wisdom
Will strengthen in me
The power of the bread.
The warm breath of goodness

Will receive through me
The blessing of the wine.

YOUTH [*going towards Michael*]:

The grapes ripen out
Into rounded fruit
In work of goodness
Flowing with warmth
From the heights of the world.
The winepresses tread
The good of the world
In barrel fulfilled
By human endeavour
And by earthly deed.
Thus form within you
The diligent works
Accomplished by men,
Achieved by mankind.
Oh help, that the fishes of goodness
Enliven the bloodstream of man,
That his doings be helpful
And the striving blessed
Of his earthly work
Be peacefully shaped
And gently achieved.

[*Behind Michael MICHAEL's EURYTHMIST appears,
accompanying his speech with eurythmy.*]

MICHAEL: The goodness of wine

I would transform
Into deed of man.
The power of wine
I can conduct
Into will for peace.

YOUTH [*going to Speaker*]: You, Speaker, speak:
Have you lost your words?

Were the sounds which you had
Only for deaf ears?
You, Speaker, proclaim:
Is your mouth now silenced?
Has the voice in you
Been muffled to death?
You, Speaker, say:
Is your tongue quite frozen?
Are your teeth chattering?
Have you lost the verse?

SPEAKER: No words of mine have gone.

My ego is mute,
My being extinguished,
My breath overcast.
So I live as if dead
And speak as if mute
And sound as if deaf.
Do you know it now?

[*In the place where the Youth first appeared,
an ANGEL appears. In the distance the singing
of many male voices.*]

ANGEL: Oh hear the singing,

How it sounds from the depths!
A human mouth with many single tongues
Is calling on the gods.
Fulfilment shall they find upon Earth
Only when you bend down in a silent listening,
And take up what the voices announce to you.

SPEAKER: Tell me the names of those

Whom we should hear.
Proclaim the I-word
Which they do bear.

ANGEL: Twelve they are

Around a table.
Twelve will they be

Around a Thirteenth.
 Twelve who are singing,
 Twelve who are speaking,
 Twelve who believe
 Because of the Thirteenth.

SPEAKER: Tell me the names
 And not the number.
 I seek the I
 And not the all.

ANGEL: Around a table are gathered
 Twelve sons of two mothers.
 They sing as if from one mouth,
 They speak as if with one tongue,
 They love as if from one heart.
 They take their leave
 And share a single grief.
 All are waiting for the one hour,
 Twelve are sitting in one round.

SPEAKER: The twelve are united
 In the one faith.
 Yet speak:
 Who are they singly,
 Each one just for himself?

ANGEL: Hear now the names
 Of each of these Twelve,
 And pay heed to the
 First eleven.

*[While the Angel is speaking, the YOUTH leaves the
 Speaker and goes to the centre of the stage. MICHAEL,
 URIEL,
 and RAPHAEL and their corresponding EURYTHMISTS
 accompany each name with the appropriate zodiac gesture.]*

ANGEL: Simon Peter
 Is the first.

YOUTH: He was called the Rock,
 He soon recognised the Lord.

ANGEL: Andrew
 Is the second.

YOUTH: He was one of the first,
 Devoted as no other.

ANGEL: Philip
 Is the third.

YOUTH: He was summoned by the Lord
 To follow in His steps.

ANGEL: James Alphaeus:
 That is the fourth.

YOUTH: He wandered in slumber,
 And yet acted faithfully.

ANGEL: Bartholomew
 Is the fifth.

YOUTH: He was strong in contemplation.

ANGEL: Matthew
 Is the sixth.

YOUTH: He was strict in beholding,
 Yet restricted in creating.

ANGEL: Thomas
 Is the seventh.

YOUTH: His purpose was to die,
 He always wanted much.

ANGEL: Thaddaeus
 Is the eighth.

YOUTH: He was pious in feeling.

ANGEL: Simon Zelotes
 Is the ninth.

YOUTH: From Cana did he come,
 His heart was never empty.

ANGEL: James
 Is the tenth.

YOUTH: Search in water for his strength.
He went on distant wanderings.

ANGEL: John
Is the eleventh.

YOUTH: He is the one loved by the Lord,
And who never caused Him grief.

ANGEL: Judas Iscariot:
He should be the twelfth.

YOUTH: Oh, be quiet!
He is alone.

SPEAKER: The names are called,
The hearts are recognised,
Only Judas is alone
In his own lonely state.
Yet all are united
Around table and bread,
Around wine and existence,
Around becoming and expiring.
They will resurrect.

ANGEL [*while the singing in the background fades away*]:
The meal is ended,
The wine is bestowed,
The bread is shared out,
The heart has spoken
The eternal parable.
Oh hear it, you angels,
Oh hear it, you men!
The night is approaching.
What men have begun
Will now be accomplished,
What worlds have erected
Human beings will behold.

MICHAEL: The plough cuts through the furrowed Earth.

RAPHAEL: The seed springs up in new becoming.

URIEL: The fruit ripens,
The Lamb arises
And becomes Lord of the flock.

YOUTH: Oh change yourself, you human child,
Go into yourself in this night,
When all creation wakes anew
In a divining of death,
In a wind of offering,
In admonition to become,
And in mortal sin.
Oh bend your knee and watch!

SPEAKER: My words have died away,
The Logos does arise.
The banner of Resurrection waves,
Shining upon the coming morn.

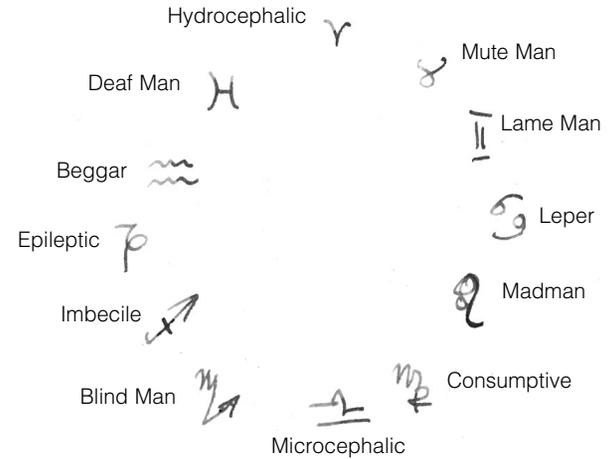
An Easter Play: Part I Good Friday

January 1945

Part I: Street in Athens in front of the Temple of Zeus

Cast

BLIND MAN	blue garment
MUTE MAN	light blue garment
DEAF MAN	green garment
MADMAN	white garment with red sash (tangled hair and beautiful face)
LEPER	brown garment
LAME MAN	(hemiplegic, lame on one side) orange garment
MOTHER	yellow garment (HYDROCEPHALIC, a doll on the Mother's arm)
IMBECILE	red garment
EPILEPTIC	brown garment
BEGGAR	wine-red garment and a fur
CONSUMPTIVE	burning red garment
WOMAN	blue garment (MICROCEPHALIC, a doll on her arm)
FIRST SOLDIER	
SECOND SOLDIER	
THIRD SOLDIER	
FOURTH SOLDIER	

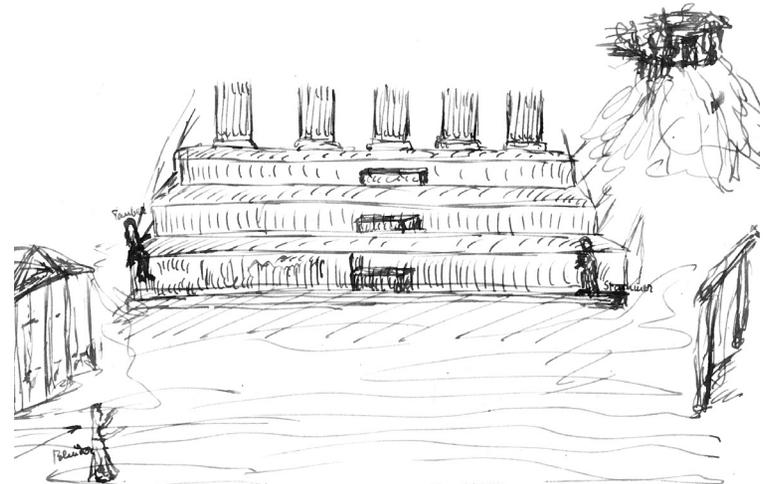


In front of the steps to the Temple of Zeus in Athens. In the foreground a street. To right and left the façades of Greek houses. To the right in the background the Acropolis in perspective.

The steps to the temple are steep at the back of the stage. Only the lower halves of the mighty pillars are visible.

Strong light and strong shadows of afternoon.

The MUTE MAN is leaning on the right side of the temple's lowest step. The DEAF MAN is sitting on the left side of the temple's lowest step, brooding.



BLIND MAN [*rushing in from the left foreground, with upraised arms*]:

O people, men, citizens,
 Help me, help!
 These are the last hours
 When I can save myself
 From being seized by Roman soldiers.
 They're following us blind men
 Everywhere!
 We don't know the way
 Through this world.
 We grope through space,
 And only divine
 That another power holds us
 Than the one we don't see!
 Oh help, oh help!

[*The MUTE MAN has seen the Blind Man and hears what he says. He wants to make himself understood by his arms, but the Blind Man does not see him. The MUTE MAN comes to the foreground and takes hold of the Blind Man by the arm.*]

MUTE MAN: Eeh, eeh, h—n!

BLIND MAN [*shaking off the Dumb Man in terror*]:

Oh, they've found me!
 Soldier of worldly power,
 Oh, let go of me!
 Oh, let me live here
 In freedom!
 Let me go through this Earth.
 I may be blind,
 But I'm a human being, like you.

[*The MUTE MAN releases the arm of the Blind Man and wants to show him that he is not a soldier*]

MUTE MAN: Eh, he— n—, eeh—

[*The MUTE MAN runs towards the Deaf Man and wakes him out of his brooding.*]

BLIND MAN: The hand let me go.

Does it still take pity
 Upon me,
 And leave me free?
 O men, people, citizens,
 Show me quickly the way
 To a temple of your gods.
 I want to flee there
 From the grip of worldly power.
 Oh help, oh help!

[*The DEAF MAN has sluggishly come down from the temple step, and draws nearer on the Dumb Man's arm.*]

DEAF MAN: Hey friend,

Hot weather today!
 The Sun bores mercilessly
 Through your skull.
 You'd do better
 Seeking for shade.
 That'll calm the excitement
 Driving you around.

BLIND MAN: How can you speak about the weather

And that I should seek for shade?
 I must save my life
 And he speaks about shade!
 Show me the temple!
 Only there am I safe
 From arms wanting to seize me.
 They'll soon be appearing.

DEAF MAN: Yes, yes, I know,

On hot days it's hard
 To keep oneself calm.

Rich people's houses are shut,
 And it isn't easy to fill our belly
 With scraps
 Falling from their tables!
 You're just hungry, friend.

[The MUTE MAN, helpless in clearing up the misunderstanding, indicates to the Deaf Man that the Blind Man is being pursued.]

MUTE MAN: Eeh, eeh, u—h, — ch, ch, ch.

BLIND MAN:

Oh, lack of understanding, misunderstanding,
 Anxiety and waiting,
 Oppression, worry everywhere
 In this world which I can't see!

[MADMAN screams in the background.]

Who's screaming there so horribly?

MADMAN *[running in from the right]*:

Dancing dryads,
 Whirling maenads,
 Worlds of whirlpools in hurly-burly
 Adorn themselves in the ocean!
 Wild watchmen follow me,
 Bringing Parthenos Athena
 Who pursues me with her spear!
 Love me,
 You beautiful whore, Parthenos Athena, you!
 Zeus, you pimp,
 You want me to beget children on her,
 But I don't want to!

DEAF MAN: Friend, you've got sunstroke.

I'm telling you,
 This weather is much too hot,
 And the strength of the heat
 Is making you wild.
 See that you get something to eat,

And also something to drink.
 That'll keep your mind together.

BLIND MAN: A mouth is uttering abuse
 Towards the god Zeus,
 Blasphemy of the divine daughter Pallas,
 Who wants to protect us.
 O you people, do help me
 To find the temple.
 I've been hesitating all too long.

[The LEPER, covered all over with sores, enters from the left side. He goes slowly towards the foreground. The DEAF MAN, the MUTE MAN and the MADMAN stagger back in horror and leap up onto the first step of the temple.]

MADMAN: I would rather enter

Your house, O Zeus,
 And beget grandchildren for you,
 One after the other.
 Oh take me in!
 I flee from sores,
 I'm a clean man.
 Oh let me live!

[The MADMAN enters the temple.]

MUTE MAN: Oh, oh hua—n

DEAF MAN: In broad daylight

This riff-raff is just prowling
 Through our city.
 How good that every temple
 Is denied to them.

Ah, not just heat but fear as well!

[The LEPER has reached the Blind Man who, unawares, remains in the foreground.]

LEPER: O friend, you've waited for me to reach you.

Oh, you are good!
 The light of your eyes was taken from you,

But instead you've gained
Compassion.
You don't withdraw when I approach you,
When I appear, you're there!

BLIND MAN: You're the first one, friend,
Who will understand me.
So listen, and give me your help.
The Roman soldiers
Are swarming through the streets
And rounding up all who aren't clean
In mind and body.
Caesar has commanded
That in his realm
Only spotless citizens
May move about freely.
All who are sick and suffering,
Who are mute and blind and deaf
And full of infirmities
Are to live set apart
On an island
Right out in the sea, far away from Athens.
Ships lie already in the harbour at Piraeus
Which are to sail into exile
With the atrocious, dismal freight.
There's no fleeing or escaping possible
For any of us.
There's only delay
By flight into the temple premises,
Which legionaries may not enter.
But what's the use?
There we'll die of starvation,
But we'll be free,
Citizens, humans, individuals.

LEPER: You want to be a citizen
A human being, an individual,

In this world you can't see?
It's just because you can't perceive
The misery and distress,
The anxiety for daily bread,
The hardship of the day's suffering,
The struggle to delay death,
That you speak as you do.
Feel my sores!
One on the cheek,
Two on the forehead,
Festering leprosy
On the belly, the back,
The hands are just bleeding, stinking cadavers,
And my feet are like rotten fish.

BLIND MAN: You've got the plague and come near me!
You monster, why don't I flee from you?
Get away!
But my foot is as though fettered
And my hand reaches out towards you!
Brother, give me your hand!
[He touches the LEPER.]
Yes, I feel it,
The sores here on your cheek,
And this one here on your forehead,
And here another.
Oh, they stink towards me
And make me shudder.
And yet, they're still flesh
Of your flesh,
And blood of your blood.

*[The MUTE MAN has heard the speech from
the temple step and drawn near, asking the Leper
with a gesture whether he too may touch the sores.]*

MUTE MAN: Eeeeh — eeeeh?

[The DEAF MAN crouches on the temple step, brooding.]

LEPER: Just touch them and feel
 That they're a piece of our human existence,
 They're not cast out, but ordered into the world.
 So am I too part of the Earth
 And not just leprosy.
 No,
 I'm part of the suffering
 Which is gaining more and more
 A place in the sunlight.

BLIND MAN: But who else is there with you,
 Touching the wounds like me
 And soothing your distress?

LEPER: It's a mute man.
 He hears what we say,
 But he can't express
 What fills him.

*[Meanwhile the LAME MAN has arrived
 from the left background. His right hand and
 arm are bent and stiff, so too his right leg.
 He walks uncertainly, leaning on a stick,
 and speaks falteringly and stammering.]*

LAME MAN: Look,
 Two men are tending
 The sores of a third.
 They're caressing them,
 May I caress too?

BLIND MAN: Brother, are you also coming here
 Seeking shelter at the temple
 From the henchmen?
 Are you being pursued like us?

LAME MAN: Pursuing me?
 I can be caught by anyone,
 But who's running after me?
 I'm just stumbling through life
 And jolting along with words.

Whoever comes behind others
 Runs for himself alone.

LEPER: Don't you want to be with us
 And stay, brother?
 We're gathering around the Earth's distress
 And don't want to be without
 Wounds, sores and infirmities, but to love them.

LAME MAN: Who taught you that?
 Yes, yes, a miracle will still be performed,
 That's what I often thought in my life.
 I now find brothers who want me
 And don't thrust me away.

BLIND MAN: I don't see you and only hear you.
 You're speaking out of your self.
 But say: what do you bring us?

LAME MAN: I bring my suffering, a deformity.
 I drag along a lump, that isn't my own,
 It's like night in daytime, like an alien stone,
 And is yet myself, full of power.

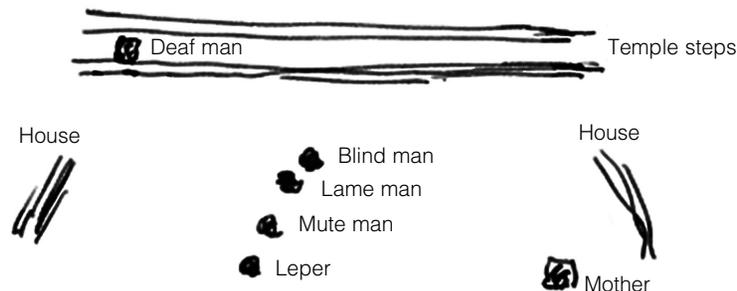
D'you feel the hardness in my arm?
*[He takes the hand of the Blind Man
 and guides it to his arm.]*

The cramp in this leg?
*[He then guides the hand of the Blind Man to
 his leg. The LEPER and the MUTE MAN follow
 the Blind Man.]*

Look here, look,
 These brothers are caressing my infirmities
 And not shuddering,
 And not frightened.
 Yes, yes, I often thought so in my life.
 A miracle will still be performed!

*[In the meantime a young MOTHER has arrived from
 the right, carrying a child in her arms.
 The child has an enormous head and a quite small,*

greyish face. It is about four years old, with thin little legs hanging loosely over the Mother's arm. For all its shapelessness the head is majestically beautiful. The MOTHER seems tired and sits down upon a stone in the right foreground. The four figures in the foreground stare at Mother and child.]



BLIND MAN: Why d'you fall silent, brothers?

Are the soldiers already coming
And is your fear taking
The speech from your lips?

MUTE MAN [*pointing to the child*]:

Eeh, eeh, i—h

LEPER: Yes, my brothers,

I too can't say more about this!
Look at the child, it's so ill
And yet seems angelic,
And seems so angel-like,
And yet is quite misshapen,
Old and pale.

LAME MAN: A lofty head,

A mighty brow,
An ancient face,
A stricken brain,
Isn't it strange?

BLIND MAN: A child, and stricken, and deformed,
And yet so angelic?

O brothers! Wait! A strange light
I perceive appearing inside me!
A light I've never seen before.
A light so mild, so warm and fair.
The light is wanting to lead me,
I want to step towards the child!

[He goes straight to the child and wants to touch it. The frightened MOTHER rises with a start and tries to protect it.]

MOTHER: Leave my child, don't touch him!

Can't die, can't live
And yet my heart belongs to him.

CHILD [*spoken by MOTHER*]: Yes, mother, yes,
I'm with you.

Have you a little milk?

MOTHER [*desperately*]:

For hours I've been fleeing from the legionaries,
Trying to protect the little child from them,
They want to snatch him from me
And send him away to the island.

[The LEPER, MUTE MAN and LAME MAN also arrive.]

LEPER: Even you don't want to abandon your child,
Don't want to wrest it from the world
Which yet disowns it?

MOTHER: Get away, you mangy dog!

Don't come near me and my child.
He must live and grow up and become.

LAME MAN: Grow up on this Earth

Which hates everything made wrong?

[At this moment, the IMBECILE and the EPILEPTIC come stumbling in from the left background. The IMBECILE is big and broad; there is something

giant-like about him and around him. He has a staff in one hand; in the other he drags along the twitching body of the EPILEPTIC and lays him in front of the temple steps. His groaning can be heard and his twitching be seen.]

IMBECILE: Hello, hello, you people, listen!

My friend, oh look at my friend!

He's twisted himself round and round!

Oh, just look how he's crying!

BLIND MAN: What's thundering and shouting here

When we're sheltering a child?

CHILD [*sobbing*]: Oh, mother, mother —

MOTHER: What filth is around me!

Child, these shall never be your brothers,

I'm not letting go of you!

[The DEAF MAN has risen and looks from the step towards the Epileptic.]

DEAF MAN: Hey, friend, I did say so,

This heat is too intense!

A ray from the Sun

Has turned you wild!

IMBECILE: It isn't the Sun, isn't the light

Which makes him so sad.

It's the heart breaking within him

And blood trickling from the mouth.

LEPER: O friends, come and bring him comfort!

The blood's raging in his body,

It's boiling and wants to consume him entirely.

Let's bring him help!

[He pulls the MUTE MAN with him, the LAME MAN hobbles behind. As they cross over the stage with the Child sobbing and the EPILEPTIC beating about him even more, the scene grows increasingly dark.]

MUTE MAN: Eeh, eeh.

[From the background of the temple, dancing over the steps, the MADMAN comes with a torch in his hand.]

MADMAN [*leaping down*]: Did day change into night?

Did the Sun lose its brilliance?

Is it myself?

Have I died?

[He comes into the foreground.]

Yes, I'm not benighted,

I'm not confused,

I'm dead, yes, dead!

[He hears the groaning of the Epileptic.]

Cerberus, you hell-hound,

I hear your snuffling.

[He hears the whimpering of the Child.]

River Lethe, I hear your rushing!

Charon, Charon,

Ferryman, over here!

Bring me to eternal night.

Ferry me across

And bring me over there

Where no-one wakes again!

Charon, Charon,

D'you hear my groaning?

Take me to yourself

In everlasting oblivion.

Possessed by night and darkness,

Let me

Never return to Earth!

Charon, d'you hear?

A dead man calls you,

A deceased man wants you,

A depraved man seeks you.

Yes, yes, there comes the winged boat,

It's trying to get here.

A mild glow
 Pierces through the dead of night
 And looks at me!
[It slowly gets brighter on the stage.]
 How bright it's becoming!
 What radiant power
 Spreads out from Charon's boat!
 Is it the Sun itself?
 I look around me
 And see the Earth again!
 Aren't I dead,
 Aren't I already a citizen of the underworld?
 O day, are you raying out here?
 Then die, torch, instead of me.

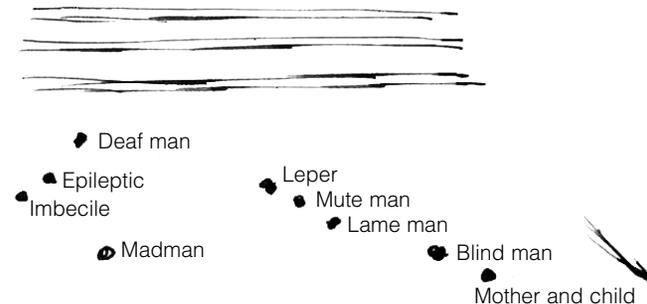
*[He extinguishes the torch on the earth
 and kneels down.]*

I greet the light of the Sun,
 I greet the distress of the Earth!
 Greet the pathway of man,
 Greet the inner command!
 Greet the new day,
 Greet the new light,
 Greet my Self in me,
 Who is breaking through the walls.
 Even though my spirit expired,
 It has yet woken again.

[He turns to the others.]

Friends, all of you, all,
 I thank you for what you've achieved!

*[The other figures recover, as if from a
 paralysis. The EPILEPTIC rises and leans on
 the staff of the IMBECILE. The Child smiles
 in the MOTHER'S arm, and the DEAF MAN descends
 from the temple step and comes into the foreground.
 The cast gather in two groups on stage left and right.]*



LEPER: What was that?

Did the day turn to night,
 And change into day again?

EPILEPTIC: D'you hear the wind?

Clouds are passing over
 And birds singing again.

MOTHER: Was it my curse,

My loathing, my distress
 Which made this day turn to night?

LAME MAN: I did say so:

A miracle will still be performed
 Here on the Earth!

BLIND MAN: O friends,

Why d'you speak here about night,
 About darkness and about gloom?
 For me it was as though I could
 Perceive for the first time a light
 I had never divined before.
 Quite suddenly, strangely, wonderfully
 The night brightened into day!
 I beheld a radiant glory
 I had only otherwise heard of
 When people spoke about the Sun.
 It was like clouds waking
 In a light, so clear and pure,
 That I didn't know where I am.

My heart became like a barque
Sailing along on waves of light,
Bathed in radiance from the Sun!

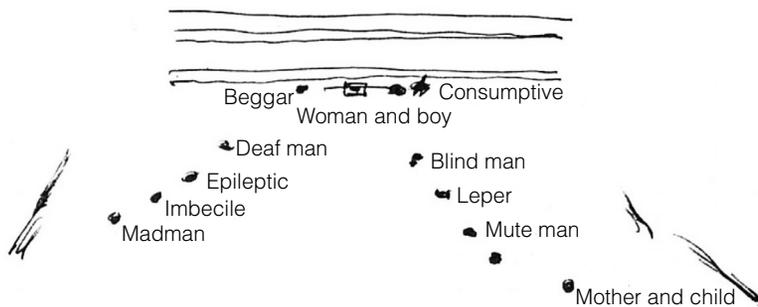
MOTHER: What was night for us
Was day to him,
What was darkness for us
Was brightness for him!

LEPER: To me it was as though
The wellspring of my life was opening up,
And newly bestowing
Existence upon me.

DEAF MAN: But look, oh look, you friends,
Something new's appearing there!
Just look at that, look at that!

IMBECILE: Isn't it bridegroom and bride
Appearing there?

*[On the uppermost step of the temple an older WOMAN
in a blue mantle appears. In her arms she is carrying
a completely paralysed young boy. Beside her are the
BEGGAR (reminiscent of John the Baptist) and the
CONSUMPTIVE (reminiscent of John the Disciple).
The WOMAN comes down to the lowest step and
holds the boy in her lap. The BEGGAR and the
CONSUMPTIVE remain beside her. The other figures
gaze in astonishment at this new appearance and
leave the centre stage free.]*



BLIND MAN: Who's appeared in our circle?
Friends, why are you silent,
Without a single word?

MADMAN: A strange procession of people
Who've come out from the temple
And are nearing this place.

LAME MAN: Miracle follows on miracle,
As though it were the first day.
The sun rose up and went down ...
Who can grasp that?

LEPER: A woman, a man on her lap,
An image I've never seen.
Is it human destiny
That this is revealed?

EPILEPTIC: Did you rise from the depth of my soul
Onto the bright strand of day?
Did my own inner self come to know
The path of human suffering?

DEAF MAN: I've never seen such a thing before!

IMBECILE: Yes, I know:
It's bridegroom and bride.

MOTHER: A mother like myself,
On her lap a child.
What is her heart likely to feel?
She's fled from
Where people are,
She's wandered from place to place ...
Has someone cooled her suffering?
Has someone stilled her longing?
Has someone diminished her pain?
O men, O world, O starry space,
D'you know the pain and travail
Of motherhood around the tree of blood
Blazing up from within her?

[During these words, she has risen up passionately and held out her Child to the Woman. The BEGGAR and CONSUMPTIVE look up. The WOMAN is totally absorbed in her paralysed Child.]

BEGGAR: Woman, be quiet and still,
And don't cry out.

It isn't you, it's your child
Who can weep and lament.

CONSUMPTIVE: Only when your heart is silent
Will your child's heart resound.
Dwell not on your own grief,
Let a child's grief sing within you.

MOTHER: D'you want to teach me
What my rights
And my freedom are?

WOMAN *[raising her head]*: You should never turn
Against yourself.
Become what you already are.
O little child on the mother's arm,
O big son in the mother's lap,
How great you both are in suffering,
How radiant you are in distress and affliction.
[The Child stretches his arms out to the paralysed Boy. The latter turns his head and with his eyes greets the Child.]

CHILD: My brother!

BOY: My child!

CONSUMPTIVE: So come and settle down before your brother,
Bend your knee
And be a man like him!

BEGGAR: In the dust of Earth you find yourself again
And speak the words:
'The Earth is not void.'

[The MOTHER follows the Child's gesture and kneels down before the WOMAN and the Boy.]

BLIND MAN:

Brothers, I know now
That I'm not blind.
It's my heart
Which didn't perceive any light.
My heart, not I, was blind.

LEPER: And so it is for me.
I'm strong myself, am full of ardour.
But my heart here is sick,
Full of pestilence and stench.

DEAF MAN: I don't hear a word,
And yet I clearly hear
The deafness of my heart.
My heart was deaf, not me.

EPILEPTIC: So do I too know
And firmly recognise –
My heart was torn
Through bone and marrow
Of my body.
But I'm not ill myself.

LAME MAN: Could it be
As my friends say?
My heart was lame,
Not me
In all the nights and days?

MADMAN: My heart was wild.
My self stood firm.
I came to the brink
Of the abyss.
There I was filled with light.

IMBECILE: Yes, yes, my heart is
Weak and foolish.
That's why the world remained so silent to me.
But I am as you are.

MUTE MAN: Eeh, eeh —

BOY: His heart is dumb,
Not he himself,
That's why he can't speak.

BEGGAR: I've made my heart
Into a beggar.

CONSUMPTIVE: My longing
Brought my heart
To fail.

ALL: Let our hearts heal us,
Let our longings be stilled.
We are human beings only
By the will of God.

*[Marching and commands can be heard
outside. Four Roman SOLDIERS enter
from the left.]*

FIRST SOLDIER: Here they all are!
Those we wanted.

SECOND SOLDIER: They're in the precincts
Of the temple.

THIRD SOLDIER: No matter.
They'll be deported.

FOURTH SOLDIER: Hey there, you,
Get together!

BLIND MAN: We are together.

LEPER: We are ready.

BEGGAR: We are transformed.

CONSUMPTIVE: We are expecting you.

THIRD SOLDIER: No resistance,
Or else my sword
Will split your skulls in two!

FOURTH SOLDIER: Foul beasts,
You're gathering
Together here
Like cowardly mutton!

FIRST SOLDIER: Queer folk,
I've never experienced anything of the kind!

SECOND SOLDIER: And how wise
Is Caesar

To remove from us

This pest-ridden beggar-stuff!

*[The WOMAN with the Boy rises to her feet,
the MOTHER rises and carries her Child forward
at the head of the procession. The BLIND MAN,
the MUTE MAN, etc. follow her, the end of
the procession being formed by the WOMAN with
the Boy in her arms, accompanied by the
BEGGAR and CONSUMPTIVE.]*

THE FOURTEEN *[together]*:

This is the procession of suffering,

O world, which you here behold.

It is the story of sacrifice

For your edification.

Hearts were embittered,

Hearts were stuck,

Souls were weathered,

Spirits were shocked.

A child on its mother's arm

Longs for the earthly world.

A boy full of distress and affliction

Held in the woman's lap.

A blind heart and a deaf one,

A stony arm and a leg

Full of dusty wounds

Having to walk upon the earthly path.

A twitching heart and a wild heart,

A dumb heart and a stupid heart,

They are all bearing the sorrow of the world,

The suffering of human beings,

The distress which befalls
Creation on its way.
We know we shall find the path,
We know we shall seek the bridge
Which carries us over
To the realm where all fragments
Will once be into wholeness reshaped.
Oh let us wander and keep watch,
Oh let us be human beings.
We want to have faith in the Earth.
We want to gaze at the stars,
They will be our supporters.

*[After coming down from the stage, the figures
move with these words through the audience.*

The SOLDIERS follow.]

FOURTH SOLDIER *[before coming down from the stage]:*

Strange, strange –
At first I thought
We were driving off all of them
As poor sinners.
And now it seems to me as if I were following them
Not like a master
Driving on the herd,
But like a poor wretch
Serving them.
Strange, strange.

An Easter Play: Part II Holy Saturday

January 1945

At the foot of the hill of Golgotha, in front of Christ's grave

Cast

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA	Red garment, grey beard and low brow, open and youthful face with radiant eyes
NICODEMUS	Blue garment, dark complexion, blond hair, high forehead, pointed beard, deep-set eyes
SAMARITAN WOMAN	Violet garment
FIRST CHIEF PRIEST	White garment
SECOND CHIEF PRIEST	White gown
FIRST SCRIBE	Green garment
SECOND SCRIBE	Brown garment
THIRD SCRIBE	Yellow garment
ROMAN CAPTAIN	Appropriate contemporary dress
FIRST SOLDIER	Appropriate contemporary dress
SECOND SOLDIER	Appropriate contemporary dress

In the left background a rock-hewn tomb, to which three steps lead up, with a heavy stone lying in front. The rest of the background is filled with an olive grove extending with its trees to the right foreground. The centre of the stage and the space in front of the tomb is a meadow. The left hand side is closed off with olive trees.

It is late morning. The Sun shines through the trees. Silence.



[Two CHIEF PRIESTS and three SCRIBES enter from the left, hesitantly, as if they were first seeking where they should be going.]

FIRST SCRIBE: A fine place
Joseph of Arimathea has
Decided on for his tomb.

SECOND SCRIBE: Yes, yes. A wealthy man
Can plan where to dwell
Even in death.

FIRST PRIEST: So this is the place
Where they have buried
The King of the Jews –
God help me.

SECOND PRIEST: Who says 'buried'?
They placed
His body there
Contrary to the law,
And Pilate consented to it.

FIRST PRIEST: Good, that it has come so far!
At last He is silent,
The King of the Jews –
God help me –

And will no longer trouble
The peace of our land.

THIRD SCRIBE: Forever is He silent now,
The King of the Jews –
God help me –
And nevermore, nevermore,
Never any more
Shall we hear again
His croaking.

SECOND SCRIBE: Do not speak disrespectfully of Him.
He is after all dead!
God knows what His soul now feels
Before the Throne of the Almighty.

FIRST PRIEST: Perhaps it was only fear
Which made us persecute Him?
Who knows?
Craving for rest,
Longing for peace.
And yet
It is good that He no longer
Belongs to the living, but only to the dead.

FIRST SCRIBE: The dead are a great host
On the margin of life.
Perhaps He is amazed
At everything He is now beholding.

SECOND PRIEST:
The Romans are waiting outside the grove.
[to the Third Scribe]:
Go, call them, say that we
Have found the tomb.
They can come.

FIRST SCRIBE: Has anyone ever heard
That the uncircumcised
Will be keeping watch over the grave
Of a circumcised man?

This should really be noted down
In the books at the temple.

SECOND PRIEST: A circumcised man who
Rises up against his people
Is no longer circumcised.

FIRST SCRIBE: On that it is not so easy
To pass judgment.

FIRST PRIEST: Come, we have other work to do here.
Let us seal the stone.
[They go to the rock-hewn tomb and take seals
and sealing-wax out of a little box carried by
the SECOND SCRIBE.]

FIRST SCRIBE [in the foreground]:
If everything had been true
Which He spoke
Would not the tomb now be resounding?
Would not thunder
Be pealing through the air?
And the stone be splitting asunder?
But nothing is taking place,
Nothing is happening.
[The two CHIEF PRIESTS seal the stone
in five places.]
Everything is silent.
And still, as it
Always is still on the Sabbath.
So silent!
Ah! If I could only hear one word!
My heart trembles with fear –
Why, why?
Ah! Even the stillness is silent!
[When the CHIEF PRIESTS have completed
their task, they return to the centre foreground.
At the same time, on the left the THIRD SCRIBE,
a ROMAN CAPTAIN and two SOLDIERS appear.]

THIRD SCRIBE: Over here, here is the place,
 We are already there.
 Did I not say straightaway
 The path goes no further?
 Here is the tomb.

FIRST PRIEST [*to Roman Captain*]:
 You know the order of your master,
 Pontius Pilate,
 You are to keep watch over this tomb
 That none of the disciples of Him
 Who declared of Himself
 He would rise again on the third day,
 Come closer to the tomb.
 Soon everyone will realise
 That the King of the Jews –
 God help me –
 Was nothing but a beggar of the Jews!

SECOND PRIEST [*to Roman Captain*]:
 You know you are acting on behalf
 Of Pontius Pilate,
 And not on our behalf.
 Keep to that.

ROMAN CAPTAIN: We know it.
 We don't need your instruction.
 We're ready to keep watch,
 And if needs be
 Take action too.

FIRST PRIEST [*to the other Jews who gather round him*]:
 What more is needed?
 The stone has been sealed,
 The tomb is being watched.
 We can now quietly celebrate the Sabbath.

[They all leave the scene without bidding farewell.]

CAPTAIN [*to First Soldier*]: You take the first watch,
 Afterwards your comrade will replace you.

FIRST SOLDIER: At your command, Centurion,
 In Caesar's name I shall keep watch.

CAPTAIN [*to Second Soldier*]: You come with me
 And rest till your time comes.

*[They both leave to the right background and
 disappear into the olive grove. The FIRST SOLDIER
 sits down in front of the tomb on the first step,
 rests his head in his hand and muses.]*

FIRST SOLDIER: How strange! Yesterday when I
 Saw you dying
 On the cross, you human being who is now
 Lying in the grave,
 You called out –
 It was just before your end –
 These words:
 'Into thy hands, O Father,
 I commend my Spirit!'
 Since then these words
 Have gnawed away in my heart.
 I can't forget them,
 And right into my very sleep
 They haven't left me alone.
 Who is your Father?
 Yes, I too had a father,
 Far away from here,
 In Gaul, where the sea
 Surges powerfully against the coasts.
 Where is he now?
 I don't know.
 Yet all the pictures are rising up
 Out of my childhood,
 As if stirred within me
 By a magic hand.
 The time of the summer solstice
 When priests robed in white

Would gather together,
 And singing priestesses
 Walk around the stones
 Heaved up broad and mighty in the forests.
 Why do I have to remember all this?
 As a youth, I shyly approached
 These holy places
 And could overhear many a word
 Exchanged between Bards and Druids.
 Did they not sound like
 What you, who are now dead,
 Called out from the cross?
 'Into Thy hands, O Father,
 I commend my Spirit!'

*[During these last words, the FIRST SCRIBE has hesitantly
 come forward from the right and moved to the front.]*

FIRST SCRIBE: It is as still as before,
 And nothing but stillness.

FIRST SOLDIER *[looking up]*: Hello! Who are you?
 Why are you approaching the tomb?

FIRST SCRIBE *[frightened]*: Sh! Quiet, friend, have no fear.
 I am a good Jew,
 A member of the Sanhedrin.
 I only came to see
 Whether the grave is being watched.

FIRST SOLDIER: Look to your own affairs
 And leave Caesar's business to his servants.

FIRST SCRIBE: Tell me, friend, since you have been sitting there,
 Has anything here been stirring?
 I mean, did you not hear the thunder?
 Or voices resounding from this grave?
 Nothing? Nothing of the kind?

FIRST SOLDIER: It's still and lonely here,
 And I heard nothing.
 Only you alone I now hear squawking!

FIRST SCRIBE: I mean, friend, just listen,
 Did nothing stir
 Inside this grave?
 Wasn't there a soft sound
 Like the falling of stones?

FIRST SOLDIER: I've heard nothing, nothing of the kind!

FIRST SCRIBE:
 He has perceived nothing, nothing of the kind!
 How terrible, cruel,
 Irrefutably true
 Is the judgment of our Chief Priests!
 Oh, that my heart grew dumb!

FIRST SOLDIER *[stands up and comes to the foreground]*:

What do you want?
 This man is dead.
 You yourself were one of the leaders
 Favouring Him before Barabbas
 As chosen to die on the Cross.
 And now you want Him to stir
 And be alive and make noises,
 So that fear can flee from your heart?

FIRST SCRIBE: The fear in my heart?
 What do you know of fear?
 I have no fear.
 I have a pure heart,
 For I acted in accordance with the Law.

FIRST SOLDIER: Come to think of it,
 I too expected
 A sign to happen today,
 Like yesterday
 When the sun quite suddenly darkened
 As He passed away.

FIRST SCRIBE: Yes, it suddenly became dark,
 So I was told.
 Around that time I was in the temple

[*He covers his face.*]

And –

FIRST SOLDIER: What is it?

Did something happen?

FIRST SCRIBE [*tears the hem of his garment*]: That happened!

Never before was it ever seen!

[*The FIRST SOLDIER, shaking his head, goes back to the Tomb. The FIRST SCRIBE sits down at the furthest right border of the olive grove. From the left JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA and NICODEMUS appear.*]

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: When you helped me yesterday

To prepare the Master's body

For his grave,

When you also brought spices,

Myrrh and aloes and well-mixed incense,

I then realised that you too are a pupil

Of the high Master.

Never before have you confessed to it.

NICODEMUS: Confessed to it?

That is a strange word.

Must one confess oneself to the Truth?

Is not the Truth just there and unshakeable?

Whoever still lives in error must

Resist the Truth and not value it.

But he whose eyes are opened

To the Spirit-light

And sees this Spirit-light radiating out

Shining in power through the spaces of the world,

He need not confess himself.

He knows what Truth is

And seeks to act out of it.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: In my heart I, knew too

What you have just expressed

With words and thoughts.

I could never be one of His disciples,

And yet I knew

That it is He

Whom our prophets spoke about

And whom they proclaimed to us as the Messiah.

NICODEMUS: I did not come yesterday evening

To help you

Because compassion was stirring in my heart.

I came because I recognised it as a human duty

To prepare the final homage

To the body of one who bestowed Himself

Upon this Earth,

Who consecrated Himself to human death.

Such was laid upon me

By world-destiny

And I only carried out

What was ordained for me.

You were prompted by your heart

But I was led by knowledge.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: I was prompted by my heart.

Yes, you said that rightly.

When I learnt

What had befallen Him,

I knew I had to place my whole power,

Which I still possess here in Judea,

At the disposal

Of the will of this world event.

My heart drove me to Pontius Pilate.

I prevailed upon him

To release the body.

And do you know what he said?

He spoke: 'Take Him away as quickly as you can,

Conceal Him and protect Him.

I am so scared, I don't know why,

But never in my life

Shall I grasp that I, the Roman,

Although His judge, yet became His servant.’
Thus did Pontius Pilate speak.

NICODEMUS: He too felt

The power of Truth.
But unschooled as he is in the mysteries,
He could
Not grasp the Truth.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: Out of fear and shame of heart

He released the corpse.
So we could wrap the poor sacred body
In white linen,
And comfort it with spices.
Sprinkling balsam
Where balm already was;
Meeting decay
Where decay was already overcome.
Now He lies well-shrouded in the tomb.
And I must always think
That it is my rock-hewn tomb intended for myself
Now enclosing His body.

NICODEMUS: Just as not quite three years ago

Jesus from Nazareth
Gave Him the body
As His living dwelling-place,
So now did
Joseph of Arimathea
Give Him his tomb
To be His house for death.

[During this conversation, the FIRST SOLDIER sits musing in front of the Tomb, and the FIRST SCRIBE is sunk in thought in front of the olive grove. Shortly before the last words of NICODEMUS the SAMARITAN WOMAN, clothed in violet comes from the right background to the tomb and sits down there, unobserved by all. NICODEMUS and JOSEPH

OF ARIMATHEA, who have been speaking in the left foreground, turn towards the tomb.]

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: The Chief Priests and scribes

Had found it appropriate
To place
The tomb,
Which for Jews is
Otherwise sacred and inviolable,
Under the protection of Roman soldiers.
Yes, this morning
Part of the great Council
Also went up before Pontius Pilate
And asked him for permission
To provide the stone of the tomb
With signs and with seal.
They fear that the disciples
Would practise deception with the corpse.
But what they really fear
Is the power of the Truth
Which even in their hearts
Is surging powerfully towards the light.

NICODEMUS: With signs and with seal

They endeavour to bind
What is working in realms
Not subject to an earthly seal
With the might of the sword
They try to suppress
What is towering loftily
Above powers of the sword
And transcends spheres
Never to be held
With the sword.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: But look! The tomb has more

Than one guard.
There is a Roman legionary

And also a woman.
They both appear
Deeply sunk in thought.

FIRST SCRIBE [*jumping up and running to Nicodemus*]:

You, Nicodemus, here?
Who gave you permission
To enter the realm of the tomb?
What do you want here?
What are you seeking
Here in this place?

NICODEMUS: I am seeking nothing
Save what I have already found.

But I must now
Reverse the question:
What are you seeking here?
Are you a watchman,
A soldier of the Romans?

FIRST SCRIBE: Me? I am not looking for anything.

I am, as you well know,
A member of the Sanhedrin.
I only wanted to reassure myself
That quiet is maintained in this place.

NICODEMUS: Ask rather after the quietness in your heart.

Why do you defend yourself
When there is no accuser?

FIRST SCRIBE: There is no accuser present,

But a judge
Continuously raising his hand
Within me
So I sought
Whether I could find
An outward sign too.
But I find nothing,
Only quietness, stillness,
Unapproachable coldness.

NICODEMUS: Unapproachable coldness

On this morning
Which greets the Earth
With such fair radiance?
The sunlight
Is shimmering through the trees
And nothing but peace,
I find, holds sway here
In the space of the tomb.

FIRST SCRIBE: Is that what you find? Do you find peace?

Here, where nothing but torment
Holds my heart in its pincers?

*[The SAMARITAN WOMAN rises during these words
and goes towards the three men.]*

SAMARITAN WOMAN: Is it torment which you feel

At this tomb?
Are you perhaps grieving over what you have done,
What you committed?

FIRST SCRIBE: I am not allowed

To exchange words
With a woman, who is unclean.
Be gone, get away from here.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA [*to the Scribe*]:

If you too, as you say,
Are a member of the Great Council,
So also am I.
How do you dare
Prohibit the place here to this woman?
The spot is mine,
It is *my* tomb and *my* abode,
And it is *my* right to say:
Take yourself away!

FIRST SCRIBE: Yes, I shall go

Away from here, far away.
I shall search for the solution to this riddle

Far away from here,
 In distant lands, foreign cities.
 I cannot,
 Cannot stand this quietness!

*[The FIRST SCRIBE leaves. NICODEMUS,
 the SAMARITAN WOMAN and JOSEPH OF
 ARIMATHEA remain in the foreground.]*

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: Are you one of the women
 Who yesterday, far from the cross,
 Followed the world event
 Enacted here?
 I cannot recall
 Having seen you.
 But there were many women,
 Sorrowing and weeping,
 Who stood around His death.

SAMARITAN WOMAN: I am not one of His.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: Who are you then?
 Whence do you come,
 That you know the place
 Where His sublime body is now resting?

SAMARITAN WOMAN: I am not from Jerusalem,
 Nor am I out of the land of Judea.
 The land I come from is Samaria.
 Some days ago, I felt
 A strange burning
 In my heart.
 It came and went
 And did not leave me in peace
 To do the work my role required.
 I felt I had to follow
 This call of the heart.
 It led me here to the south.
 It was as if I knew for the first time
 How the birds fare,

Which come every year from the north
 To visit our land.
 Like a bird I felt my fluttering heart
 Longing for a place of home,
 Where the Sun radiates and shines
 Warmly and brightly
 So I let this heart-bird spread its wings
 And it bore me here.
 Then, yesterday, as in the sixth hour
 I lay down to rest
 In the north of Jerusalem,
 Suddenly, unexpectedly,
 My heart-bird ceased
 To beat its wings.
 All at once the whole land darkened
 As if no longer light
 But only darkness would stream down from the Sun.
 Then I knew:
 ‘My Lord has died
 Into the body of the Earth,
 My Friend has completed
 His course of sacrifice.
 My Master has fulfilled
 His earthly existence.’
 My heart has this morning
 Borne me hither.
 I know I am in the right place.

NICODEMUS: So you too partake
 In all the Truth
 And yet are only a woman?
 Has your heart really
 Led you hither?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: I can well understand
 In my heart
 That this woman speaks the truth.

SAMARITAN WOMAN [*to Nicodemus*]: I know you as well,
 Although I have never
 Encountered you before.
 You are the one who once
 In the winged garment of the Spirit
 Approached the Master
 In the night of the Earth
 And long conversed with Him.
 He gave you counsel, teaching, help!
 Why did you never
 Acknowledge Him?

NICODEMUS: Woman, your heart-bird
 Is a quite wondrous singer.
 It sings about the secret
 Which until now no-one has known!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: So you already knew the Master
 For so long a time,
 And yet never
 Confessed to being His pupil?

NICODEMUS: I was only seeking for Truth,
 Nothing but the Truth;
 And He conferred it on me.

SAMARITAN WOMAN: Yes, He conferred on you this Truth,
 But did you ever ask yourself
 From where He was able
 To entrust you with all this Truth?

NICODEMUS: Was He not the Truth Himself?
 Was not therefore
 Every single word
 Springing from His mouth
 A child of Truth?

SAMARITAN WOMAN: He was the Truth!
 But do you also know
 Through what He became this Truth?

NICODEMUS: Became the Truth?
 What do you mean, ‘became’?
 Was He not already
 The Truth
 From the whole beginning of the world?

SAMARITAN WOMAN [*as if speaking from a distance*]: It is still here,
 So still that all life
 Seems to be silent.
 His corpse is resting in the tomb,
 His tomb is resting in the rock,
 The rock is resting in the ground of the Earth,
 The ground of the Earth is resting
 In the arm of God.
 That is the stillness
 We here are allowed to overhear,
 The stillness speaking to our hearts.
 It is the same stillness
 As then lay over the meadows
 And imbued our olive grove,
 When I betook myself to the well.
 I then knew already in the morning
 When I awoke and an image
 Was growing in my soul, which I
 Had never before been allowed to behold,
 That something new and great
 Would that day be accomplished.
 I was striding from Sychar over the field
 Which Jacob, our father, once
 Passed on to Joseph.
 I was drawing near to Jacob’s well;
 It was also then about the sixth hour.
 A weary man was sitting
 At the well’s edge.
 When I saw He was a Jew

I waited, and did not dare approach Him.
 He then raised His eyes towards me
 And asked me
 To draw Him a drink out of the well.
 Surprised, I asked Him
 Why a Jew is asking for
 Water from a Samaritan woman.
 His gaze met mine again,
 And He began to speak
 Words which poured like healing medicine
 Into the essence of my inner space.
 They streamed into me
 And took on life within my heart.
 My mouth was still trying to form words
 Which rolled from my lips
 Like common everyday words.
 But my heart was as if transformed
 The moment
 He commenced to speak.
 Although I was a servant and priestess
 In the Mysteries of Venus,
 Although Astarte loved me especially,
 And often seemed to endow me
 Richly with her wisdom:
 It felt as if this heart within me had for centuries
 Been thirsting and drying up.
 And upon it now there descended
 Healing medicine,
 A reviving gentle rain.
 On rising from the edge of the well
 He spoke:
 'The time is coming,
 And has already now come,
 When neither in your sanctuary
 Nor over there in Jerusalem

Will you find in prayer your rightful Fathers.
 Only in the Truth conveyed by Spirit-vision
 And springing from a pure heart
 And having good will
 As its source,
 There will you find the right refreshment,
 The sources of all life,
 Leading to wisdom.'
 So He said.
 As He spoke, I knew
 That the Messiah had found me worthy
 To direct to me His Words.
 Since then my heart
 Has been transformed into a bird
 Which is continually longing for its home.
 Now His corpse is resting
 In this rock-hewn tomb.
 But I know from my heart's divining
 That this body has become the Word
 As once the words He spoke
 Poured streams of life
 Into the heart of humankind.
 So His body will become
 The Word-Seed for this Earth,
 Fallen from the arms of the Ground Divine.
 The new Word will
 Bear the Earth again
 Back to the Father Ground.
 The new Earth will lighten up the rock;
 The light-filled rock will shine
 Throughout the tomb;
 The shining tomb will
 Turn the body
 Into the crystal of the New Creation.
 That is what I had to say.

NICODEMUS: And what you say is true.

I must now confess myself to the Truth.
I feel my heart accompanying
In its own speaking, every word you spoke.
Oh, how renewed has my heart become!
It is jubilating, as it never did before.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: Yes, what you say
Completely fills my heart with gratitude,
With gratitude and reverence which never before
Could I feel in such superabundance.
Yet say, O Samaritan woman,
What was the image you beheld
That day when you were allowed to meet Him?

SAMARITAN WOMAN: What was image then,
Has now become the Truth.
I beheld this day and this hour,
But did not know what that image
Should mean for me.
I saw you, Nicodemus,
And you, Arimathea,
Standing at my side
Before a rock-hewn tomb.
And a voice spoke:
'With these two shall you wander ministering
Through many stages of transformation
In the service of One whom you soon
Shall meet.'

NICODEMUS: You had five men,
Earth, fire, air, water,
And also light.
They have been serving you.
Yet now the new life
I am able to give you
Shall be your guide.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: And the sound
Emanating from my heart
Shall be united with you.

SAMARITAN WOMAN: This is all far more
Than I have ever expected.
Come, let me go with you.
Arimathea and Samaria
And Nicodemus,
We shall walk as confessors
Along His path.

NICODEMUS: Through many earthly lives
Will His Light be guiding us.
What has commenced at the rock-hewn tomb
Leads into widths of space and time.

SAMARITAN WOMAN: The heart-bird will spread its wings
And fly to its soul's home.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: His Spirit has already risen from the grave.
It unites the hearts of men
Who do Him service.

*[The SAMARITAN WOMAN, NICODEMUS and JOSEPH
OF ARIMATHEA go off through the olive grove on
the right. There is deep silence. The Roman Soldier
is still sitting on the step, lost in thought.]*

FIRST SOLDIER: I wish I could be in my homeland.
The women will now be
Walking in great processions
Around the sanctuaries. It's the time
Of the spring equinox.
O fathers, priests,
If only I could place in your hands
The longing of my soul!
Isn't it just like that call
Yesterday in the dark hour
Shaking through the whole land?

[The SECOND SOLDIER comes out of the olive grove.]

SECOND SOLDIER: Hey, comrade, wake up!

It's now me taking the watch!

You go and lie down beside the captain,

He's deep and fast asleep.

FIRST SOLDIER: We're all asleep here.

God knows

What will yet come of it.

*[FIRST SOLDIER rises and leaves his place to
the Second Soldier.]*

An Easter Play: Part III Easter Sunday

January 1945

In Ireland, on a hilltop amid a Druid sanctuary

Cast

IRVING	}	Both men have white garments with red belts, red hems at the lower edge, at the neck and at the sleeves
WEYLA		
FIRST DRUID	}	Old men with white hair and beards; red gowns; white sleeves, stripes down the middle, and neck hems
SECOND DRUID		
FIRST DRUIDESS	}	Unbound hair; white gowns; red sleeves, stripes down the middle, and neck hems
SECOND DRUIDESS		
THIRD DRUIDESS		

TREMENDOUS VOICE (Rev. 11:19, 12:1–6)

The scene is a level plateau on a hill in western Ireland. It is a heath and in the extreme right foreground are tall beeches in full leaf. The plateau rises towards the left, first gently, and then abruptly; single cliffs, and between them two paths leading up to the left. The crest of the hill is not visible. The sea can be seen in the distance.

It is Easter Sunday morning. The sun shines from the right with low rays, almost parallel to the ground. The sea is green, the sky very light blue with many white clouds.

IRVING and WEYLA, two young priest pupils of the Druids, stand before the grove of trees on the right. Both look to sea.



IRVING: The night lies at our feet.
The sun has overcome the darkness.
The sea is shining
And its countenance sparkles.
The world of day has risen forth
From the portal of earthly birth.

WEYLA: And yet the night
Which now is past
Has borne the young day
Within her womb.
She retreats, like a mother
Vanishing behind her son
When he grows up
And becomes a man.

[Pause, quiet]

IRVING: The third night is now past,
Which was allotted to us by the Fathers
To spend
In close vicinity
Of the mystery centre.
Three times has the sunlight
Vanished behind the hilltop,

And three times has it risen again,
And newly revived us.

WEYLA: Three times has
Night embraced us,
And three times has
Daylight
Offered us its greeting.
And every morning
At the first ray
Of the sun
The Fathers came down to us
And have
Greeted us
Together with the light.
Yet today we wait in vain
And do not know
What wants to happen.

IRVING: Have anxiety and concern
Risen in your heart,
That you cannot bear
To wait?

WEYLA: Too long and too often
Was I subjected
To the teaching of our sanctuary
For anxiety still
To be working in my heart.
It is just a question,
An expectant, vague presentiment
Which fills me.

IRVING: During this night
Which I spent awake with you,
As I sought to hold fast the summer land
In a complete image in my mind,
It was always to me

As though summer wanted
To change abruptly and suddenly
Into autumn.
I bore within me the ripening barley fields,
The green meadows, full of herbs and blossoms,
The summer clouds and the blue sky.
The forests were cool
And summer wind wafted through the trees.
The cuckoo called
And the bees swarmed.
How hot became there the inner space of soul,
How glowingly warm
And all filled with the being of summer!
Yet every time when I achieved this image
And sought to hold it,
Suddenly the summer clouds massed up,
And turned dark, heavy and mighty.
Thunder rolled – as if distant at first –
Through the cloud foundation,
Bright clear lightning flashed up
And darted down here upon the land,
The fields foamed up,
The meadows withered away,
The forests expired.
And I did not have strength to withstand
The changing of this image.

WEYLA: And in the inner space of my mind
I sought to hold fast the image of winter,
Wakeful in deep night.
When I brought it about
That the snow was falling upon the Earth
And the meadows turning
White from its appearance,
When the winter stars

Were sparkling bright and clear
 Onto the Earth,
 Then suddenly clouds would build up
 And darken the image.
 The same fierce lightning flashed
 Through the banks of cloud.
 Thunder rolled
 And lashing rain whipped
 Down upon the Earth
 Destroying all the winter
 Which I wanted to hold upright
 In my soul.
 Just as for you too
 The summer was completely nullified.
 *[While Weyla speaks it grows noticeably darker;
 the single clouds become thicker and thicker,
 covering the sky.]*

IRVING: Yet see, is not what we beheld at night
 In an inner picture turning to reality?

WEYLA: Clouds are already enveloping the Earth,
 They are darkening
 And filling with elemental water.

IRVING: Fire is baking and welding them together
 And warmth resounding in the rolling thunder.
 [Distant thunder.]

WEYLA: The clouds' heart is thickening,
 Gathering atmospheric blood
 Into its chambers!

IRVING: I already hear
 The sound of the clouds' heart,
 Pounding in a peal of thunder!
 [Thunder.]
 Now –
 [Thunder.]
 And now again!

WEYLA: Already lightning is striking
 Out of the thundercloud's heart.
 It lightens up
 And changes substance.

IRVING: And blood of earthly atmosphere
 From the clouds' heart
 Is streaming down,
 Drumming upon us.

WEYLA: Oh, cloud-blood!
 Oh, flashing lightning!
 *[Their words disappear in the din of the storm which
 has broken. Lightning and thunder. Rain streams down.
 Darkness. A Tremendous Voice speaks through the space,
 sounding above all the noises of the storm (Rev. 9:19).]*

TREMENDOUS VOICE: And the Temple of God
 Was opened in Heaven.
 And the Ark of His Covenant
 Was seen in His Temple.
 And there were flashes of lightning and voices
 And thunder and earthquakes
 And a great hailstorm.
 *[It is as though the Tremendous Voice penetrates
 the weather. Thunder and lightning die away,
 the clouds pass by and it becomes clear again. IRVING
 and WEYLA lie stunned beneath the beeches in the right
 foreground. Two DRUIDS come down from the cliffs
 on the left onto the plateau. They stand at some distance
 from the recumbent figures.]*

FIRST DRUID: Wake up! Wake up!
 The night has
 Changed into day.
 The shining sun stands
 At Heaven's firmament.
 Daylight is working
 Into earthly space.

IRVING [*rising*]: It was the Voice
 Speaking through the power of the storm,
 So mighty and tremendous
 That it overcame my body
 And cast me spellbound on the Earth.

WEYLA [*raising himself upright*]: It hurled me forcibly
 Into the chasm's night.
 I saw an image
 Which previously I have never yet beheld.
 I cannot say
 What I saw!

FIRST DRUID: Wake up, get up,
 Lift up your heads
 Against all earthly weight
 Towards Heaven.
 The Voice of the Spirit has spoken,
 It cast you down.
 Now raise yourselves again.

SECOND DRUID:
 The ancient force of the tempest
 Has inscribed images
 Into your minds.
 These are still unconscious
 To eyes of spirit
 And to ears of soul,
 Which you do not know how to use.
 But pay heed to what the elements
 Are still wanting to tell you.
 Come and behold
 What is here given to you
 As a likeness.

[*Both DRUIDS, IRVING and WEYLA, move over
 to the left foreground, just below the cliffs. Diagonally
 from right foreground to left background, a tremendous
 rainbow appears.*]

IRVING: See, see,
 The bow of Heaven
 Is spanned above us.
 It conjures spirit-substance
 Into earthly matter
 And lets the coloured play
 Of elements
 Reveal
 To human eyes
 The power of the spirit.

WEYLA: O man,
 Cover up your eyes!
 O spirit,
 Open up your ears of soul!
 There speaks the same Voice
 As sounded to us before.
 I hear already the rushing of its wings,
 Oh listen, listen!

FIRST DRUID: Fear not,
 Be steadfast and calm.

SECOND DRUID: Make your hearts strong,
 Your will devoted.
 It is the wind of the Spirit
 Now meeting you
 In test.
 Do not be frightened,
 Just tremble with awe.
 Be strong and upright!

[*A tremendous rushing wind arises and shakes
 the trees, the cliffs appear to totter.*]

TREMENDOUS VOICE: And there appeared
 A great portent in Heaven:
 A woman clothed with the sun
 And the moon under her feet
 And upon her head

A crown of twelve stars.
 And she was with child,
 And cried out in her labour
 And had great pain
 In giving birth.

*[The two DRUIDS, IRVING and WEYLA fall
 to their knees and hide their heads in their arms.]*

FIRST DRUID *[on his knees, with raised arms]:*

O Brothers, friends,
 What a Voice is speaking
 And what words does it form
 Into tremendous images!
 Only divining did we know
 In our sanctuaries
 That one day
 At the breakthrough of all times,
 At the chasm of all earthly becoming,
 This Word
 Will sound from Heaven
 Down to human ears.
 And now it rings out,
 Here, in this hour,
 At this place;
 The Voice rumbles
 At our hearts
 And tears them
 Out of their well-paved courses.
 O friends, brothers,
 We who are sons
 Of the same sanctuary –
 It is the Word
 Which we and our fathers
 And our fathers' fathers
 Were ever again with ancient presentiment
 Expecting to hear.

SECOND DRUID: Be silent and wait:

The wind of the Spirit
 Begins to roar again,
 It rumbles and thunders.
 Let us hearken
 As its servants and only be ears.

*[Mighty rocks fall down the cliffs, dark clouds
 appear. Branches and twigs break from the trees,
 but flashes of sunlight shine again and again.
 Over the roaring of the wind the TREMENDOUS
 VOICE is heard again. The two DRUIDS, IRVING
 and WEYLA cower, clinging to the rocks, kneeling,
 heads covered with their arms.]*

TREMENDOUS VOICE:

And there appeared
 Another portent in Heaven,
 And behold
 A great red dragon,
 Having seven heads
 And ten horns,
 And upon his heads
 Seven crowns.
 And his tail drew
 A third part of the stars
 Of Heaven
 And cast them to the Earth.
 And the dragon
 Stood before the woman
 Who was ready to be delivered,
 So that as soon as she had given birth
 He could devour her child.

*[The storm abates, the trees come to rest, the sun shines,
 the air is clear and there are no more clouds. Three
 DRUIDESSES come down the cliffs, hurrying,
 as though in greatest anxiety.]*

FIRST DRUIDESS: Where are you, Fathers?

Brothers, are you still
In the earthly body?
Give answer!
Your Sisters seek you
In great distress.

IRVING: Over here,

We are still unharmed
In our bodies,
Yet our trembling souls
Press together,
Like sheep in a herd
Round which packs of wolves are prowling.

FIRST DRUIDESS [*to the other two*]: Praise the Gods!

Providence
Has kept our Fathers for us.
They are crouching underneath the cliffs.
*[The DRUIDESSES reach the plateau. The two
DRUIDS, IRVING and WEYLA rise, profoundly
shaken. They greet each other.]*

FIRST DRUID: What has driven you three,

Who are committed to the sanctuary,
Hither to us,
At an hour
When you should be guarding and tending
The sacrificial flame?

SECOND DRUID:

Have you forsaken the temple's sacrificial service?
Has something unutterable happened there,
Driving you over here
To us?

SECOND DRUIDESS:

We were carrying out our sacrificial service
As usual,
When you are not staying

In the confines
Of our temple.
But suddenly,
Unspeakably for all of us,
A rushing sound
Arose in the temple room.
The sacrificial flame leapt up
To heights which had never been known.
Within its light were glowing
The holy figures twain.
And the light abruptly went out,
It died and darkness was around us.

THIRD DRUIDESS: So dark it was

That we could distinguish nothing.
We knew no more
Where the floor or where the ceiling was.
We seemed to be raised
Into a spaceless and timeless condition.
It was as though eternal night
Had closed in.

FIRST DRUIDESS: We then sought

To reach the way out.
Groping, we could discover
The gate of day
And came hither,
To tell you
What has happened
In the temple's inner room.

SECOND DRUIDESS: On our descent through the rocks

Suddenly
Stones began to loosen.
The earth's foundation
Quaked beneath our steps.
We knew
That we are walking between death and life.

THIRD DRUIDESS: So we are here
 And telling you
 What we have experienced.
 O Fathers,
 Help us to kindle anew
 Our sacrificial flame!
 The service must go on.
 But what was the reason
 That all this happened?

FIRST DRUID: O Sisters,
 What has occurred
 In the holy room of the sanctuary
 Is the same portent,
 And the same likeness
 Which we, your Brothers,
 Have experienced
 Here in the sacred precinct.
 We stand at the abyss of all times.
 We are at the breakthrough
 Of all earthly becoming.
 The Word,
 Which was proclaimed to us for centuries
 That it will once
 Stream from Heaven onto Earth,
 The Word of the World,
 The Christ has appeared.
 He is from now onward Himself
 The Lord of the Elements
 And the Spirit of the Earth.
 Fulfilled is what our fathers
 And our fathers' fathers did prepare.
 The Light we have awaited
 Has appeared!
 The Word we have hoped for
 Has been born.

O joy, ineffable joy!
 O glory!
 Oh, Faith, Hope, Love
 Are fulfilled.
 O Brothers, let us give thanks.
 O Sisters, let us believe.
 O elements, trees, flowers,
 You sunlight and moonshine,
 You clouds, meadows, cliffs,
 Stones, beasts,
 Bow down in gratitude!
 He who was proclaimed to us
 Has appeared!
 The table of the Earth
 Has been lit up.

[The seven arrange themselves in a semicircle.]

	Irving	+	Weyla	
	+		+	
		Third Druidess		
	+		+	
	First Druidess		Second Druidess	
+				+
First Druid				Second Druid

[In the gentle light the cliffs start to shine from within; the ground also radiates from within, and around the trees a wafting aura appears, becoming ever stronger, so that the bright sky appears wan and pale in comparison. The TREMENDOUS VOICE resounds, forcing the seven to their knees.]

TREMENDOUS VOICE: And she brought forth a son,
 A little boy,
 Who should shepherd all the Gentiles
 With an iron staff,
 And her child
 Was caught up to God
 And to His seat.

FIRST DRUID, SECOND DRUID, IRVING *and* WEYLA

[*deeply moved, kneeling*]:

A little boy
Is born
From the womb
Of the Holy Virgin.
Ceridwen has fulfilled
What she promised.
Exult, you human heart,
And rejoice
Upon Earth
And in Heaven.
Your ways have been fulfilled.

WEYLA *and* IRVING: O Fathers, arise,

O you Sisters,
Make yourselves ready
And let us wander forth.
We want to step
Through all lands,
To waken hearts,
To open eyes,
To prepare the way
For the little boy.

[*All rise, filled with thanks. The light from the cliffs and
the earth dies away. The aura of the trees disappears.*]

FIRST DRUID: What we have taught

We can now proclaim,
What we have preserved
We want to give away.
What we have known
We want to squander!
Our time is fulfilled.

SECOND DRUID: Seven were we,

To whom was revealed

The highest secret.
Seven shall we be again,
Ever and ever again.
Seven, bearing in their hearts
The holy secret
Which shall be manifest
To all human beings.

FIRST DRUID: The rune has transformed

Into the Word.
Man must transform
Himself
Into an angel.
Creation is renewed
In the human heart!

[*All turn to the right foreground, as if to go off.
The three DRUIDESSES suddenly clutch
their hearts and stop.*]

THREE DRUIDESSES: Stop! Brothers, Fathers,

Wait! Do not hasten.
Let us listen once again.
The Voice is speaking
Within our heart.
Do you not hear it?
'And the woman fled
Into the desert
As she has a place
Prepared by God
That she would be fed there
One thousand two hundred and sixty days.'

FIRST DRUID: Sisters, be thanked

For the word
You have let sound
Through your hearts.
It is the way

Now prescribed for us,
The way
Leading us out of the past.
We have to seek the Mother.
Let us go into her desert,
To where God once directed her.
The Way will change into the Truth
When we act in the Light
Bestowed upon us.
But the Truth
Will turn into eternal Life.
It is so.
Sun, shone around by Spirit
Will radiate on Earth
In human hearts.

SECOND DRUID: The Earth turns into Bread,
The human heart, to Cup.
O friends,
Death is our friend,
And our life
Is our brother.
Oh, let us bend our knees
Down here to the Earth,
And raise our hands
Upwards to Heaven.

[They sink to their knees and raise their arms.]