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## Like the Moon

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Like the Moon

Senior Project submitted to  
The Divisions of Arts, Languages and Literature  
of Bard College

by  
Camille Weisgant

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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## **DEDICATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To Lia Clemens (1926-2014): my Nonna, my second mother, my eternal supporter. I would not be here without you.

Thank you to my friends and family for their love and input at every juncture in this process. Thank you to Cora and Catherine for taking on this production with me. And thank you to my advisers, Chiori Miyagawa, for overseeing my writing process, Jonathan Rosenberg, for his feedback during staging, and Nathan Shockey, for his support and insights with regards to the Japanese half of this project.

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**Introduction:**

Tokyo in mid-May. It is a warm Sunday morning as I rush down the street from Meguro Station, packaged sandwich in hand, following groups of elderly Japanese in suits and kimonos to enter the Kita Noh Theatre. It is not the first full program of Noh—or “Noh marathon,” as I have fondly come to call these Sundays—that I have seen during my stay in Japan. A full Noh program is an exhausting entire day of theatre. I am more prepared this time than I was my first time; I have studied the translations of each play in the program in advance and am armed with an abundance of convenience store snacks for the breaks between performances. When I finally arrive at the theatre, the hallways are bustling with tables of vendors selling souvenir cards and trinkets. I brush past them into the auditorium, and sit in the virtually empty student section on the second tier of the theatre, laughing to myself as I notice, once again, that I am probably the youngest in the room by thirty years, and the only westerner. Soon enough, I hear the first call of the musician: the program is beginning...

I first became interested in Japanese traditional performance long before my time abroad in Japan. In my freshman year of high school, I was introduced to Kyôgen, Noh's comedic counterpart. A teacher of mine directed us in short Kyôgen pieces, complete with full faces of makeup; I think he had conflated elements of Kabuki with those of Kyôgen, which is actually performed bare-faced. Regardless of whether or not our presentation was accurate to the form, this was my first exposure to Japanese performance, and I continued to be intrigued by it throughout high school, studying Kabuki, and then finally coming across Noh. Upon coming to Bard and deciding to pursue a joint major in Asian Studies and Theatre, I saw studying Noh as a perfect union of my two fields. It was Chiori Miyagawa's course, “Writing Plays with

Demons and Ghosts,” on adapting Noh plays, that originally gave me a way into the form that I could actually identify with, rather than seeing it as an untouchable, historic, and mysterious art. This project was thus inspired by work that I produced in that course.

### **History and Structure of Noh:**

Noh is a stylized, atmospheric performance art based on traditional literature and myths that was conceived in 14<sup>th</sup> century Japan. Though Kan'ami (1333-1384) originally devised the form from short plays and dances, called sarugaku (literally “monkey music”), the development of Noh as an art form is most commonly attributed to Kan'ami's son Zeami (1363-1443).<sup>1</sup> Zeami was the first of his family to be literate, and therefore was first able to record a Noh play in 1414.<sup>2</sup> Zeami is thought to have written over a hundred plays, many of which have survived in the repertoire of the two hundred and forty plays that are still performed today. In the traditional repertoire, plays are divided into five categories according to theme: *kami mono*, or deity plays, which serve to praise the gods; *shura mono*, or warrior plays, which reflect upon the sufferings of the warrior's life by forcing him to relive them; *onna mono*, or woman plays, in which the protagonist is a woman; miscellaneous plays, subdivided into three different categories of *kyōran mono* (madness plays), *onryō mono* (vengeful ghost plays), or *genzai mono* (present plays); and, finally, *oni mono*, or demon plays, in which the protagonist is a supernatural being.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless of the category, each play follows a common structure, the most common of which is called *mugen*, or supernatural Noh. In these plays a traveler (often a priest, or royalty accompanied by retainer-priests) makes a pilgrimage to visit a famous place, where he or she

1 Bowers, Faubion. *Japanese Theatre*. New York: George J. McLeod, 1952. 15.

2 Rath, Eric C. *The Ethos of Noh: Actors and Their Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U Asia Center, 2004. 47.

3 Brandon, James R. “Japanese Noh.” In *Staging Japanese Theatre: Noh & Kabuki*. Key West, Florida: Inst. for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts, 1994. i.

encounters an inhabitant of the area who narrates a myth regarding the location. After a lengthy dialogue, the inhabitant reveals that he or she is in fact the ghost or spirit of a character in the myth, and then disappears. Later, the supernatural being returns to reenact the myth via a dance. Often, the living person will pray for the ghost to be released of their earthly body during this dance, which signifies the end of the piece.<sup>4</sup> Noh does not, by any means, aspire to realism; any “action” has already long since occurred, and the play is concerned with the process of recalling the past. A Noh play does not tell a story based on human action per se, but rather uses music, dance, and costume to elicit a particular set of emotions or atmosphere. Supernatural Noh is considered to be a depiction of the traveler's dream state, and the play is meant to evoke a mood based on that state.<sup>5</sup> This dream-like, atmospheric quality is what originally attracted me to the form.

Traditional Noh performance is made up of many players, the first of which is the *shite*. In Japanese, *shite* literally means “the doer;” more often than not, the *shite* is the ghost character of the play. The supporting character is the *waki*, which means “aside” or “bystander.” The *waki* is the listener, and is typically spatially confined to the downstage left corner of the stage for the majority of the play. The *waki* is also always the primary living character in the play. The *shite* and *waki* are sometimes accompanied by retainers, which are called the *shite tsure* and the *waki tsure* respectively. The *ai kyôgen* is a sort of comic interlude character who normally plays a bystander able to elaborate on the history of the location that the *waki* has traveled to.<sup>6</sup> The section of the piece between the *ai kyôgen* and the *waki* is always written in prose and spoken, unlike the rest of the piece, which is written in measure and sung. A chorus is also on stage for

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4 Brown, Steven T. *Theatricalities of Power: The Cultural Politics of Noh*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001. 22.

5 Brandon, iii.

6 Bowers, 18.

the duration of the piece, functioning similarly to a chorus in a Greek drama, and able to both comment on the action on stage omnisciently and embody the voice of any character.<sup>7</sup> The chorus helps to emphasize emotion in the performance. Musicians, of which there are three or four, depending on the piece, occupy an area upstage. Always present are a *fue* (flute), *kotsuzumi* (shoulder drum), and *ôtsuzumi* (hip drum). In many performances, there is also a *taiko* (stick drum) player. These four musicians make up what is called the *shibyôshi*.<sup>8</sup> Actors and players each belong to different stylistic schools, train separately, and are only joined in one dress rehearsal prior to performance, creating a sort of spontaneity to each performance.<sup>9</sup>

The most important influence on Noh is Zen Buddhism, which lends the art a sort of austere beauty that relies heavily on the importance of small gestures, subtlety, simplicity, and slowness. The main concept that differentiates Noh from other popular drama forms is the emphasis on *yûgen* in performance, an idea which is at the heart of Zen Buddhist art.<sup>10</sup> *Yûgen*, literally meaning “mysterious” or “deep beauty,” is a Japanese aesthetic concept which denotes the beauty that lies in impermanence.<sup>11</sup> Like the iconic Japanese cherry blossoms, that flower and die in the span of a few weeks, each moment is imbued with a sense of its imminent passing. Noh serves as a means of grieving this impermanence and coming to terms with the natural way of life. Though less important to Noh than Zen, Amidism, a sect of Buddhism known for its emphasis on human salvation through prayer and chanting, also plays a role in shaping the Noh

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7 Bowers, 17.

8 Uchida, Takahiro, Yuji Shiozawa, and Kentaro Okutsu. “Introducing the World of Noh” *The-Noh.com*. Caliber Cast, 2015.

9 Pellecchia, Diego. “Traditional Theatre: the case of Japanese Noh.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. 138.

10 Sadayo, Kita. “Aspects of Noh.” In *Staging Japanese Theatre: Noh & Kabuki*. Key West, Fla.: Inst. For Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts, 1994. i.

11 Brandon, iii.

play.<sup>12</sup> Each performance ends in the *waki* praying for the salvation and enlightenment of the *shite*, who is bound to an earthly existence because of some unresolved attachment. Amidism underlines Buddhism's central criticism of attachment to one's life and accents the themes of death and transience in Noh.

During the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), Noh was governed by the shogunate's strict control over Japan which had suffered through centuries of civil wars. The shogunate attempted to control all aspects of life, including the arts. As a result, a detailed code of performance for Noh was established by the Shogun, and deviation from this code was strictly forbidden. After the Meiji restoration of 1868, when Japan was opened to the western world for the first time in centuries, Noh was chosen as the official entertainment for foreign guests, solidifying its status as a traditional and indigenous art form not to be altered.<sup>13</sup> This strictness with regards to Noh performance seems a double-edged sword: it is both what preserved the form, but also what outdated it, as it was not allowed to adapt with the changing times, a bit as if it were a work of art stored in a museum. Though some modern adaptations of on the form have been attempted, most notably by Yukio Mishima (1925-1970), these are often seen as external to "real" Noh, and would never be considered part of the official classical repertoire.<sup>14</sup> Because Noh is dominated by a few families, outsiders see little value in entering this world, as it offers very limited artistic freedom.<sup>15</sup> In the west, for example, Theatre Nohgaku is an important cornerstone of American Noh, but is committed only to translating and performing English versions of plays from the repertoire.<sup>16</sup> Chiori Miyagawa's play "This Lingering Life" actually comes the closest to adapting

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12 Brandon, ii.

13 Pellicchia, 139.

14 Mishima, Yukio. *Five Modern Nō Plays*. New York: Vintage, 1973.

15 Rath, 250.

16 See <http://www.theatrenohgaku.org/> for more information.

Noh to a modern, western stage, though it strays far from actual Noh structure.<sup>17</sup>

### **Artistic Goals**

Because of the strictures of tradition and form, Noh can seem inaccessible to modern viewers, especially in the western world, where we do not share the same collective knowledge of traditional myths and literature that a Japanese audience member would in theory have. As a non-Japanese viewer, we enter the theatre essentially blind. For Noh to function on a twenty-first century stage and be understood without prior knowledge of the form, it begs reexamination. It was, therefore, far from my intention to reproduce a Noh performance as such. To do so would be both much too challenging a task to take on, and I also feared that doing so would end up gimmicky and excessively othering. The profession of a Noh actor is hereditary: actors and musicians are trained by their fathers from a young age.<sup>18</sup> Asking a college-age actor to portray a role that one trains for for twenty years seemed out of the question. My goal in the creation of my piece was therefore to reexamine a form that has rarely been adapted for the western stage or the modern world, and create my own interpretation of Noh.

Faced with the imminent death of my grandmother last fall, I saw Noh as a powerful means for meditation on death and transience. Because virtually every Noh protagonist is not living, during the conception of my piece, I found death an important topic to deal with. Specifically, I began thinking about the subject of dying in the twenty-first century, when our deaths, just like our lives, are now mediated by technology. I thought of email accounts that still exist after one's passing, and of how easy it is to imagine communication from beyond the grave

<sup>17</sup> See <http://chiorimiyagawa.com/plays/this-lingerin-g-life/> for more information.

<sup>18</sup> Brazell, Karen. "The Noh and Kyogen Theaters: Elements of performance." In *Traditional Japanese Theater: an anthology of plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. 117.

through media such as the Internet. Though I grew up with Internet technology, the workings of it still seem almost supernatural to me. I have watched as people write on Facebook pages of the deceased, and imagined how it would not seem so out of the ordinary for one of them to respond. I saw technology, and especially the Internet, as a kind of limbo, an in-between place, perhaps even a dreamscape, not unlike the Noh stage. I also viewed the role of technology in my piece as a compelling way to modernize the form. In addition to remediating Noh, a goal of my piece was to examine what it means to die in the twenty-first century.

**“Why Ama?”:**

“Ama,” or “The Diver,” was the second performance in the Kita Noh Theatre's program that day in May.<sup>19</sup> The first thing that I noticed was that the minister character, the diver's son, was played by a small boy. I had yet to encounter this phenomenon, and thought it strange. However, young boys are often cast to play the roles of ministers and kings in Noh as their *waki tsure* have the majority of the lines, and it would be considered offensive to have a professional actor perform such a small role.<sup>20</sup> These young boys are actors in training, and perform their lines in a shout, so as to train their voices for the gravely Noh sound they must attain by adulthood. What ultimately attracted me to want to adapt the piece, however, was the mother character's final dance, in which she reveals her true identity to her son. More specifically, I found the moment in which she symbolically pulls a small sickle across her chest breathtaking. There was no stage blood; the incision was made less painful with the knowledge that it was done in order to hide a pearl, a sacrifice for her son's glory, in her breast. The touching nature of sacrifice,

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix A for a copy of the full script in both Japanese and English.

<sup>20</sup> Bowers, 21.

coupled with the moment of reveal, is what truly drew me to “Ama,” and what I wanted most to explore in my own version of the piece.

Furthermore, I was drawn to “Ama” as it explores the first meeting between a mother and son, years after the mother's own death. The minister does not remember his own mother. The climactic moment of the piece, to me, is the moment of recognition, after the diver reveals her identity. I asked myself, “What would it be like to meet your own mother for the first time?” This question haunted me during the piece, yet the mother's salvation is what I found easiest to access during the performance of the original play. Because of the stylized nature of Noh, I found it hard to make any emotional connection, particularly because of the dramatic shift from a sombre atmosphere in the first half, to a celebration of the mother's salvation in the second half of the play. Noh generally seemed too distant a form to connect with, and I thought a somewhat more realistic production of the piece would create more emotional closeness with the audience.

When first looking at Noh from an academic standpoint in Chiori's course on adapting Noh plays, I was most fascinated by *onna mono*, the woman plays. It is said that these plays are meant to “radiate elegant beauty,” implying that women are supposed to be delicate and resigned, something I found somewhat problematic.<sup>21</sup> I found it contradictory that a Noh play should concern itself with women whereas, traditionally, all actors have been and continue to be male.<sup>22</sup> Female characters in Noh are thus cast under a male gaze, from their inception by male playwrights to their performance by male actors. Though these plays were dubbed “woman plays,” they were still, at their core, an all-male performance. In an effort to include women in Noh, and perhaps as a knee-jerk reaction on my part against gendered arts, I wrote the minister in

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<sup>21</sup> Brandon, ii.

<sup>22</sup> Prideaux, Eric “Women in Noh.” *The Japan Times*. April 11, 2004.

“Ama” as a woman, and cast only female actors.

### **From Text to Stage:**

In the writing of my piece, I decided to forgo all other characters, and focus simply on the two central actors in a Noh piece – the *waki* and the *shite*.<sup>23</sup> In my case, the *shite* became “Stranger,” while the *waki* became “Woman,” replacing the roles of “Diver” and “Minister Fusazaki” respectively. The retainers in the piece essentially speak for the minister, so, when breaking the text down to its most basic elements, I thought them to be extraneous for the purpose of my piece. I wanted to focus on the relationship between mother and child, and eliminating all other characters in the piece allowed me to best do so. More generally, my work ended up stripping away of the “bells and whistles” of Noh – there was no stylized movement, no music, no elaborate costumes, just the distillation of emotion, so the lack bodies on stage also served this purpose.

I came across some cultural difficulties when altering the character of the diver. It is said that, in Japan, the tradition of diving, called *ama*, has existed for nearly two thousand years. These divers are mostly women, as their body fat is better distributed than men, keeping them warmer in cold ocean temperatures.<sup>24</sup> *Ama* are often of low class, though because they are able to dive for oyster pearls, they are immensely respected as valuable members of society. I found no real American equivalent, so decided Stranger would be a cleaning lady. Though a cleaning lady does not carry all of the same connotations, the sense of class resonates somewhat. The fact that the mother is able to offer a kind of service in exchange for her child's glory, but also for the

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23 See Appendix B for a copy of my full script.

24 Nukada, Minoru. “Historical Development of the Ama's Diving Activities.” In *Physiology of Breath-Hold Diving and the Ama of Japan*. United States: National Academy of Sciences, 1965. 25.

purpose of a higher class man (here a business mogul instead of a minister), allows the character to translate to the contemporary American context. As for the pearl, to follow the theme of Internet technology in my performance, I decided that a most valuable object today might be a hard drive.

The setting of my play moved from that of a literal location, Shido-no-ura Bay, to an interior space. As the crux of “Ama” is a meeting between a man and his mother's ghost, this seemed to me something very private that could work just as well in a woman's interior space. Taking the dream-like quality of Noh a bit further, I wanted to suggest that the whole meeting between the two could have been a dream. The first scene of my piece implies the female protagonist's slumber. She is only woken by a supernatural force, which enters her interior space. Because Noh uses no set pieces that indicate setting, other than a pine permanently painted on the backdrop of the stage, this transition was smooth.<sup>25</sup> In a Noh play, setting is symbolically linked to the myth the play is based off of, so I found it easy to do away with location. Setting, rather than a concrete image for the world of the living, is meant to symbolize the meeting between the living and the dead that takes place in each performance. Noh is essentially a landscape of symbols, and I decided that my purpose would be better served in a metaphorical space.

Noh text is quite challenging: lines are poetic, and often do not make grammatical sense. Images and allusions are strung together with repetitions, puns, and other types of wordplay,<sup>26</sup> which does not translate particularly well into English. Lines are highly structured, based off of specific syllabic breakdowns (“a 7-5 or 12 syllable count sung over an 8 beat measure”),<sup>27</sup> as

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25 Bowers, 17.

26 Brazell, 125.

27 Uchida, Shiozawa, Okutsu.

they are meant to be sung. Unlike western song, these are not based off of any pitch or scale. For the purpose of my piece, I did not see it necessary to limit myself to a specific structure, as I wanted to have my actors speak the text, rather than sing it, in an effort to ground the piece. Instead, I used some poetic language harkening back to the spirit of the original text. This retained the expressive atmosphere of Noh, while bringing the language into a modern world. The language of my piece also helped to create a landscape for which the characters to inhabit, and was part of what defined the rules for the space later in rehearsal.

The first line of the original play is simply “the crescent moon.<sup>28</sup>” I imagined that Stranger, coming from some otherworldly place, could conceivably have come from the moon. To me, the moon illustrates the concept of *yūgen*: it is beautiful, mysterious, unattainable, and, more importantly, central to this Noh play. Stranger's intangibility was not unlike the moon's, and so I chose to name my piece “Like the Moon.” The other central image in the original piece is the water, as the mother was a diver. The image of the water and the moon are fused when one of the minister's retainer's asks the diver to “cut the bushy seaweed at the bottom of the ocean because it hampers [the minister] from seeing the reflection of the moon on the seabed.<sup>29</sup>” The link between the ocean and the moon is undeniable, as its gravitational pull controls the tides, and I decided that that aspect would be the connecting factor between the two images in my own play. Aside from the moon being a constant projected presence in my own piece, I retained the notion of water via imagery in the language. Finally, in performance, I decided to bookend the piece with the sound of waves, to further establish a poetic relationship with water.

In the first section of my piece, which I left as is outlined in the structure of a *mugen* play,

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28 Walsh, Steve. “Ama.” *The-Noh.com*. Caliber Cast, 2014. 1.

29 Walsh, 4.

in which the ghost character initially contacts the living character, I decided to write Stranger as a projection. In the ghost character's second appearance, the actor normally changes form in some sense, so I believed a powerful shift could be from immaterial to physical. As I mentioned, I was also interested in playing with the idea of technology mediating death in some way, and so decided that a video chat would be the method by which ghosts could contact the living from limbo in the world of my piece. The Internet, to me, seems to be a sort of limbo itself, part reality and part fictional, and so it seemed an appropriate metaphor. It also allowed Stranger to subtly cross the threshold of Woman's interior space before actually physically entering her world, not unlike a traditional Noh *shite's* subtle disguised approach, prior to the full reveal.

The second half of my piece also reflects traditional structure. After the *waki* encounters the *shite* a first time, the *shite* normally mysteriously disappears. This is reproduced in the disconnection of the video call. Once the *shite* reappears, they normally reenact the story of their death, and finally ask for the *waki* to pray for their salvation, a narrative that I followed loosely. Though I did not have Stranger tell her story as a myth during her first meeting with Woman, I used the second half of my piece as time for her to do so. I chose not to incorporate the religious aspect of Noh into my piece (though my piece still contains many Buddhist ideals), so I replaced the prayer for salvation with a scene of forgiveness. Rather than the prayer being the climatic moment of my piece, Woman's recognition of Stranger as her mother was. Woman helps Stranger come to terms with her death through their meeting, and her forgiveness functions similarly to the original prayer for salvation.

During the rehearsal process, I worked mostly with my actors on the strangeness of the mother-daughter relationship. Though Stranger, played by Cora Katz, and Woman, played by

Catherine Bloom, are mother and daughter, they initially encounter each other as strangers, particularly in Woman's case. Though Stranger knows full well that Woman is her daughter throughout the piece, there is a certain tension prior to her reveal. In rehearsal, we discovered the tension that existed in Stranger's character between wanting to reveal herself as Woman's mother immediately, and not wanting to drive her away by revealing herself too soon. We did various improvisations based on meeting your child again after twenty years, as well as work on what it would be like to encounter a mother you had never known for the first time, in order to heighten the tension of emotion that each character experiences in the piece. In the second half of the piece, however, I wanted the two to physically come together more clearly as mother and daughter, and so we did various trust exercises in order to build their relationship.

Because the language was rather poetic, and I was attempting to direct the piece as a piece of contemporary theatre, I spent time with my actors going through their motivations and desires. We spent rehearsals discussing ways to think about their lines so that they made sense in the context of the piece, as many lines appear airy and even groundless without proper thought as to why they are being said. Finding ways for Catherine and Cora to connect to the lines was particularly helpful in order for them to embody them. Additionally, we established rules for the space, as it was not quite realistic, but not quite complete fantasy, which helped make several moments in the piece seem more natural, and gave my actors a sense of what could and could not happen in the space. Essentially, we took on the play as if it were a realistic American performance, and found the contrast between the realistic acting and the supernatural elements of the play to be much like the confused nature of a dream, which crosses between real and otherworldly effortlessly.

I did have my actors watch some traditional Noh to get a sense of the context of the piece. Though we incorporated little traditional performance elements into the acting, I did discuss one element of Noh with them, called *jo-ha-kyū*. *Jo-ha-kyū*, literally meaning “beginning, break, rapid,” but more often translated to “beginning, middle, climax,” implies that actions or moments start slow, speed up, and end quickly.<sup>30</sup> Noh actors are supposed to incorporate *jo-ha-kyū* into each of their actions. This concept also applies to each section of a Noh play, as well as to the Noh play as a whole.<sup>31</sup> We incorporated *jo-ha-kyū* into the rehearsal room by heightening awareness to the beginning and end of each movement or beat. This heightened awareness was helpful to add a layer of thought to Cora and Catherine's gestures, a bit like how dancers must count as they move through music. It also gave underlying conceptual aspects of the piece a certain order to them.

An incredibly challenging scene to rehearse was that in which Stranger was projected, and Woman was on stage. Because we would not actually do a video call during performance, but simply have a live feed of Cora projected onto the scrim, attempting to communicate and react to each other in real time when not actually in person was obviously key to the rehearsal process. Before incorporating the technology, I had the two do the scene face to face in order to understand the beats of the scene. Once they were comfortable with the scene naturally, I had them do it while in the same room, but with Cora behind Catherine, so they could not make contact. Outside rehearsal, the two went through the scene over the phone, before finally incorporating a video call. In rehearsal, we did actually use Skype to prepare the scene, so our tech rehearsals were the first time that the two performed in the actual set-up, but, because of our

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30 Surtasky, David. “Jo-ha-kyū (序破急).” *Theatre Nohgaku Blog*. August 10, 2012.

31 Hare, Thomas Blenman. *Zeami's Style*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986. 51.

extensive preparation, the transition from rehearsal room to stage was smooth.

As far as the staging, I wanted to maintain a sense of the Noh stage, particularly the square playing space, as well as the drama of the *shite's* entrance.<sup>32</sup> Noh's square playing space represents the world of the living. This was still true in my piece, but the center stage also functions as Woman's interior space. I wanted to give the effect of Stranger's entrance as transgressive. Despite having a leveled stage, I created the essence of the square playing space by taping it out with white gaff tape, at about eighteen feet square, the typical dimensions of the Noh stage.<sup>33 34</sup> The white gaff made Stranger's entrance and exit a literal crossing of boundaries between the spirit world and the world of the living, but also between the outside world and Woman's dream space. The fact that this space was delineated by mere tape made it seem all the more fluid.

The concept of the *hashigakari* also played an important role in my set decisions. In traditional Noh, the *hashigakari* is a bridge-way between off-stage areas and the square, main stage that constitutes the majority of the playing space.<sup>35</sup> I often noticed that it also served as a tool for the dramatic reveal of the *shite*, as the masked figure would emerge across the *hashigakari* from behind a colorful curtain. While serving as a place for actor entrances and exits, the *hashigakari*, to me, represents the straddling of two worlds, the bridge between the world of the living and that of the dead. My version of the *hashigakari* was therefore a piece of hanging muslin behind which Stranger could pass. Her shadow was visible as she crossed from off-stage to on, from immaterial to physical presence, from limbo to earth. Her shadow, not quite

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32 See Figure 1 for a comprehensive diagram of the traditional Noh stage.

33 Fenollosa, Ernest and Ezra Pound. *Noh or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1916. 60.

34 It is said that the traditional stage is three ken square. A ken is a Japanese measurement equal to six feet, therefore three ken square is equal to approximately eighteen feet square.

35 Hare, 293.

tangible, but more than abstract, paralleled the transition that the *hashigakari* signifies.

Another important aspect that felt necessary to include was a tree in the backdrop, somehow, like the painted pine that graces the back wall of each Noh stage. I knew that I wanted the moon to be the essential element of the backdrop for the piece, but added a reminder of the tree as another set element (in fact, I was told by several who knew Noh that I absolutely could not leave out the tree in some form, as it was vital to the Noh “image”). Thinking back to the theme of technology running through my piece, I incorporated an image of a tree-like circuit board, shone onto the muslin which served as my *hashigakari*. It only became illuminated once Stranger physically entered the space, symbolizing the connection between the real world, and the world of spirits. The tree remained lit until Stranger exited by way of the muslin passageway.

Other than the moon, the muslin *hashigakari*, and the taped-off playing space, the stage was relatively bare. Only in rare instances is there a large set piece in a Noh play. I reflected the minimalism of the set with that of the props. In Noh, characters sometimes carry small hand props, or have one particular prop associated to them, so I attempted to recreate that with the computer and hard drive, associated with Woman and Stranger respectively, placed at opposite corners of the square playing space.<sup>36</sup> As previously mentioned, the *waki* normally inhabits downstage left, while the *shite* moves more freely through the space, but is associated with the downstage right corner of the stage. Thus, the computer, my *waki's* hand prop, was set in the downstage left corner, whereas the hard drive, my *shite's* hand prop, was set in the downstage right corner of the square playing space.

I felt it very important to include a mask in my piece as a means to differentiate Woman and Stranger. Stranger is a ghost character, and all ghost characters in Noh are masked, whereas

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36 Brazell, 121.

living characters are unmasked.<sup>37</sup> I created the mask myself with the intention of it looking both like the face of the moon, as well as a sort of pixelated surface, making Stranger all the more indistinguishable and mysterious. Without it, the piece would have seemed much like a traditional, realistic play, which would not have suited Noh, for it is largely based in the supernatural. As soon as we got the mask into the rehearsal room, it began to change the nature of Cora's body language, which became less fluid and more pronounced, matching the unnatural appearance of a person in a mask. I encouraged her to take this further, but wish we could have had more of an opportunity to work on specific body language associated with the mask.

**Reflections:**

If I were to do the project again, I would have co-directed it with someone uninvolved in the writing process. It was a challenge for me to direct my own writing because it required divorcing myself from the writing process completely, and taking it on as if it were new to me. I found it difficult to detach myself from my work in order to discuss it with actors in terms of staging when I was not discovering the text in the same way that they were. Having written the piece myself, I had many preconceived notions about it, and had obviously even imagined what it might look like, or how lines might sound spoken. This was my biggest obstacle in the rehearsal process. I had wanted to give the actors room outside of my own understanding of the piece to discover new moments and layers of the piece, but I feel as if I did not approach them with enough suggestions or questions for them to do so fruitfully because of the extent of my own vision for the piece.

In fact, throughout the rehearsal process, I began to realize that the text does not lend

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<sup>37</sup> Brown, 27.

itself particularly well to realistic interpretation. I actually see the biggest fault in my piece to be how I stuck to realistic ideas of acting with my actors. I would have liked to work more closely with Cora to shape Stranger, especially, into an otherworldly character, and perhaps incorporate actual Noh movement into her vocabulary. I think if we could have heightened the contrast between her and Woman, the piece would have been stronger. I also think that, although I was trying to move away from the stylistic nature of the form, it could have been beneficial to generally connect the piece to Noh a bit more. One thing in particular that I felt was missing from my production that could have added an interesting layer to the performance was song, or at least a musical underscore. I did play with the idea of incorporating some traditional Noh music in the piece, such as notes from a *shinobue* flute, or distant calls from the *ôtsuzumi* or *kotsuzumi* players, but settled against them in the final performance. Because of the slowness of my piece, I feel like a soundtrack could have added texture to the piece.

While watching my piece as an audience member, I felt as though there was something missing. A thought that I had that could have filled this gap was if I had used more technology sounds in the piece. I began to introduce this with the use of the dial-up tone that served as the sound for the attempt at connection between Stranger and Woman. It might have been interesting if I had taken this further, and created a full and constant soundscape of metallic, unnatural “beeps” and “clicks.” Though it would have been in complete contrast to the guttural, rhythmic sounds of traditional Noh music, the idea of a soundscape could have tied the piece together. The discordance of electronic sounds might have worked similarly, however, in evoking the atmosphere of the play. In any case, a soundscape could have been the thing that felt missing from my piece.

My main intended goal was to create a westernized version of a Noh play, and while I think that I achieved that goal, one thing that stuck out to me, viewing my piece as an audience member, was how the flow of the style translated to a contemporary piece. I feel as though there was an unavoidable slowness to my play, no matter how much I told my actors to pick up their cues. It was quite clear when we transitioned from rehearsal room to theatre that, without the dissonant music and colorful costumes of Noh, what was left was a very muted, unobtrusive performance. To a certain extent, I relished in the intimacy this slowness and subtlety created, but I also think that my piece could have benefited from being more assertive. The leisurely pace of Noh did not match up with the contemporary elements of my piece. It might be that the play was too caught between two forms, traditional and modern, and I had needed to make a clearer decision one way or the other for the performance to flow better.

Overall, I feel as though I achieved my main artistic goals. I was able to examine death as mediated by technology via the video call between Woman and Stranger. I suggested a possible reconciliation between technology and death by making it a means by which the dead could communicate with the living, rather than the unsatisfying opposite that occurs in the world right now (I am thinking back to my particular example of people writing on Facebook pages of the deceased). The concept of the dead being able to use technology to contact the living reflected the supernatural moments in Noh that were originally explained by Buddhism. In a way, technology took the place of the religious constructs present in Noh, which explain why the dead are brought back. In some ways, technology has become the modern religion, so it seemed appropriate to use it in such a way.

Finally, I was able to bring Noh to a western stage. The piece read clearly to any audience

member, no matter what their experience with Noh. Without any knowledge of Noh, “Like the Moon” still appeared to be a fully comprehensible modern play, despite certain elements which would likely have been better understood or appreciated with some awareness of the form. The play moved from being a heavily religious scene of enlightenment to a reconciliation between mother and daughter, but still examined the tragedy of the dead's attachments in a similar manner. Again, the only thing which may have appeared out of the ordinary was the slowness of the piece, inherent in a form that is based on recalling past action rather than enacting a new event. That may also have had more to do with my directorial choices than the actual content of the play itself.

When I originally sat down with Chiori at the beginning of last semester, I said that I wanted to create a full cycle of Noh plays: deity, warrior, woman, miscellaneous, and demon. She immediately said that the project was too ambitious, which I quickly realized was true, and I settled on one type of play to focus on. However, were I to go forward with this project, I might actually create a full cycle of adapted plays concerned with modern issues. In fact, I might even take these next plays further into the modern world than I did in “Like the Moon.” I imagine Noh plays taking place in Las Vegas, bemoaning a culture of spending, materialism, and alcoholism. I imagine Noh plays on college campuses, protesting rape culture in fraternities. I imagine a Noh play concerning itself with the mafia. Because death is at the heart of Noh, and dying is such an intrinsic part of life, it is actually a form that has what I see as limitless possibilities for play and adaptation. Despite the current faithfulness to the form that exists today, I see a future in Noh adaptation, and hope that this rigidity does not deter other artists from taking on projects of reconstruction, as they could be incredibly fruitful.

Figure 1:

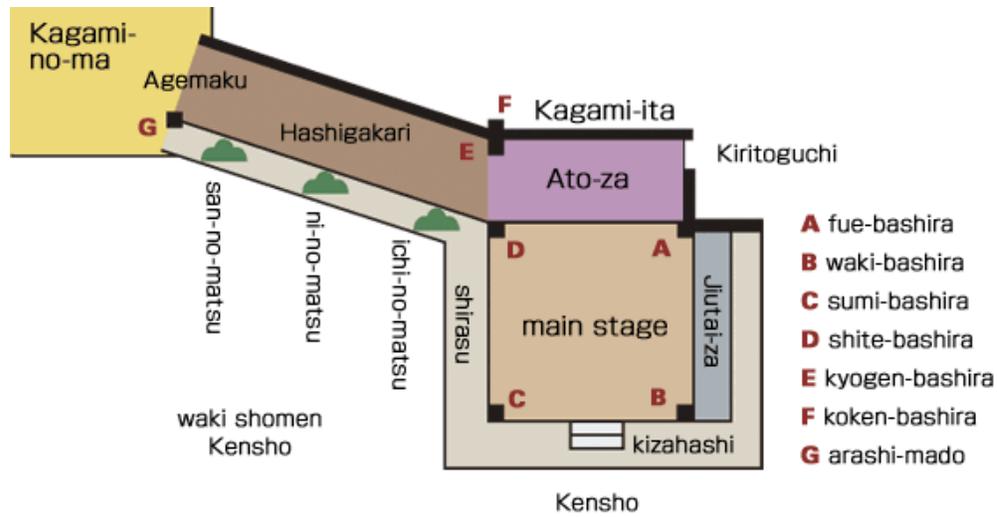


Diagram of the traditional Noh stage from bird's eye view. © the-noh.com

一 房前ふさざきの大臣とその従者たちが登場

房前ふさざきの大臣が従者とともに、亡母の追善のため讃岐国「香川」香川志度しどの浦を訪れる。

従者一同 出ては隠れる三日月の、出ては隠れる三日月の、その影残る空の彼方へ、名残惜しい都を出て西へ向かおう。

従者 天地が開けて以来、恵み久しき神々のうち、天児屋根命あまのこやねのみことの子孫、藤原氏に連なる

房前ふさざきの大臣 房前ふさざきの大臣とは、私のことである。時に私の母は、讃岐の国志度の浦、房前ふさざきという場所で、亡くなられたと伺いました。急いでその地を訪ね、亡き母の追善の法要をも営もうと思います。

従者一同 慣れない旅にも、奈良坂を過ぎ、振り返って三笠山を見れば、春霞に隠れて見えない。恨めしいことである。

三笠山を仰ぎ、わが藤原北家が今まさに栄えるこの岸边から、

## 1. Minister Fusazaki and His Retinue Enter

Minister Fusazaki visits Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province (present-day Kagawa Prefecture) with his retinue in order to hold a memorial service for his deceased mother.

Retainers The crescent moon. The crescent moon. She rises and she hides. Beyond the sky where her remnant lies, to the west, we shall depart Kyoto which we miss.

Retainer Since the beginning of the world, the Fujiwara clan are the descendants of Amano Koyane no Mikoto, one of the deities who eternally blesses us.

Minister Fusazaki

I am Minister Fusazaki of the Fujiwara clan. Now then, since I have heard that my mother passed away at Fusazaki on Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province, I would like to visit the place and hold a memorial service for her.

Retainers We are not used to traveling, but we passed the Nara-zaka Hill. When we looked back to see Mount Mikasa, the rising spring mist just covered and hid the mountain. How regrettable.

Looking back upon Mount Mikasa, from this shore where the Northern House of the Fujiwara clan is about to flourish,

Retainers At the shore where we are just flourishing, we shall rush to the southern sea. We soon pass Koya (present Itami city in Hyogo Prefecture) in Settsu Province and sail out toward Awaji Island, which is said to be the first island of Japan created by the deities during the formation of the country. Then, around the time our travel is almost complete, we pass the coast of Naruto. We hear a small boat of a diver, who does not know where to stay. The sound of diver's boat reaches us.

\*The following bracketed phrases are only used in Kongoh, Komparu and Kita schools.

Retainers Although this is not an easy journey, our Lord's feelings as he thinks of his mother hurries us there. Days pile up like snow, and just looking at the snowy sky of Tsumori at the corner of our eyes, we travel days and nights. We finally arrive at Fusazaki Bay in Sanuki Province. We arrived at Fusazaki Bay, whose name we have only heard before.)

Retainer As you hurried, you have already arrived at Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province. Look, a person is coming from over there, though I am not sure if it is a man or a woman. We shall wait for the person and ask the details of this land.

## 2. Diver Enters, Dialogue between Retainer, Minister and the Diver

A woman diver (*mae-shite*), holding a sickle in her right hand and seaweed in her left, enters the stage. She converses with the retainer and the minister.

右手に鎌、左手に海松布みるめを持った海女が登場し、従者や大臣と言葉を交わす。

## 二 海人の登場、従者・大臣との問答

従者 お急ぎになりましたゆえ、早くも讃岐の国、志度の浦にお着きになりました。あちらを見ると、男か女かもわかりませんが、人が一人、やつてきます。あの者を待って、この土地のことを詳しく聞きましょう。

従者一同 つらい旅であるが、これも母のためと思えば、急がれる。(日にちを重ねて迎える津守の雪空、)日にちを重ねて迎える津守の雪の空を尻目に、夜昼となく行けば、名前のみ知っていた讃岐の国、房前の浦に着いた。房前の浦に着いた。

\*以下の囲み内は、下掛三流(金剛・金春・喜多)のみにある。

従者たち 今まさに栄えるこの岸边から、南の海へ急ごう。行けば程なく摂津の国の昆陽こや「兵庫 県伊丹市」を過ぎ、日本の始まりのときに出来たという淡路島への海路を進む。旅の末に、鳴門の沖を通れば、泊る地も定まらない海人の小舟の音がする。海人の小舟の音がする。

- Diver Although I am not talking about the 'heart' insect living on the seaweed I have cut, my sleeves are wet by my tears as my heart hurts.
- This is Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province. The woman before you is a diver, who lives in the village of Amano. Although we have a dignified temple, Shido Temple, nearby, I myself have little relationship with the heart of Buddhahood.
- The renowned divers in Ise Province wait for the moon, rising above the mountains of the Inner and the Outer Shines of Ise, at the place washed in evening waves. They must know when the autumn comes, informed by the voice of the winds blowing over the reeds called "beach bushclover in Ise." Also, I overheard that the divers in Suma add the branches of young cherry trees to bake the sea salt. They never forget the taste of spring. However, on Shido-no-ura Bay, nothing comforts my heart. Although it is named Amano-no-hara (the field of heaven), no flowery grass grows to delight my eyes. I shall cut seaweed now in this bay where nothing pleases my eyes.
- Even if I don't cut seaweed with all my might, it carried by a river. Even if I do not cut seaweed, carried by a river, which pours into the ocean, floating reeds are coming into the ocean with the tide. Since a diver lives like the floating reed, how can you determine that she does not have a heart? I shall go back to the village of Amano, where such a diver lives. I shall now return to the village.
- Retainer Say, woman over there. Are you a diver living on this bay?
- Diver Certainly, sir. I am a diver living on this bay.
- Retainer Since you are a diver whose job is to dive in the ocean, cut seaweed at the bottom of the sea for my master.

海人  
海人の刈る藻に住む「われから」の虫ではないが、我から「我が心のゆえ」涙に袂が濡れる。

ここは讃岐の国志度の浦。近くに志度寺はあるものの、私は仏の心にも欠ける、  
天野の里の海人でございます。

まことに、名を得た伊勢の国の海人たちは、夕波のうち寄せるところから、内外の宮の山に上がる月を待ち、伊勢の浜萩と知られた芦に吹く風に秋を知り、また須磨の海人たちは、塩焼きの薪にも、若木の桜を折り持ち、春を忘れることもないと聞くけれど、この志度の浦には、心を慰めるものもなく、ただ名前のみ、あまの原というばかりで、花の咲く草もない。見るものもないこの浦で、みるめを刈ろう。

刈らなくても浜辺の川に運ばれて、刈らなくても浜辺の川に運ばれて、潮に引かれる流れ芦は、海へと流れ込む。その芦のように、海人は世を渡る生業なのだから、心ないとも言いがたい。そんな海人の住むあまのの里に帰ろう。あまのの里に帰ろう。

従者  
やあ、そこにいる女に聞かすが、あなたはこの浦の海人なのか。

海人  
その通りです。この浦の潜かすきの「潜水をする」海人でございます。

従者  
潜水の海人なら、あの海底のみるめを刈っていただけはないか。

Ama (The Woman Diver)		Story
Diver	How pitiful. He must be exhausted after traveling and suffering from hunger now. Although this is my home, it is astounding to meet a noble person in such a shabby rural village. Please accept this seaweed. I do not need to trouble myself for diving and cutting it. Please take these.	
Retainer	No, no, you have misunderstood. His orders are to cut the bushy seaweed at the bottom of the ocean because it hampers him from seeing the reflection of the moon on the seabed.	
Diver	I see. So, he orders it cut in order to enjoy seeing the moon. The command reminds me of an old story. When a shining sacred jewel was stolen by the Dragon King's Palace off the shore of this bay, the one who dived into the ocean and retrieved it was...	
Reciters	a diver of this bay. The full moon shines in the sky, and the tide fully comes in. The full moon hangs in the sky. With the high tide, I will dive and cut the seaweed.	
Retainer	Hold on a minute. Did you say that a person who dived and returned the sacred jewel from the ocean was a diver from this bay?	
Diver	Yes, sir. The person was a diver from this bay. And, see, the village over there is Amano, where the diver used to live. Also, the island in front of you is named Shinju Island, which means the "island of new jewel," because it was where people could see the sacred jewel when it was first taken from the ocean.	

海人 お気の毒にも、旅に疲れ、飢えに悩まされておいでなのです。私自身が住む里とは申すものの、こんなにもみすぼらしい田舎の果てで、高貴な方にお目にかかるとは思議なことではございません。みるめをお召しください。刈るまでもありません、このみるめをお召しください。

従者 いやいや、そのためではない。水底に映るあの月をご覧になるのに、みるめが茂つて邪魔をしている。それを、刈りのけよとの仰せである。

海人 さては、月見のために刈りのけよとの仰せなのです。昔もそのようなことがありました。この浦の沖で、龍宮に奪われた明珠を、海に潜つて取り上げたのもこの浦の

地 海人。天に満月がかかる満ち潮の、天に満月がかかる満ち潮のなか、さあ、みるめを刈るとしよう。

従者 しばらく待ちなさい。明珠を潜つて取り上げたのも、この浦の海人だと申すのか。

海人 その通りです。この浦の海人でございます。また、あちらの里をあまのの里と申しまして、その海人が住まれた場所です。またこちらの島は、新珠島しんじゅしまと申します。かの玉を取り上げて初めて見たところだといえますので、新しい珠島と書いて、新珠島と申すのです。

Ama (The Woman Diver)		Story
Retainer	Then, what was the name of the jewel?	
Diver	The sacred jewel contains the holy figure of Gautama Buddha. His holy face looks at you from any direction, so it is called “The <i>Menkō-fuhai-no-tama</i> Jewel,” and the Chinese characters mean that he “does not look aside even if you look at his holy face.”	
Retainer	Why on earth would such a precious jewel be sent from T’ang China to this land?	
Diver	A younger sister of the current Lord Tankai, Minister Fujiwara no Fuhito, became the consort of the third emperor of the T’ang Dynasty. Then, the empress gave three treasures to the Kofukuji Temple because it is the family temple of the Fujiwara clan. The three treasures were <i>Kagen-kei</i> (a percussion musical instrument made of the stone from Kagen in Shaanxi Province, China), <i>Shihin-seki</i> (a percussion musical instrument made of the stone from the Si River in China), and the <i>Menkō-fuhai-no-tama</i> jewel. Two of them safely reached the capital of Nara; however, the jewel known as <i>Menkō-fuhai-no-tama</i> was stolen by the Dragon King’s Palace offshore here. Therefore Minister Fuhito secretly secluded himself in this shore, and married a diver girl. The couple had a baby, who is the current minister, Lord Fusazaki.	
Minister Fusazaki	I am the Minister Fusazaki. The story fills me with great nostalgia. Diver lady, please tell me more and more.	
Diver	What a surprise! I have never thought until this moment that this story would relate to anyone. But it is about you, my Lord. Ah, it was inappropriate to tell the story...	

従者 それで、その玉の名前は、何と言われていたのか。

海人 玉の中にお釈迦様の像がございます。どちらから拝み奉っても、いつもお顔をこち

らに向けておられるので、面を向けるのにお顔を背けないと書いて、「面向不背の珠」と申します。

従者 そんな宝を、なぜ、中国・漢の朝廷が渡したのか？

海人 今の大臣の淡海公、藤原不比等様の御妹君は、唐土の高宗皇帝の后になられました。

それで、その氏寺だからと、興福寺あてに三つの宝を渡されたのです。華原磬「中国の華原で産する石で作った磬の楽器」と泗濱石「中国泗水に産する石で作った磬、そして面向不背の珠がその宝です。先の二つの宝は奈良の都に着きましたが、面向不背の珠は、この沖で龍宮に奪われてしまいました。大臣は身分を隠してこの浦に籠もり、海人の少女と契りを結び、一人のお子さまをもうけられました。今の房前的大臣がその方です。

房前的大臣 おお、私こそが、その房前的大臣だ。何とも懐かしいことである。海人よ、もっと

もっと詳しくお語りなさい。

海人 (これはまた何と、) 今までは、全くの他所事と思っていましたのに、実に、あなた

様の身の上の出来事だったのでですね。何とも不適切なことを申し上げました。

## Minister Fusazaki

I was born the son of Minister Fuhito and am a member of the blessed Fujiwara clan. However, although I am alive here I am concerned because I do not know who my mother is.

One day, my close advisor evasively answered “your mother was at Fusazaki in Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province, and was a diver... well, diving too much into this story is too dreadful.” But with his all respect, he could not tell me anymore. Now I understand. I am a son of an ignoble diver and was born of an ordinary woman.

Reciters Even so, even so, I was in her womb even for a while. It is the same as the moonlight in the sky is under an obligation to the dew drop in bush on the earth and shines there for a while. I appreciate it so much that I have traveled all the way here. Ah, your diving costume makes me feel a certain warmth. And saying so, he weeps.

Diver Although I am a diver, who does not really understand the movement of human emotion, my costume...

Reciters the sleeve of my costume which wets in sea all the time should wet now in my tears, you mean? Oh, Lord, I am so grateful for what you have said. It must be determined from your previous lives that such a noble person as you was placed in the womb of an ordinary diver. It is like the lights of the sun and the moon in the sky become even stronger when it reflects in a puddle in the garden. Although I wish to say that we are also the descendant of that diver, it would be an ill-considered saying. I will close my mouth and not speak of anything as if I were a relative of yours and had some relations with the Fujiwara clan as flourish as purple wisteria. And, I will not see anything. Like the name of the mandarin duck, which indicates a deaf-mute, I will remain silent and not sully your august name.

私自身は大臣の子として生まれ、恵みの開かれた藤原一門に属している。しかし気がかりなのは、我が身は生き残っていないながら、母を知らないことである。

あるとき側近の者が、「かたじけなくも母君様は、讃岐の国志度の浦、房前の、あま……あまり申し上げますと恐れ多いことでございます」と言葉を濁した。さては、私は賤しい海人の子で、身分の低い女の腹に宿ったのか。

たとえそれでも母のもとに、たとえそれでも母のもとに、つかの間でも宿っていたことは、月の光が箒木の雨露の恩にあずかり、しばし宿って輝くのと同じではないか。そう思えばこそ、ここまで訪ねてきた。ああ懐かしい海人の姿よ、と涙をお流しになると、

海人 まことに心ない海人の、その衣、

地 いつも海で濡らしている私の袖を、重ねて涙で濡らせとのことなのですか。恐れ多いことです。このような高貴な方が、賤しい海人の胎内に宿られたのも、この世だけの縁ではない。たとえば、日の光、月の光が、庭の水たまりに映り、輝きを増すようなものである。私たちもその海人の子孫、とお答えするようなことは、まことに愚かしい物言いである。あなた様にゆかりのある者と受け取られ、紫の藤咲く華々しい藤原一門に縁があるなどと聞こえるようなことは、口を閉じて何も言わず、見ることもしません。水鳥の鴛鴦<sup>おし</sup>ではないけれど、あなた様の名を汚しますまい。

### 3. Diver Acts the Scene of Taking Up the Jewel and Disappears

The diver convincingly enacts the scene in which the ancient diver took the sacred jewel back from the ocean (“*Tama-no-dan* (the Scene of the Jewel)”). Then, she hands a letter to Minister Fusazaki and disappears.

Retainer Now, would you portray some parts of the scene in which the diver plunged into the ocean and regained the jewel, in front of His Excellency?

Diver Yes, I will show you some.

(When Lord Tankai asked the diver to get the jewel back,) the diver told him, “If I can take it back, please promise that our son becomes your successor.” As he said it was an easy to promise, she determined not to spare her own life if it was for the glory of her son. She then held a long rope around her waist and told, “If I can get the sacred jewel, I will pull this rope. Please then pull me up with this rope with everyone working together.” Saying this, she unsheathed a sharp sword in her hand,

Reciters She dived to the bottom of the sea where the ocean and the sky seem to merge together. While swimming in the wave like clouds or smoke, she dived into the vast ocean and checked the seabed right beneath her. But she cannot see the bottom. In this endless ocean, she started to be worried whether one ordinary human without supernatural power could actually pick up the jewel. However, she managed to reach the Dragon King’s Palace. When she sneaked into the Palace, the sacred jewel was placed with incense and flowers at a sacred tower 90 meters in height. Around the tower, the Eight Great Dragon Kings lined up to protect the sacred jewel and ferocious fish and sharks opened their mouth. When she understood that she could not escape a death, she suddenly missed her loved home in the shore, as she was a woman.

### 三 玉取の様子を演じた後、姿を消す海人

海人は、迫真の勢いで玉取りの様子を演じる（玉の段）。その後、房前大臣に母であると告げ、手紙を渡して姿を消す。

従者 それでは、あの玉を海に潜って取り上げたところを、大臣の前で、少し真似してお目にかけていただきたい。

海人 それでは、少し真似てお目にかけてみましょう。

（淡海公が明珠を取り返してくれと頼んだ）その時、海人は、もし私がこの玉を取れましたら、この子を世継ぎの位につけていただきたい、と申し上げた。それは容易いことだとご承なさったので、海人は、ならば我が子のために捨てる命、少しも惜しくはないと意を決した。そして長い縄を腰に巻き付け、「もしこの玉を取れたなら、この縄を動かします、その時に皆で力を合わせ、私を引き上げてください」と約束し、一つの鋭い剣を抜き持って、

地 かの海底に飛び入れば、海も空も一つになって、浪は雲か煙のようになってい。それを凌ぎつつ、広々とした海に分け入って、真下かと思えば、底も見えない。この果てしない海底では、神通力の持ち主ならいざ知らず、玉を取れるかどうかかわからない。ようやく龍宮に着き、宮中を見ると、その高さ三十丈の玉塔に、例の玉を安置し、香や花が供えられている。その守護神には、八大龍王が居並び、そのほか、

Beyond the wave, my lovely son and his father, Lord Tankai, would be there. However, how sad that I had to be separated from them at the moment of my death. In tears, she stopped for a moment, but had second thought and prayed to the Bodhisattva of Mercy of Shido-ji Temple to help her to achieve it. Believing in the Bodhisattva's mercy, she pressed the sharp sword on her forehead and jumped into the Dragon King's Palace. Then, the evil dragons unintentionally stepped back for both sides. Seizing the moment, she stole the sacred Jewel and tried to escape. Since the Dragon Kings chased her down, as she planned from the beginning, she held her sword upside down and cut her body beneath her breasts. She stuffed the Jewel into her opened wound, abandoned her sword, and fell upon it. Since the dead are hated at the Dragon King's Palace, no evil dragon wanted to come close to her. Then, she pulled the rope attached around her waist as planned, the people on a boat on the surface willingly pulled the rope up. People did not know where the jewel was, but she went back to the surface of the ocean.

Diver Although she could return to the surface of the ocean, her body was torn into pieces by ferocious dragons and soaked in blood. While Lord Tankai lamented that he lost both the sacred jewel and his wife, the diver told him to see the place under her breast, with struggling breath. When he looked, there was a deep cut made by the sword. Then, the brilliant jewel came out from the cut. This is why you could be the successor of Lord Tankai as promised and named after this place, Fusazaki. There is nothing to hide now. I am the ghost of your mother, the diver.

海人

獯猛な魚、鰐鮫の口も見える。我が命はもはや死から逃れ難いと思うと、さすがに女の身、恩愛残る故郷が恋しい。あの波の彼方にこそ、わが子はいるのでろう、父の大臣もおられるであろう、それにしても、別れたまま果てることの何と悲しいことか、と涙ぐんで立ちつくした。しかし、またそこで思い切つて手を合わせ、南無や志度寺の観音薩埵、どうか力を合わせて支え給えと、観音の慈悲を念じて鋭い剣を額にあて、龍宮の中に飛び入った。すると、龍たちは左右へばつと退いた。その隙に宝珠を盗み取つて、逃げようとする、悪龍たちが追つてくる。そこでかねてより企てていた通り、持つていた剣を取り直し、乳房の下を掻き切り、玉を押し込め、剣を捨てて突つ伏した。龍宮では、死人を忌み嫌うため、あたりに近付く悪龍はない。約束の縄を動かせば、船上の人々は喜んで引き上げた。珠はどこかもわからぬまま、海人は海上に浮かび上がった。

このようにして、浮かび出てはきたが、悪龍の仕業と見えて、五体は切り裂かれ、血に染まっていた。宝珠も失われ、本人までもが落命したかと、大臣が嘆いておられるその時に、苦しむ息の下から、申す言葉がある。「私の乳のあたりをご覧ください」というものであった。まこと剣の刃があつた痕があつた。その中から、光り輝く珠を取り出された。そういうわけで、あなた様は約束通りに世継ぎとなり、この浦の名にちなんで「房前的大臣」と呼ばれている。今は、何を隠すことがあるものか、私こそが、あなたの母、海人の幽霊である。

Reciters My dear son, please read this letter, do not doubt, and comfort my soul. Now, I would leave under the wave which is meaninglessly washing the shore. As a ghost who can see you only in the dream at night, I hate the dawn. Our family bond has been very weak, don't you think? Saying so, she sunk underneath the waves in the morning tide. She sunk beneath the waves.

[Interlude]

#### 4. Story told by Local Resident

Responding the retainer's request, a local resident (*Ai*) called by the retainer started to narrate the story associated with the diver who brought the jewel back. The retainer reveals that they are the group of Minister Fusazaki and orders the villager to pass word around his village that the Minister will hold a memorial service with music and is therefore looking for musical performers. The local man was also ordered to tell people to prohibit killing any creatures. The villager obeys his order and gives notices to his village.

#### 5. Memorial Service by Minister Fusazaki

Minister Fusazaki reads the letter from his mother. Following her desire expressed in the letter, he holds his mother's thirteenth-year memorial service.

Retainer Excuse me, my lord. It was such a mysterious event. Why don't you open and read the letter?

地

この文の筆の跡をご覧になり、不信なされず、弔いなさい。今はもう、いたずらに寄る波の下に帰ろう。夜の夢でしか逢えない幽霊の身には、明け方が恨めしい。親子の縁は浅いものであったよ、と朝潮の波の底に沈んでいった。立つ波の下に入っていた。

〔中人〕

#### 四 浦人の物語

従者から呼び出された近隣の浦人「間狂言」は、従者の問いに応じて、海人の玉取にまつわる物語を始める。従者は、房前大臣一行であることを明かし、浦人に追善供養のため、管弦役者の募集と殺生禁断のお触れを出すように命じ、浦人はこれに従い、触れてまわる。

#### 五 房前大臣による追善供養

大臣は母からの文を読み、供養の望みを汲んで、亡母の十三回忌の法要を営む。

従者 ここに申し上げます。あまりに不思議なことでありますゆえ、文を開いて、ご覧になるのがよろしいかと存じます。

## Minister Fusazaki

He opens the letter, thinking this is what his deceased mother wrote in her hand. The letter says as follows: “Thirteen years have passed since my soul has departed for the underworld. My body was buried under the white sands of the shore and meaninglessly accumulated the time. The path in the underworld is dark, and no one has consoled my soul. If you have the heart to serve your mother, please save my soul which is wandering in the darkness of the other world.” Surely, I am thirteen years old now.

Reciters There is no room for doubt. I should pray for my mother. With all his heart Fusazaki prepares to offer flowers appropriate for Shido-ji Temple. He then recites the Lotus Sutra and holds various memorial services. He holds various memorial services for his mother.

## 6. Dragon Lady Enters and Dances with Joy

The ghost of Fusazaki's mother, who now transformed to a Dragon Lady attaining Buddhahood, appears with a Buddhist holy scroll in her hand. She dances expressing her delight in becoming a buddha. At the end, the origin of the service at Shido-ji Temple is introduced.

Reciters *Jakumaku muninjō*. (It is so lonely. I cannot hear anyone's voice.) [A part of the verse, used to sing the praises of the Buddha, in the Lotus Sutra.]

## Dragon Lady

It is an extremely blessed sutra. Because of the merit of this sutra, Devadatta, who committed the five deadly sins, was given an oracle that he would become Buddha. The eight-year-old Dragon Princess also can be reborn in the Pure Land of innocence in the south. Please, keep reading the sutra, please.

Reciters *Jindatsu daifukusou. Hensou ojitsuhou*. (Buddha recognizes the deep root of weal and woe of every living thing and evenly gives the light to the every corner of the world.)

地

深達罪福相、遍照於十方「仏は衆生の罪福の根源に深く達し、十方世界をあまねく照らし給う」、

龍女

ああ、ありがたいお用いであることよ。このお経の功德で、五逆の罪を犯した提婆達多も将来の天王如来になると予言を受け、八歳の龍女も南方無垢世界の浄土に生を受ける。この上になお、要の読経を続けていただきたい。

地

寂寞無人声「非常に寂しく、人の声もない」「法華経法師品偈文」の一句

経巻を持ち龍女の姿となった母の霊が登場し、成仏の喜びの舞いを披露する。

## 六 龍女の登場と喜びの舞

地

これが亡き母の手ずからの文かと開いてみれば、「私の魂が黄泉の国へ旅立って十三年、しかばねを浜辺の白砂に埋ずめて、年月を経た。冥界の闇路は暗く、私を弔う者もない。あなたに孝行の心があるのなら、冥界の闇で踏み迷う私を助けてください」とあった。まことに、自分も十三の歳となっている。

もはや間違いはない、さあ申おうと、志度寺の名にふさわしく、志を込めて花を手向け、法華経を読経し、いろいろの追善の法要をなし給う。いろいろの追善の法要をなし給う。

房前の大臣

これが亡き母の手ずからの文かと開いてみれば、「私の魂が黄泉の国へ旅立って

## Dragon Lady

*Mimyou jouhosshin. Gusou sanjuuni.* (His holy body, the purest and the most excellent, displays the thirty-two fortunate signs,)

Reciters *Ihachijishshukou.* (And also embodies eighty holy expressions.)

## Dragon Lady

*Yooshoogon hosshin.* (Those signs and expressions adorn the Buddha's body.)

Reciters *Tennin shotaigou. Ryuuujin genkugyou.* (Both the heavenly bodies and earthy bodies respectfully worship the Buddha, and dragon deities also respectfully serve Buddha.) How wonderful and merciful the Lotus Sutra is!

## [Haya-mai]

This is a bright, elegant dance, which expresses the joy of attaining Buddhist enlightenment. It is usually performed as *Banshiki-hayamai* accompanied by the music of high notes. Although it is called haya-mai (fast dance), the pace of this dance does not become too fast. The music for this dance is played by a Japanese flute, small and large hand drums, and a drum.

## Dragon Lady

Owing to the virtue of the Lotus Sutra,

Reciters Thanks to the virtue of the Lotus Sutra, the celestial people, dragon kings, and the Eight Guardians of the Law of Buddha – both human and non-human creatures witness that the Dragon Lady became a buddha. Originating with Fusazaki's love for his mother, a memorial service with eight lectures on the Lotus Sutra has been conducted at Shido-ji Temple in Sanuki Province. The temple became a sacred place which conducts two devotional exercises in the morning and the evening and actively practices Buddhism.

龍女 微妙浄法身、具相三十二「精妙で清らかな法身は、三十二の際立った相を具え」、

地 以八十種好「さらに八十種のご相好を以て」、

龍女 用莊嚴法身「仏身を莊嚴なものになさっている」、

地 天人所戴仰、龍神咸恭敬「天、人もそれをあがめ仰ぎ、龍神も皆、恭しく敬い奉る」、ああ何と、  
ありがたいお経だろうか。

「早舞」  
はやまい

成仏の喜びをあらわす明るく、気品のある舞。主に高音の調子で奏される盤ばん涉しき早舞として舞われる。早舞の名があるものの、さほど速くはならない。笛、小鼓、大鼓、太鼓で奏される。

龍女 今このお経の功德により、

地 今このお経の功德により、天人、龍王、八部衆、人、人でないものも皆、遙かに彼の龍女の成仏を目の当たりにした。かくして、この寺が讃州の志度寺と号し、毎年法華八講を営み、朝夕の勤行を絶やさないと、仏法繁栄の靈地となったのも、この（房前の大臣の）孝養の行いに発するとお聞きしている。

## Ama (The Woman Diver)

### Synopsis

The minister Fujiwara no Fusazaki, a son of Fujiwara no Fuhito (or Lord Tankai), arrives at Fusazaki in Shido-no-ura Bay in Sanuki Province (present Kagawa Prefecture) to hold a memorial service for his deceased mother.

When Fusazaki's retinue arrives at Shido-no-ura Bay, they meet a certain woman diver. After exchanging words, Fusazaki's retainer asks her to dive in the ocean and cut seaweed. Being reminded by the request, the diver tells them of an event that occurred in the bay. "The Jewel of *Menkō-fuhai-no-tama*" which was offered when a sister of Lord Tankai became the empress of the Tang Dynasty, was stolen by Ryūgū (the Dragon King's Palace). Lord Tankai traveled incognito and stayed in this bay to get the jewel back. A diver in this bay eventually had a baby with His Excellency. In order to make her son the heir to Lord Tankai, she sacrificed her life to go to the Dragon King's Palace and brought the jewel back. Through the narrative, the diver imitates the scene in which the jewel was brought back from the undersea palace. Then finally, she reveals that she is the mother of Minister Fusazaki, passes a letter to him with tears, and disappears in the ocean.

Reading her letter, Fusazaki understands that in the underworld his mother desires salvation. He performs her thirteenth-year memorial service at Shido-ji Temple and consoles his mother. Then, while reciting the Lotus Sutra, his mother, who is transformed into a Dragon Lady, appears. She dances gaily and expresses her delight at attaining Buddhahood.

### Highlight

The highlight of this drama is definitely the scene where the diver brings back the jewel from the Dragon King's Palace. This scene is especially recognized as "*Tama-no-dan* (the Scene of the Jewel)," known for its great chant and dance. The woman diver holding a sword in her hand jumps into the Dragon King's Palace, takes back the jewel, which is protected by the Eight Great Dragon Kings, from the sacred jewel tower, and cuts under her breast to hide the jewel in her gash. Because of the Dragon's Palace's taboo to avoid the deceased, not even evil dragons approach her. Then, the woman diver pulls the safety rope... The zeal of the diver who is willing to cast her life aside for the sake of her son and her mission is dramatically expressed through the chorus and dance. You might have an impression that the whole piece was created for the sake of showing this "the scene of the jewel."

It is tragic that the son is bereaved of his mother. However, the somber atmosphere is changed by the short, up-tempo development of the story in the second half of drama. Ultimately the piece reaches a bright ending with the blessing of Buddha. This drama cherishes the climax and is artfully woven.

Schools	All five schools. While the Kanze school uses Chinese characters of 'Ama (海士)' for this piece, the other four schools use 'Ama (海人)'		
Category	Fifth-group noh, <i>kirinoh-mono</i>		
Author	Unknown		
Subject	Allegedly originated by Ingyō-ki in "Nihon Shoki," "Taishokkan Monogatari" and "Shido-ji Engi," etc.		
Season	Spring (February)		
Scenes	The Nara era	<i>maeba</i> <i>nochiba</i>	Shido-no-ura Bay, in Sanuki Province Shido-ji Temple
Characters	<i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Nochi-shite</i> <i>Kokata</i> <i>Waki</i> <i>Waki-tsure</i> <i>Ai</i>	Woman Diver Dragon Lady Minister Fujiwara no Fusazaki Fusazaki's retainer Fusazaki's retainers A local resident of Shido-no-ura Bay	
Masks	<i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Nochi-shite</i>	<i>Fukai, Ohmi-onna, or Shakumi</i> <i>Deigan, Ryūnyo, or Hashihime</i> (Hosho School)	
Costumes	<i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Nochi-shite</i> <i>Kokata</i> <i>Waki</i> <i>Waki-tsure</i>	<i>kazura, kazura-obi, mizugoromo, kitsuke / surihaku, koshimaki / nuihaku, koshi-obi, and a fan. Holds a sickle and branches of Japanese cedar (seaweed).</i> <i>kazura, kazura-obi, kuro-tare</i> (a black wig whose hair extends slightly longer than the shoulder), a dragon's tiara, <i>maiginu, kitsuke / surihaku, colored ōkuchi, koshi-obi, and a fan. Holds a sutra scroll.</i> <i>golden kazaori-eboshi, chōken, kitsuke / nuihaku, white ōkuchi, koshi-obi, and a fan.</i> tops and bottoms of <i>suō, kitsuke / dan-noshime, a small sword, and a fan.</i> Similar to <i>waki</i> .	
Number of scenes	Two		
Length	About 1 hour and 30 minutes		

## 海人／海士（あま）

### あらすじ

藤原不比等（淡海公）の子、房前ふささきの大臣は、亡母を追善しようと、讃岐の国（香川県）志度の浦を訪れます。

志度の浦で大臣一行は、ひとりの女の海人に出会いました。一行としばし問答した後、海人は従者から海に入って海松布うみまきぬを刈るよう頼まれ、そこから思い出したように、かつてこの浦であった出来事を語り始めます。淡海公の妹君が唐帝の后になったことから贈られた面向不背むおもむきの玉が龍宮に奪われ、それを取り返すために淡海公が身分を隠してこの浦に住んだこと、淡海公と結ばれた海人が一人の男子をもうけたこと、そして子を淡海公の世継ぎにするため、自らの命を投げ打って玉を取り返したこと……。語りつつ、玉取りの様子を真似て見せた海人は、ついに自分こそが房前ふささきの大臣の母であると名乗り、涙のうちに房前ふささきの大臣に手紙を渡し、海中に姿を消しました。

房前ふささきの大臣は手紙を開き、冥界で助けを求める母の願いを知り、志度寺にて十三回忌の追善供養を執り行います。法華経を誦読しているうちに龍女りゆうにょとなった母が現れ、さわやかに舞い、仏縁を得た喜びを表します。

### みどころ

この作品の山場は、何と言っても海人が龍宮から珠を奪い返す様子を見せる場面でしょう。「玉の段」の名を持って特別視され、謡どころ、舞どころとして知られています。一振りの剣を持って龍宮のなかに飛び入り、八大龍王らに守られた玉塔から宝珠を取り、乳房の下を掻き切って押し込める。死人を忌避する龍宮のならいにより、周囲には悪龍も近づかない。そして命綱を引く……。子のため、使命のために自らの命を投げ出す一人の海人の気迫が、特別な謡と型を伴い、ドラマチックに表現されていくのです。この場面を見せるために、一曲ができていたのではないかという印象すら覚えます。

親子の死別という、悲しい結末の重苦しさは、後場の短くテンポのよい展開で雰囲気を変えられ、最終的には明るく、仏法の功德につながります。一曲の盛り上がりを大切に、巧妙に練り上げられています。

流儀 五流にあり。宝生、金春、金剛、喜多の各流は「海人」、観世流は「海士」と表記。  
分類 五番目物、切能物  
作者 不詳  
題材 「日本書紀」允恭紀（いんぎょうぎ）、「大織冠物語（たいしよっかんものがたり）」、「志度寺縁起」などと伝えられる。

季節 春（2月）  
場面 奈良時代 前場 讃岐の国、志度の浦  
後場 志度寺

登場人物 前シテ 海人  
後シテ 龍女  
子方 藤原房前大臣  
ワキ 従者  
ワキツレ 従者たち  
アイ 志度の浦の住人

面 前シテ 深井または近江女、曲見  
後シテ 泥眼、龍女（りゅうにょ）、橋姫【宝生流】

装束 前シテ 鬘、鬘帯、水衣、着付・摺箔、腰巻・縫箔、腰帯、扇  
鎌と杉葉【海松布（みるめ）をもつ】。  
後シテ 鬘、鬘帯、黒垂（くるとれ）、龍戴（りゅうたい）、舞衣（まいぎぬ）、  
着付・摺箔、色大口、腰帯、扇 経巻（きょうかん）をもつ。  
子方 金風折鳥帽子（きんかざおりえぼし）、長絹、着付・縫箔、白大口、腰帯、  
扇  
ワキ 素袍上下（すほうじょうげ）、着付・段熨斗目、小刀（ちさがたな）、扇  
ワキツレ ワキに準じる。

場数 二場  
上演時間 約1時間30分

海人／海士（あま） Ama (The Woman Diver) ©2014 the-noh.com

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『海士・海人 対訳でたのしむ』竹本幹夫 著 檜書店  
『海人（海士）能の友シリーズ 12』川西十人 著 白竜社  
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『新潮日本古典集成 謡曲集 上』伊藤正義 校注 新潮社  
『能への招待!』藤城繼夫文・亀田邦平 写真 わんや書店  
『能楽ハンドブック』戸井田道三 監修・小林保治 編 三省堂 など

## Like the moon

by

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February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015

for my Nonna (1926-2014)

time                      now

place                      somewhere in between

notes on the text      Stranger should be barefoot.

characters

Woman

Stranger

*Spotlight on a computer downstage right. Lights down.*

*Lights up. A huge full moon hangs at the back wall of the stage. WOMAN enters stage left. As she says the next lines, she bends her fingers back.*

**WOMAN:**

I tried to speak with my father today. My relationship with him isn't exactly... strong. It's a bit like a house built on stilts. Comfortable, but at the same time very pliable. Ready to collapse at any little wave.

*WOMAN turns and notices the moon.*

**WOMAN:**

The moon is bright tonight. I imagine it is an all-powerful being. The moon controls the tides. When the moon shines like this, the light keeps me up at night. Turning to look up at the surface of the ocean from the depth of the water... That's exactly what the surface of the moon looks like. I'm exhausted.

*WOMAN makes herself comfortable on the floor.*

**WOMAN:**

When I was little, I slept deeper than the ocean. Nothing could stir me from my slumber. Now I wake at every little sound, even ones that don't exist.

*WOMAN shuts her eyes to sleep.*

*An internet dial up tone is heard coming from the computer.*

**WOMAN:**

Shhh. Let me sleep.

*The sound gets louder.*

**WOMAN:**

Not now...

*The sound gets louder.*

**WOMAN:**

I said, not now! I'm trying to sleep.

*The sound gets louder.*

**WOMAN:**

What do you want...?!

*WOMAN drags herself over to the computer, the dial up tone cuts off. STRANGER's face is projected on the back wall, replacing the light of the moon.*

**STRANGER:**

Hello? Oh, good, I thought you'd never come.

**WOMAN:**

What do you want waking me up at this hour? Who are you?

**STRANGER:**

Me? That doesn't matter.

**WOMAN:**

Of course it does. You just called me. Why did you call?

**STRANGER:**

Call? No, not exactly.

**WOMAN:**

Listen, you must have the wrong person.

**STRANGER:**

No, wait, don't go. I know it may seem strange to you, but I have something very important to tell you. I've been trying and trying to connect with you for so long and I'm quite tired now. I'm not asking for much, just for you to listen for a few minutes.

**WOMAN:**

I don't know... I'm so tired.

**STRANGER:**

Well, I'd be happy to listen to you! You could get some things off your chest. Then maybe you could regain the sleep you have been chasing so fruitlessly. Why don't you tell me about your mother, then?

**WOMAN:**

My mother?

**STRANGER:**

Yes, I can tell you are aching to talk about her.

**WOMAN:**

You can tell?

**STRANGER:**

I'm here now, I said I would listen, so why don't you tell me?

**WOMAN:**

My mother... I don't even know her. She died when I was so young. The world never gave me time to know her.

**STRANGER:**

I see that is agonizing for you. I'm sure it is for your mother, too.

**WOMAN:**

Do you think so? Even though I don't remember watching her die, every time I think of it, my body goes numb. I stare into space and bend my fingers too far back.

**STRANGER:**

But your mother would not want you to feel pain over her death, of that I am sure.

**WOMAN:**

Certainly she has no idea.

**STRANGER:**

You don't know that. You don't believe in ghosts?

**WOMAN:**

Who are you?

*The projection on the back wall shuts off. The connection has been severed. The computer makes garbled sounds. The moon returns.*

**WOMAN:**

What? No...

*WOMAN works on her computer briefly, attempting to retrieve a connection unsuccessfully.*

**WOMAN:**

It's the moon. When the moon is this big, it gets in the way and disrupts the signals... Maybe tomorrow.

*WOMAN paces.*

**WOMAN:**

The loneliest thought is being completely swallowed up.

*WOMAN waits at her computer, speechless. After some time, the computer switches from it's garbled sounds and begins to dial up. WOMAN picks up.*

**WOMAN:**

Thank goodness.

*The moon fades away, leaving STRANGER blinking back in to focus on the back wall.*

**WOMAN:**

We seem to have lost our connection. I was worried. I need to find out who you are, how you know things about my mother.

**STRANGER:**

Listen, and I will explain. But I fear a faulty connection. Though the moon is in perfect alignment tonight, it still interferes. It has not been this way in decades, you know. It would be much better if we could meet in person.

**WOMAN:**

How?

*The stage projection goes dark. STRANGER enters slowly upstage right, holding a razor blade in her right hand and a tangle of wires in her left hand. WOMAN stands. WOMAN and STRANGER face each other. The moon returns projected on the back wall of the stage.*

**WOMAN:**

I'm speechless. You're here.

**STRANGER:**

Amazing, isn't it?

**WOMAN:**

Yes... It's like the spaces in between. I would think my heart beat would be slower, or I wouldn't feel the blood coursing through my body, but my pulse is faster than ever. What are you carrying?

**STRANGER:**

My only material belongings. *(sits, places razor blade and wires at her sides)* Why don't you lay your head down? Let's rest together. *(motions to lap)*

*WOMAN lies her head in STRANGER's lap.*

**STRANGER:**

So.

**WOMAN:**

So...

**STRANGER:**

This is right.

*WOMAN nods.*

**WOMAN:**

I feel like it should remind me of being little, of being a child, of being on the beach, the waves are lapping at my feet. The water is cold, but you are so, so warm.

**STRANGER:**

It's just like we once were. Now, I must explain. It's quite a long story, to tell you the truth. So prepare yourself.

**WOMAN:**

Tell me, you must.

**STRANGER:**

And it's not as if you have any time constraints.

**WOMAN:**

Well—

**STRANGER:**

Shh... Not in this world.

**WOMAN:**

Okay, I'm listening.

**STRANGER:**

A long while ago, before you were even born, I was far from where I am now. I was nothing but a cleaning lady, working in a tall, tall office building. My life was mundane, but easy. Nothing was hard because I lived simply. I had a little white apartment all to myself. I rarely ate out, I never travelled, all of my clothes I had since school. I lived my life with it's little excitements happily. In fact, I would call it luck that I worked as a cleaning lady where I did, because I was eventually noticed, noticed by a kind and attractive employee of the building. I was immediately draw to his charm, and I guess, though I may have been humble, my modesty had a certain charm to it, too. We fell madly in love. And with that, my life became a bit more exciting. But the excitement had nothing to do with the money, at least not for me. It was his smile.

**STRANGER (cont'd):**

His intention. When we pressed our hands together, I could feel the heat of his body, I could feel the intensity with which he existed. I had never felt that in another person before, not the way I did with him. And the excitement of young love... It just took over. I'm sure you know of it. You look like you know of it.

**WOMAN:**

Hardly.

**STRANGER:**

You will, someday. I hope you will. You, of all people, deserve all the love in the world.

**WOMAN:**

Me?

*WOMAN and STRANGER exchange a long glance.*

**STRANGER:**

You. Anyway, my love, he... money mattered more to him, let's say. He was always hungry, ravenous even, for more. And more power. Did that make him a bad man, though? If it did, I was blind to it. It didn't change our relationship until... well, he asked for my help. Sorry, I'm getting carried away in remembering.

**WOMAN:**

I'm listening. I'm curious.

**STRANGER:**

It feels so far away now, but my husband asked me to help him.

**WOMAN:**

Yes.

**STRANGER:**

There was... a hard-drive. My husband was young and ambitious, and told me he would do anything to become the president of his company. And his boss, the president of the company, had entrusted him with the knowledge of certain criminal activities in which he participated. Some sort of embezzlement, that type of thing. Well, all the information with regards to that was contained on the hard-drive. My husband sought to expose him, he thought it was wrong, and he also knew he was likely next in line to run the company... His boss really was a terrible man. So I thought it only right to help.

**WOMAN:**

And so he asked you?

**STRANGER:**

That's right. We devised a plan, which only I could carry out, as I was the only other person besides the president himself who had a key to his office. I would always clean his office last, as it was on the top floor, normally around seven or eight at night. Everyone was already long gone, home to dinner, home to their families. But not me. Between vacuuming his floor and wiping down the windowsill, I stole the president's hard-drive, from the top left drawer of his desk.

*A small area is illuminated downstage left, in which is contained a tiny, glistening hard-drive. STRANGER comes forward and slowly lifts the hard-drive to the light. STRANGER then places the hard-drive lovingly into the folds of her robe. The downstage corner fades to black as STRANGER moves back to sit with WOMAN.*

**STRANGER:**

My theft left me reeling. I had never done anything like it in my life. The next few days... no, the next few months, were a blur. The president of the company was arrested, my husband promoted to his position, and my deed went completely invisible, utterly unnoticed. I began to fade away. I would look at my limbs, I would hold an arm in front of my face, and I thought I could see right through myself. My husband was the only one who still saw, but it was for all the wrong reasons. He would do nothing but praise me, saying we had secured a wonderful future for ourselves, for our children yet to come. But his smile started to grow dull. It didn't have the same power it once had over me. I missed his luminosity. I missed my one room apartment, my clean, simple, pure life. Now my life was full of things, money, lavish, luxury.

**WOMAN:**

You wanted meaning where you had none.

**STRANGER:**

That's right. So I went through the motions of being a wife. I got pregnant. I had the baby, but I didn't spend much time with her. I think that is my biggest regret in life... Not waiting, not letting the baby and I grow happy together. I think we could have, if I would have just been patient. I think the baby could have meant everything to me. But I was anxious, anxious to feel peace in my life that had become chaos. And so I did the most rash thing... *(weeps)*

**WOMAN:**

Oh... Don't cry.

**STRANGER:**

Do you... forgive me?

**WOMAN:**

Forgive you for what?

**STRANGER:**

For dying.

*WOMAN has a short intake of breathe. The sound reverberates against every wall.*

**WOMAN:**

I don't know.

**STRANGER:**

That's right. How could you know?

**WOMAN:**

It's not that I don't know the answer to your question...

**STRANGER:**

You can't quite unravel it yet.

**WOMAN:**

Maybe not.

**STRANGER:**

You want me to leave.

**WOMAN:**

It's not that.

**STRANGER:**

Then what?

**WOMAN:**

I forgave you a long time ago. It's just hard to come to terms with the fact that you have to leave all over again.

**STRANGER:**

But I must. I'm not allowed to stay. For where does one go after such joy? I'll try to make my way quietly. I'll try not to bother you anymore. Oh, but I want to stay so badly. I don't mind waiting. You can go back to sleep, I'll stay.

**WOMAN:**

Go back to sleep...?

**STRANGER:**

Yes, sweetie, lay down now.

*STRANGER crouches over WOMAN.*

**STRANGER:**

Goodnight. Sleep tight.

**WOMAN:**

Don't let the bed bugs bite.

**STRANGER:**

This is how it would have been, wouldn't it?

**WOMAN:**

How it would have been.

**STRANGER:**

I have never regretted leaving you more than I do now.

**WOMAN:**

But I turned out okay.

**STRANGER:**

Of course you did. I knew you would be fine without me.

**WOMAN:**

It doesn't mean I didn't miss you every single day.

**STRANGER:**

And I've been thinking of you constantly.

**WOMAN:**

Mapping the pattern of your face in my mind. Feeling for the warmth of your hands. Imagining your figure standing in my doorway. Mama. You were like the moon. Constant and constantly intangible.

**STRANGER:**

I can't ever leave you again.

**WOMAN:**

But you know the way it goes. You have to leave. It will be okay.

**STRANGER:**

You have no idea. How can you say it will be okay?

**WOMAN:**

Nor do you. I do know the ocean will swallow you up. I know the tides will overcome you. And it may feel lonely at first, but then it will be okay, because you'll forget loneliness, you'll forget warmth, you'll forget touch and just sleep. It will be simpler.

**STRANGER:**

Without you...

**WOMAN:**

You'll forget me, too.

**STRANGER:**

No. Now that I've seen your face, I can't ever imagine forgetting it.

**WOMAN:**

We can talk until you are tired, if you want.

*WOMAN and STRANGER sit back, basking in the moonlight. The stage brightens.*

**STRANGER:**

The way was so dark before, but now it seems clear as day.

**WOMAN:**

It does, doesn't it.

**STRANGER:**

I'm getting sleepier now.

**WOMAN:**

You can give in.

**STRANGER:**

I will. I'm tired of wandering.

**WOMAN:**

Between worlds.

**STRANGER:**

My feet are aching.

**WOMAN:**

You can go. I know you now.

*Lights begin to dim, except for the projected moon, which shines brighter than ever. STRANGER dances as she exits stage right.*

*When lights come up, WOMAN is asleep on the ground, alone, with wires woven into her hair.  
Sound of waves.*

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