

BRING ME ONE OF EVERYTHING

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Act I
Scene 1

The Beginning of the World

[The theatre is dark. On the centre of the stage is a black box, 4x4, with slatted sides, barely visible. A large feathered wingspan moves over the audience.]

Chorus:

Nothing had to happen forever
in order for this something to start

Voice:

Earth was not found yet
nor heaven.

Voice:

To the north and south of nothing
were regions
of ice and fire.

Chorus:

At the end of the first three minutes,
the universe was mostly light.

Voice:

This is Raven's story.
It is the only one to tell
It goes like this:

Chorus:

[Alternating voices, male and female, upbeat, staccato]

Raven
being born
needs a mother

to be born
needs to love
being born

Entire Chorus:

makes the light

[The movement of the wings centers on the stage. Inside the box on stage a light grows stronger and brighter.]

Voice:

Then Raven steals what he has made—
like that—snatched.

[A large bird swoops down and grabs the light in the box and takes it high on stage, beyond view. The only light on the stage is the indirect light shining from this box.]

Voice:

[Serious, playful but also slightly melancholic]

Raven was bored being so alone.
He cried.
And someone heard his cry
In the cave where the winds are born.

The sound was irresistible.

[Nahanee comes from the darkness, stage right and moves toward centre stage. He is followed by Austin Hart, Tom Price, Mary-Anne Hart and the children, with other members of the cast coming behind. They can only be seen as shadowy figures. As they are still moving, the light is “dropped” from above and the stage is illuminated with brilliant sunlight, like a flash, and then immediately lights out.]

Act I
Scene 2

The Departure

[At the docks. The archaeological expedition is about to leave for Ninstints Island in the Queen Charlottes. The Collectors are loading the boat with provisions: lumber, food, tools, large hand saws, a chain saw. Austin Hart is standing near his wife, Mary-Anne, and his daughter, Paige, a child of seven. The Chief Collector stands beside Hart.]

[Upbeat mood, tone of excitement]

Chief Collector:

[To Austin Hart]

You go to bring out the totem poles
so they will be preserved
protected
salvaged—

You will be thanked
for generations.

Some Collectors:

It's a jungle in there
a rainforest
a tangle of evergreens.

Chorus of Collectors:

We are collectors
in a great tradition.
We are collectors,
anthropologists,
like the best of them
Newcombe
Swan
Powell
Halliday

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Chief Collector:

Halliday,
he made some mistakes.
There were indiscretions
which should be avoided.

Collectors:

We are collectors
in a great tradition
Austin Hart, collector,
the best of them.
God's speed.
God be with you
in your mission, Austin Hart.

Austin Hart:

For years
I have yearned for this day
and now it's here.

[Points out to the ocean]

There's a killer whale out there about to plunge
with the arching of the salmon's back in view.
I am ready to go.

Mary-Anne Hart:

This trip is a journey
of celebration—

Chief Collector:

[Contradicting her slightly, to assert his authority]

—of salvation

Hart:

[Accommodating]

Of celebration and
of salvation.

Some Collectors:

But where is Tom Price—
the project must be documented,
filmed, completely chronicled—
that's what he's for.*

Chief Collector:

[Annoyed]

Is Price late?

Some Collectors:

Where is he?

Some Collectors:

Can he be trusted?

Some Collectors:

Is he really one of our kind?

Hart:

[Confident; reassuring]

He'll be here.
We couldn't go without him.
He knows the way.

* Tom Price is a native whose origins go back to Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands). He has been hired to chronicle the expedition. He later becomes a famous carver.

The Collectors:

[Emphatic]

But you made all the connections
paid those who asked.
You are our man.

Chief Collector:

[Annoyed]

This journey costs dearly.
And Price is late.

[Price enters]

Price:

[To the Collectors; ironic]

But not too late, I see.

[To Austin Hart]

There are complications with the families—

Hart:

Disputes as to ownership?

Price:

The people are remembering.
The Chief, he's sorting it out.

Chief Collector:

[To Hart, focusing on him and not Price]

But you paid the money
You paid the Chief.

Hart:

I paid all those who had a claim—

Chief Collector:

[Calmed]

That settles it.
Our natives, they will be pleased.

Hart:

[Slightly anxious]

All those who had a claim
whom I could find.

Price:

There will be others.

The Collectors:

We'll show them the receipt.
The law will protect us
It's on our side.

Chief Collector:

Enough of this.
These are details
that Hart will look after.
He knows the way.

Some Collectors:

[Who are staying behind—sincere and celebratory]

You are collectors
in a great tradition
Austin Hart collector
like the best of them.

God's speed.
God be with you
in your mission,
Austin Hart.

God's speed
God be with you
in your mission,
Tom Price.

*[Everyone who is leaving has now boarded the boat except
Hart]*

Hart:

[To Mary-Anne—thoughtful, determined]

There will be no boot-prints in the sand
Bullets in skulls
Tongues slashed.
We are not conquerors

We are collectors.
Anthropologists,
in a great tradition.

[To the Chief Collector]

We go to preserve,
to protect
to salvage
what the natives have left behind.

Some Collectors:

[From the boat]

To salvage
to protect
to preserve
Forever.

Hart:

This journey is an act
of salvation.

[Hart kisses Mary-Anne and Paige goodbye. He shakes hands with the Chief Collector and walks up the gangway to the boat, carrying in one hand his bag, and under his arm some books. On board the Captain of the vessel (partly in jest), salutes Hart. Hart turns and waves to his family. The dock splits. On one part is Hart's family; on the other is the Chief Collector and the others who are staying behind. The two parts gradually slide off stage, as the bridge of the ship moves forward.]

As Hart leans against the railing of the ship, holding a book in his hand, day turns to night.]

**Act I
Scene 3**

The Dream

[Throughout this scene the Haida speak in their own language with the sur-titles in English.]

Hart, stage right, alone at the front of the boat. Night-time. He looks to the stars and then to the north.]

Hart:

[Contemplative but optimistic and self-confident]

There is a forest of totems—
inaccessible, waiting—
I will be the last to witness their pure state.
They are crumbling even now.
There will be no more—

I am trained to go through barriers
to glimpse another world.
I will pay for the vision I seek.

I am ready.

Other explorers only loved a curio trade
Except Juan Perez.

He didn't go to conquer but to enquire,
for science

He didn't land.
He was afraid.
I am not afraid.

*[Hart opens the book he is holding. It's a copy of Perez's journal
and letters. He reads out loud from the book.]*

"July 19, 1774,
There was smoke coming from the land,
the unoccupied land."

Voice of Perez:

*[On the screen behind Hart it shows Perez standing on board a
boat, looking out.]*

In canoes they came towards us.
I touched the barrel of my gun
but these natives began to sing.

[The screen shows the scene being enacted]

An old man—he seemed to be king—
stood in the centre of the boat
and played a tambourine.
He opened wide his arms,
as if expecting me to arrive.

Chorus of Perez's Men:

They cast feathers on the water
for our bow to spread
to lay aside
to open—
They opened up their arms

As if expecting me.

[Lights down on Hart who moves to the side as the scene unfolds on the boat which becomes the historical scene. Nahanee (the Chief and master carver) as well as other Haida, board the boat.]

Nahanee:

[To the other natives]

Spread the word back to the shore,
across the feathers we laid down,
spread the news:

Native Chorus:

[More and more voices join the chorus as the lines are sung until there is a full chorus]

They are just like us
They are people
They are just like us
Real people.

Full Chorus:

We have discovered a human race.

[The words "they are human, they are just like us" are repeated in Haida, Gitksan, Nlaka'pamux, Heiltsuk, Halkomelem, Chinook, down the line.]

[Nahanee steps forward.]

Nahanee:

You come toward us
like an echo
answering our very own song.

[Nahanee embraces Perez, who is deeply moved. He searches for something to give Nahanee: touches his chest and removes a

locket from inside his shirt. He shows Nahanee that it has a mirror on the back and the reflection flashes through the theatre. He places the locket around Nahanee's neck.

The reflected light from the mirror becomes the shifting lights of the aurora borealis. In silhouette, totem poles are being raised on Ninstints. The wind starts to pick up.]

Nahanee:

[Points to the land]

Come.

[Perez looks around. The wind is getting stronger.]

Perez:

Tomorrow.

Native Chorus & Crew:

Florescence.
A brilliant light that shines:
our people together
We create the light in the sky.

[The wind is quite strong. The natives climb down from the boat. Perez's boat slowly disappears as a fog separates the two peoples.

When the fog lifts, we are on land. Nahanee, centre-stage, is carving a mask. A young boy is beside him, watching. Other native people are watching him, including Nahanee's grandmother. A white man appears. He is wearing the Haida mask of The Trader. Nahanee is startled by his presence.

The trader has with him another man who wears a Hudson's Bay Company blanket. On his face is the Small Pox mask. Other traders and settlers come on stage.]

Native Chorus:

We trade;

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we get what we want,
and you do too.
You buy. There is plenty.
Then you want more.

Nahanee:

I go to my house.
The storage is empty.

I take my bent box;
I give it away.

Native Chorus:

[One voice begins and others join line by line]

There is a touch of the conqueror
on your face.
And when you are talking
you are glancing over my shoulder.

Full Chorus:

You are looking at my land.

A Voice from the Chorus:

[To the Traders and Settlers]

Be still, be guests for once.

Native Chorus:

They break into the houses of our dead
They rake through our lives
they take our bones

They sell these stolen things
like owners
like conquerors
like kings.
The price goes up.

They sell these sacred things,
like scavengers,
like jackals,
greedy men.
The price goes up.

To Chicago
New York
Ottawa
Paris
Brussels—
our treasures vanish.

Nahanee:

And we start to carve for you
pipes that don't smoke
to use with coal that won't burn.

You buy.

Native Chorus:

What has happened to our love—
florescence—
our mutual song?
What has happened to the news
that came across the waves
on feathers we set down
for your bow to spread
to lay aside, to open.

You came toward us
like an echo
answering our very own song.

Now your echo contains a blast.
What have you done?

*[Nahanee and the trader negotiate, and Nahanee gives the trader
an argillite pole in exchange for the Hudson Bay Company
blanket. The trader removes the blanket from the man with the
Small Pox mask. The trader puts the blanket on the young native*

boy who wears it proudly at first. But the back of the blanket starts to burn, a symbol of the small pox that infects the blankets given to the natives by the traders. The trader and the Small Pox man exit. Then the child, inflamed, starts to run. Others catch fire. Everyone runs. There is pandemonium.

Nahanee picks up the mask he has been carving and runs. Other natives run, fall and can't get up. The stage transforms into a Mission run by the priests. Nahanee falls headlong into the arms of the priest.

The priest washes Nahanee's charred face.

The Priest wears a mask. With him is a Chorus of Priests, some wearing the mask of the Intruder, some with ugly, long-nosed masks. Others are handsome.

Nahanee's grandmother has also run to the Mission. She sits in a circle with other Haida who have fled from small pox. There are Chilkat blankets hanging behind them.]

Nahanee:

Help me.

Priests' Chorus:

Don't speak your language,
Indian
We will beat the Indian out of you,
Savage
We will beat the savage out of you—

[The Priest takes off his mask; he has the face of the Chief Collector.]

The Priest:

[Gently]

—and make you our own.

The Priests' Chorus:

You will learn to write.

Nahanee:

[Proudly]

I write with my heart.

The Priests' Chorus:

[As the Priests' chorus sings they pull the Chilkat blankets down and put all the ceremonial masks in it. They transfer other things they've "collected" from other native nations to the blanket as well, including the sighted and unsighted stone masks. On stage, symbols of the church replace those of the natives. Nahanee is now in a completely foreign environment.]*

We will deal with your heart, savage

Write this on your heart

HEATHEN

in your heart

mend your ways

in your heart

listen to us

in your heart

despise your father

in your heart

on your knees.

Priest:

[Gently]

I am your only friend.

* These are twin stone masks. The only difference between them is in one there are perforations through the stone, as open eyes. In the other, the stone is smooth, the eyes closed.

[He moves towards Nahanee. Nahanee backs up, clutching the mask he has been carving close to his chest. The Priest takes it. Nahanee is stunned.]

And your name, by the way, is not Nahanee.
Your name is Edward.
I christen you.

[Moving closer]

Tell me you care for me,
Edward.
Say it to me
Tell me now.

Nahanee:

[Defiant]

I will never be your friend.

The Priest:

[Angry]

That's from the devil.

[Softening]

[He moves closer, holding out Nahanee's mask carving, as if he might give back the mask if Nahanee did what the Priest asked]

And your feelings for me
come from God.

[The Priest towers over Nahanee]

Tell me you are my friend
Say it to me—
now.

Nahanee:

[Afraid, almost in a whisper]

Friend.

[His grandmother, in the circle of native people but slightly apart, watches. The Priest looks at her and grins because of his victory over Nahanee. He leaves with the mask. The grandmother is completely distraught and buries her face in her hands.]

[Exit the Priests]

Nahanee:

[He is shaking]

I cannot weep.

[He slowly moves into the centre of the circle, surrounded by his people.]

My grandmother weeps.
I turn my head away.

Native Chorus:

Salvaging what he can
He gets up to dance.
He can't dance

He opens his mouth to sing
He can't sing.

Nahanee:

Grandmother, I'm sick.

Grandmother:

This must be hidden from them.

Native Chorus:

This must be hidden from them.

Grandmother:

This must be hidden from the world.

Native Chorus:

What has happened to our love—
florescence—
our mutual song?
What has happened to the news
that came across the waves
on feathers we set down
for your bow to spread
to lay aside, to open,
the news of a real human race—
A light is going out.

You came toward us
like an echo
answering our very own song.
Your echo contained a blast.
What have you done?

Hart Awakes

[Lights up on Hart on deck. He looks up from his book.]

Hart:

Years of yearning assemble
and sing one song
my heart wants to be uncaged.
And yet, I hesitate.

These dreams make me hesitate.

There will be no boot-prints in the sand.

Mine is a quest.
Terrible, sublime.
The world is as sharp as a knife.

[Blackout]

Act I
Scene 4

The Awakening

*[The expedition to Ninstints Island has arrived during the night.
The scene opens before dawn on the beach.]*

Hart:

Pitched darkness.
Never born.
Death smothered against my head
and crushed upon my eyes.
I am extinguished.
I never was.

I am not now.

*[Light grows. The totem pole of the Weeping Woman is upstage
centre, in front of other poles. There is one totem, stage left,
which has partially fallen as a result of natural causes. It has
Raven carved on top. It is leaning against another pole and
caught in the trees.*

*Stage right is the entrance to a cave. On top of the cave there are
more totems, disappearing beyond view. The cave contains the
roots of trees which seem to be the roots of the totem.]*

*The light breaks over the hills. The sky is red, and the poles are
black against the sky. The light expands to show Hart, down-
stage centre, and Price upstage left. Price is crouching over,
looking at something. As Hart sings, Price lifts a board.*

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Hart:

[Amazed, transfixed]

I've been here
Here before
At first contact with this light
At first contact with this place
And I was afraid.

Spirit Chorus:

[Unseen]

Ah

[Repeated]

Hart:

I step onto this shore.
I feel released, discovered
I feel, holy—

And I am afraid.

Spirit Chorus:

*[Some come from within the trees and the totems, behind Hart.
Their faces are painted.]*

Ah

[Repeated]

Hart:

Animals were not in my dreams,
as though extinct in me

[Referring to the animal figures in the poles]

Spirit Chorus:

Here they are at first light.
Here they are at contact
Here they are—
Alive.

[Hart thinks he sees someone behind one of the poles. It is Nahanee, holding a stone tool, The Slave Killer. He disappears.]

Spirit Chorus:

Someone is watching you

Hart:

[Alarmed]

I know.

Spirit Chorus:

Someone is here.

Hart:

I know

Spirit Chorus:

Someone is watching you

[Repeated as a chant under Hart's singing]

Someone is here—
Someone is here with you.

Hart:

I wish I had a mask to hide myself.
Time is all at once;
And everything is changed—
I step back and I fall

into you
I am afraid of you
I am aware of you
I am afraid of you

Hart & Spirit Chorus:

I am afraid—
I am aware of you—

Hart:

Am I disfigured by entering here?

[The spirits disappear again, except for Nahanee who is looking from behind the Weeping Woman pole. All the poles can be seen in full light.]

Hart:

There is someone else here
whom I have known
an attended silence
a watchful eye
watching me.
Who is it?
What does he want?

Who are you?
What do you want?

Or are those his questions
to me?

And in his presence
I realize my soul is bruised,
my vision the cross-hairs
of a gun

There were to be no boot-prints in the sand.

[He looks around. No one is there.]

[Absorbed in himself]

A rampant beauty invades my soul.
As though a lover has been waiting all along
her house arranged,
the table set,
everything wrapped in light—

Spirit Chorus:

Everything wrapped in light.

Hart:

I had not thought
I would be so affected
by this place.

[Price moves downstage. He holds out his hand to show Hart something.]

Price:

I lifted a board
and underneath
a totem pole, ten inches high in slate—
I never saw anything like it.
I reached
I was excited
So beautiful I wanted to touch it—
I reached—
It crumbled in my hand.

A god
fell apart in my fingers
gone to dust
before my eyes.

[Looking at the poles]

What a story these artists have told;
It calls to me.
Everything wrapped in light.
I had not thought
I would be so affected by this place.

[The Collectors bring in supplies. The boxes they are carrying are plain, pine boxes.]

Spirit Chorus:

Everything wrapped in light.

[Repeated]

Hart:

This task will break our hearts.

Some Collectors:

[Seeing Hart and Price standing there]

Austin, what's wrong?

Some Collectors:

We have work to do.

[On top of some of the poles are grave boxes. The light glances off the copper on them. From time to time the light flashes into the audience. It catches Hart's attention.]

Hart:

The sun has been captured by these poles—

Price:

We must bring them down to us.

We must bring them down to earth
to be amongst us.

A Collector:

Austin, you are in command.

Spirit Chorus:

Everything wrapped in light.

[Some of the men are taking ropes and throwing them up in an attempt to lasso the Weeping Woman pole. The ropes, secured to the ground, look like guy-wires. Jones, one of the Haida, is scaling a tree beside one of the poles to attach another rope.]

A Collector:

[Realizing that Hart is almost lost to the Collectors]

You must not fail.

Hart:

[Thoughtful]

Perez, he didn't land.

A Collector:

He was afraid.

Hart:

And my father, too,
he didn't land.

A Collector:

He was afraid.

Hart:

He never came to shore.

The Collectors:

You are here, now.
You must not fail.

The Collectors:

Hart must not fail like Perez,
and his father,
and the generations before.

Collectors:

We will restore them
They will be forever
Like stone
Like rock.

Hart:

[Tormented]

If we don't take them—

The Collectors:

[Gently but growing more aggressive]

In your father's footsteps
In your father's tracks
Left in dust turned to mud
no better than he,
afraid to land.

A Collector:

[Firmly]

You have waited long enough.

[Nahanee can be seen again, amongst the poles. Hart feels his presence again, as do the Collectors.]

[It starts to rain, but the rain is coming from the poles.]

Hart:

The poles weep.

The Collectors:

[Demanding]

Say the word.
Say the word
now.

Hart:

[As though he is obeying an order of a higher command]

Fell these poles

Now.

[The chainsaw is started. Price and Jones begin to cut the pole with the Weeping Woman. The Collectors join. Hart watches. The chainsaw sputters and stops. It is started again. A cut is made into the pole and the wood flies like sparks. Then the saw sputters and stops.]

Spirit Chorus:

The animals stop talking
The breeze stops moving
And the waves hesitate—
Everything listens
listens.

Price:

[To Hart]

The saw won't work.
The men are hungry.
You said you paid to take them
but someone didn't pay enough.

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Chorus of the Guardians of the Poles:

[Coming from the base of the poles and behind the cave, wearing dark colors, masks]

What is that?
What is that noise?
What is that?
What is that noise?

Spirit Chorus:

The earth alarms
the water boils
the wind wakes
it screams around the corner
The waves bolt
the trees rock.

Guardians:

What are you doing?
What are you doing?

What is this abomination?

Butchers.
You butchers.

[Storm, lightning, howling wind. The men cower.]

[A Collector tries the chainsaw again. It won't start.]

Hart:

[Panicked]

Never mind the saws
bring the axes.

Never mind the machines
use your hands.

Collectors:

Scale the poles: they are not mountains
Fell the totems: they are just trees
Use your hands.

[Climbing on the branches of the trees, the men rope the poles and start to hack them with axes. The sound of the hand saws going through the wood becomes louder and louder.]

Spirit Chorus:

Hacking the wood, like butchers
Hacking the wood, like butchers.

Hart:

I cannot bear that sound
I will hear it in my sleep.

What am I doing?
What have I done?

[Hart gives a signal. A section of a pole is gently lowered. Lost in contemplation, he watches. The men are having difficulty with the Weeping Woman pole; it swings, leans, seems out of control. Hart becomes alert. He goes over and calls to the Collectors.]

Hart:

[Yelling, panicked]

The pole is falling
We need help
Don't let it fall.
Hold the ropes—
Don't let it fall.

[All the men are now trying to hold the rope and the swinging pole.]

[The pole falls face down. Hart and Price jump back. Jones wheels around, swears in anger, walks away. Hart goes over to the pole, kneels, touches it.]

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Hart:

[Clear, directive]

Put boughs on the ground
in layers.
It must not happen again.

This is the edge of the knife
dangerous
sublime.

[Price is filming. The poles are sectioned and crated. The crates are being lifted by winches. On them are large letters: BC PROVINCIAL MUSEUM.]

Hart:

[To the Collectors]

Check the lashings.

We must hold down the past
we have just saved.

[The men are pulling a section of the felled pole down the beach. Price continues to film. Hart goes over to him. Price puts down the camera as he approaches.]

[Exit Collectors]

Hart:

[Tired, amazed at the change in Price]

Tom Price,
something has happened to you
You are changed.

You have a look
I have not seen before.

[Price and Hart start to walk offstage]

Price:

I did not think
I would be so so affected
by this place.
Now we leave

Hart:

Being watched
being seen.

[As they are walking off stage right, Hart looks down and, almost past it, notices something on the ground near one of the poles. He stops and leans over to pick it up. Price continues walking offstage.]

[Exit Price]

[Nahanee emerges from behind a disintegrating pole the expedition has not taken. He watches Hart, unseen. Hart picks up a Raven Rattle hidden in the earth. He looks at it and shakes the rattle, but there is no sound.]

Nahanee moves behind Hart. As he does it is apparent how frail he is; he almost stumbles. He is carrying a stone maul.

Hart holds the rattle to his ear. Hart puts the Raven Rattle in his pocket. As he is doing this, Nahanee lifts the stone maul with one hand to strike Hart, but isn't strong enough, and his arm goes limp. He then uses both his hands and raises the stone. There is the sound of shell rattles. Nahanee turns to look and freezes at the top of his stroke. Raven, wearing a red and black Haida cape, appears and takes the stone from Nahanee.

Hart leaves, unaware that anything has happened.]

[Exit Hart]

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**Act I
Scene 5**

The Wager

[Nahanee slumps. Raven steadies him and they sit down on one of the sections of poles that has rotted and wasn't taken by the expedition. They look out in the same direction.]

Nahanee:

[Hurt and confused]

He came toward us
His shadow contained a blast.

Raven:

He knew you were here, watching
He wanted you here, watching.

He knew the poles were alive.

Nahanee:

And he cut them down.

Raven:

You wanted to murder that man.

Nahanee:

[Putting his head in his hands, as his Grandmother did in Scene 3]

What does it matter?
Why do I care?
I have withdrawn my spirit
from the world

Raven:

And become ill.

Nahanee:

He cuts these poles—
he too is ill.

[Abashed]

I would have killed that man.

Raven:

Maybe the poles were meant to be stolen.

Nahanee:

Like the light.
That's the game you like.

Raven:

A mistake can begin the world anew.

Nahanee:

A mistake of a certain kind.

Raven:

One that shows the gods
what it is to be human.

We must reach him.

Nahanee:

Why?

Raven:

If the human race is squandered
the sound of its going
will spread to the end of time
and back—

Nahanee:

A billion years will pass
before people will come again—
a billion years of midnight—

Raven:

and me, forlorn, and waiting,
as I waited, too long, before.

Nahanee:

How alone you will be
without a human friend
all stories put in a box—
Lights out—

Raven:

Left watching a greedy old man.

Nahanee:

This man hesitates, and then he acts.
He becomes a brutal man.

Raven:

And you,
your grief will come to murder.
Your soul is dry
You cannot dance.

Nahanee:

The twin masks were taken
and now the poles.
My grandmother wept at my shame.

Raven:

She should not have to weep again.

Nahanee:

Danced, the twin masks
sing a mutual song—
Split, the sighted from the unsighted,
water spills from the cup.

But if they are joined,
become one again,
We might be healed.

Raven:

Will you help me?

Nahanee:

Is he worth it?

Raven:

Only love can tell.

Nahanee:

Use Hart as a drum.
Through him the masks will be returned
to dance.

Raven:

I will take a human form to find him
and show him the way.
I will become a woman, his lover.

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[Nahanee nods]

*[As the Spirit Chorus sings, the Chorus gathers around Raven.
Raven transforms into a young and beautiful woman.]*

Spirit Chorus:

Austin wakes.
There is tension in his heart.
A deer offers himself to the hunter
is shot, is skinned, is scraped
becomes a hide
becomes a shield
stretched tight across a frame
becomes a drum.

Tom Price can make a drum beat
a rattle sound.
His hands remember everything.

Hart, Price, Nahanee, Raven:
They are a bridge.
There is a bond.

Celebration.
First contact.
Florescence.

[The curtain falls]

Act II
Scene 1

Arriving Home

[The workshop of the Royal British Museum in Victoria, B.C. is filled with large stuffed animals, crates, poles, and masks from all over the world. A section of the Weeping Woman pole brought from Ninstints is standing upstage, centre. Another partially crated section of the pole is beside it. There is a table with artifacts on them being tagged by the Collectors.

Stage left is a long window. The light is diffused.

Centre-stage there is a table cluttered with papers, tags, scissors, rope.

As the scene opens, there is the sound of rattles. Raven, transformed into The Lover, emerges from one of the Ninstints poles.

Hart enters the workshop area with a group of university students who are visiting the museum. He has been giving a lecture tour of the museum's collections. The Collectors are bringing in more of the Ninstints crates on trolleys, and in the confusion, Hart doesn't notice The Lover. In the background Price is photographing the artifacts and studying the Weeping Woman pole. The Lover moves to the edge of the student gathering, remaining inconspicuous.]

Students:

[To Hart who is listening, enjoying the questions, but very focussed, attentive]

[Alternating voices]

What was Ninstints like?
We heard it rained the whole time—
How did you remove the poles?
Can we see the film you made?
Will you ever go back again?
Are there many poles left?

When will you publish your book?

Hart:

[Commanding respect; disclosing]

Let me tell you.

[Everyone becomes hushed]

The trip was hard—gruelling—
tiring—but now I'm home:
jubilant.

Students:

Jubilant.

Hart:

Jubilant.

Everyone:

Jubilant.

Hart:

[Pointing to the poles]

These artifacts bring us
the spirit of that place.

The Collectors:

And darkness has been pitched away.

*[Enter Mary-Anne, Hart's wife, and their daughter, Paige; they
stand at the side, stage right, near the window.]*

Everyone:

Jubilant

Hart:

I thought some spirit had turned his face away—
I was wrong.

[Pointing to the Weeping Woman pole]

We turn to face the light.

Everyone:

Jubilance

Hart:

What is alive in me?

Everyone:

Jubilance

Hart:

What, alive in you?

Everyone:

Jubilance

Hart:

Something is alive.

[The students break into applause. Some students go over to speak to Hart, others talk to Price or mingle with the Collectors.]

[Exit most of the students]

[Mary-Anne goes over to Hart. He embraces her, and takes her hand. He kisses Paige. Hart starts to pack some papers from the desk into his briefcase while signalling good-bye to the Collectors who are leaving.]

[Exit Collectors]

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Mary-Anne:

I've never heard you speak with so much passion.
This trip has really made a change—
You're not so hesitant or withdrawn—

Hart:

My flight is high;
I feel I'm far above the ground.

Mary-Anne:

[Affectionate, teasing]

You are.

[The Lover has gone behind the screen. She emerges stage right.]

[Hart puts his arm around Mary-Anne, and holds Paige's hand.]

Hart:

An ache has started in my throat.
I thirst—
I long for more.

I want to lay bare the very thing
this art is made to disguise—
where everything's wrapped in light.

I'm excited,
yet my moods disperse and gather.
They make this different light.

[He lets go of Paige's hand and turns around slightly to indicate the poles. He sees The Lover standing there. She moves forward.]

The Lover:

Austin Hart.

Hart:

[Thinking she is a visitor who has wandered off limits]

You shouldn't be here.

The Lover:

[Her anger controlled]

I wanted to visit Ninstints
sometime in my life.

Hart:

[Not understanding]

Yes.

The Lover:

It's now too late.

Mary-Anne:

You are angry.

The Lover:

[To Hart]

I came to say you should have left the poles.

Hart:

They should not have been salvaged?

The Lover:

Salvation does not have such a stunting purpose.
They should never have been taken.

Hart:

[Looks at her with growing annoyance]

Collected.

The Lover:

Stolen.

Hart:

[He removes his arm from around Mary-Anne]

Saved.

The Lover:

[Focused anger]

Chopped down. Axed.

The place still shakes from the blast
that severed all those limbs.

Mary-Anne:

*[Assessing the situation, although she is being ignored by Hart
and The Lover]*

You seem to make your inquiries with a blade
as well.

Hart:

We did the right thing.

The Lover:

[With growing passion]

The poles don't belong in stairwells;
The poles don't belong with floodlights

in offices
as ornaments
as curios.

You've cut them down
and now they are yours.
You arrested what belongs to that place;
The consequences fall.

Hart:

[Undefensive]

I am ready.
Something is luring me—

Mary-Anne:

[Suspicious at this charged atmosphere which has quickly developed between The Lover and Hart]

—on a path with a slipping descent.

The Lover:

You expected a task requiring your strength
But the world has gone from flat to round.
The task is a different kind.
It requires your all.

[Hart looks at The Lover with intense curiosity that she should be saying these things. He puts down his briefcase.]

Mary-Anne:

[Anxious]

We must leave now, Austin.

[Hart nods in agreement, but it is to what The Lover has said, not to Mary-Anne. Mary-Anne sees that Hart is caught. The exchange has attracted Price's attention; he turns and looks at what is going on.]

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Mary-Anne:

[Pleading somewhat]

Ask her to go, Austin.

[Aside]

He is pushing back the dark—
And then she comes near,
pulling night-time in her wake.

It's not a jealousy I feel,
but curiosity at this dance.
She reminds me of him.

Hart:

[Looks at a large Haida painting of ovoids and form lines in black, red and white. The Lover looks at it as well.]

There is power I almost apprehend—

Mary-Anne:

[She continues to move stage right, almost backing away.]

Why is she here, Austin?

Hart:

[To The Lover, trying to express his deepest feelings]

I trail a god
who is searching for me.

[The light within the painting becomes more and more vivid. Price stands, startled at the change in the image. Mary-Anne is in retreat.]

Mary-Anne:

Austin be careful.

Hart:

[Turning to her, suddenly annoyed and rough]

Careful of what?

[Mary-Anne is angry and humiliated by his remark. She picks up Paige and leaves. Hart is ashamed of himself.]

The Lover:

She doesn't have to leave.

[Exit Mary-Anne and Paige]

[Hart starts to go after Mary-Anne and Paige. The Lover, trying to avoid becoming enmeshed, steps back to where Price is. Hart stops, looks at The Lover, uncertain whether to follow his family. When he looks back to Mary-Anne, she and Paige are gone.]

Price returns to testing the wood on the Weeping Woman, studying the lines. Hart watches.]

Price:

[Referring to the Weeping Woman pole]

Isn't she spectacular—

The Lover:

[In a sincere voice]

Even dismembered.

Price:

[Now he is curious at the power of her presence]

Who are you?

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The Lover:

[To Price]

There's so much you need to do.

[Hart moves closer]

Your people are hungry for learning.
There are children now who will hear.
You can tell them
that the spirit of Ninstins
can come alive.

You can bring it alive.

Price:

[Self-deprecating, resisting being drawn to The Lover]

I am only a journalist.
That is my first work,
my obligation is to it.

Anyway, who are you?

The Lover:

You are a reluctant conscript.

Price:

*[Softening, referring to the poles and the thought of his having
to continue as a journalist]*

I am a parched man before a found spring—
and my mouth is made to close.

The Lover:

Conscripts can be nurtured here.

[To both Price and Hart]

When you touch something
made thousands of years ago
it goes right through you.

Before that it is
interesting, abstract—
It is—

Price:

Remote.

Hart:

Yes, remote.

Price:

I can't understand
until I've held it in my hands.

Hart:

Your hands remember everything.

Price:

The past is not dead.

The Lover:

It brims with life.

[Looks at Price with assertive power]

Carve.
Carve, Tom Price.

Hart:

[Realizing that The Lover has said precisely what Price must do.]

Of course—

[There is an intimacy between the three of them. Price nods his head in agreement.]

The Lover:

You only have to touch things once—

[She picks up the Raven Rattle. Price takes his camera and begins to take photograph. The images are projected onto the large screen.]

The Lover:

This rattle—

Hart:

—it brings the world.

The Lover:

This spoon—

Hart:

—is a ladle for poems.

Hart & The Lover:

This net
will catch the light.

Hart:

[Picks up a bow]
He got a deer
skinned the hide
used the antlers
fed his children

I want to hold hands
with that family.

I call out to them.
They don't answer.

The Lover:

Not yet.

*[Hart picks up a wooden feast bowl. The Lover takes a carafe of
water from the table.]*

Hart:

This bowl, its shape
is sustaining

The Lover:

Our life, in this bowl.

[The Lover fills the bowl with water]

Price:

Water.

[The bowl is passed between the three]

Hart:

Holy.

The Lover:

[To Hart]

Drink.

Hart:

[Hart lifts the bowl to his lips and drinks]

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It tastes like heaven.

[Hart passes the bowl to Tom Price, who drinks and passes it to The Lover, who drinks. With the drinking of the water, we have entered the spirit realm. The Spirit Chorus sings as a chant:]

Water
Holy
Drink

Price:

[Upbeat]

Holding these artifacts.

The Lover:

What are they saying?

Hart:

What is the meaning?

Hart, Price, The Lover & Spirit Chorus:

Look at these artifacts.

Hart:

What is the lesson?
What are we missing?
What is their meaning.

Hart, Price, The Lover & Spirit Chorus:

You see a frog here
You see a bear here

Hart, Price & the Spirit Chorus:

You see a raven

Hart, Price & The Lover:

A transformation.

[The moon is up and can be seen through the long window at one of the workshops.]

[Exit Price]

Hart:

[Excited and reverential]

This night, so awake with life
wants us to go out and look—
Look at the moon.
It wraps everything in light.

The Lover:

This light, so awake in us
wants us to climb to the moon—

Moon has the light.
Everything's wrapped with moon.

Hart & The Lover:

We are swimmers.
The light is a river,
carrying us upstream
to the source.

Hart, The Lover & Chorus:

We are swimmers.
The light is a river,
carrying us back home
to the source.

Hart:

[Deeply moved]

How unexpected this meeting you;
You have my promise.
You're in my heart now.
How unexpected this love for you.

Where will you go, when you're not with me?
Who will you love as well as me?

The Lover:

Bring me your dreams.

Chorus:

Jubilance

[Music swells]

**Act II
Scene 2**

At the Longhouse

[One month later, in Austin Hart's study in Victoria, B.C. Hart has secured a position as a professor of anthropology at the University of British Columbia and the Hart family will have to move to Vancouver on the mainland within the next few months. Austin is starting to organize his study and pack up some of his books. Paige is lying on the floor reading.]

[Hart stops arranging his books and sits at his desk, staring in to space. Mary-Anne enters with her coat on.]

Mary-Anne:

I am ready to leave—

[Surprise to see Hart just sitting at his desk instead of getting on with the job of packing]

Are you all right?

Hart:

Going to the university,
moving to a strange city—

Mary-Anne:

[Trying to be encouraging]

—has sapped your strength
but just for now.

Hart:

A spirit lingers, like sweetgrass—
like knowing—
and yet such a lassitude I feel.
I doubt my dream.

Mary-Anne:

The norm that stamped you at your birth
welcomed you to an outworn path
and told you where to go—
It carried civilization's plod.
To get away we must carry a mountain
on our backs.

We can.

Hart:

At the university will I be able to tell them
all that I know?

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Mary-Anne:

[Trying to bring him out of his despondence]

Your hope clangs around you like an empty pail.
Don't worry.

Hart:

I promised my native friends
I would return.
My promises must be kept.

Mary-Anne:

[Lovingly teasing]

But first we have to leave.

The self-doubt mask you invite
takes hold.
You can loosen its grip.

[She goes over to Austin and puts her hands on his shoulders]

Hart:

[Still self-absorbed and full of doubt]

I am at the door.
Yet afraid to knock
for fear someone will yell
"go away."

Mary-Anne:

As I must do.

The man who yells has the voice
of your father.
He alarms you still.

I'll see you late tonight.

[She kisses him and Paige]

[Exit Mary-Anne]

[Price enters, having seen Mary-Anne in the hall]

Price:

Mary-Anne looks tired.

Hart:

So do you.

Price:

I'm carving.

Hart:

Yes, you must.

Price:

I've quit my job.

Hart:

You are a carver
I am a teacher
And we will both write—

Price:

[Sarcastic, self-deprecating]

—about my artifakes.

Hart:

[Upset]

Why do you say that?

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What remains
undone, unsaid, unfinished
that you must mock who you are?

Price:

These Haida songs in wood,
are old and cracked.

*[Picking up the Raven Rattle on Hart's desk, the one Hart found
on Ninstints. He's surprised that Hart has the rattle. He shakes
it.]*

This rattle makes no sound.
It's the one from Ninstints that you found.
Why do you have it?

Hart:

[Taking the rattle from him]

I've borrowed it

[Making an excuse]

For us to study.

You can make the rattle sing,
the drum beat.

Price:

Doesn't this belong to the museum?

Hart:

[Avoiding Price's question, and trying to lift his own spirits]

Leave your questions with me.
I can carry them for a while.

Some knowledge is alight
and in us it can burn.

You will be a fire
within that Ninstints' night.

Price:

[Still despondent]

A fire will burn my art
My own people will light the blaze.
They will burn the sheds
with my poles inside
They will burn my dreams.

Hart:

This is in your mind as future
because the history's in your blood.

I will promote your dream
even when I doubt my own.

Price:

We must go.

Hart:

Where?

Price:

To the longhouse.
Someone will be given a name.
I'm to take you with me.

Hart:

I have too much to do.
And Paige is here.

[There is a faint sound of the drums.]

Price:

Don't send this invitation back
Come.

Hart:

I'll come.

[As the drums get louder and louder, the study is transformed. A wooden wall extends across the stage. Hart, holding Paige's hand, with Price, stands in front of the wall.

There is a deafening sound as though lightening has struck something, followed by a second sound of lightening as it strikes. The wall screen splits revealing the longhouse. There is a large fire in the centre with bleachers stage left. Smoke swirls up from the fire.

Price, Hart, and Paige are escorted by a native dancer (dressed in street clothes but with a band of black paint across his face) to a place on the third row of the bleachers.

The Longhouse Elder stands in the middle of the stage, accompanied by a young native boy. The Speaker is wearing a Hudson's Bay Company blanket (three wide colored stripes on a white background). Money has been pinned to the blanket so that it covers its entire front. The money is what the family has paid the elder. The blanket represents the native peoples' survival of the attempted extermination when the government intentionally infested blankets with smallpox and gave them to the natives as gifts. The instrument of destruction has been incorporated into the culture.

The Longhouse Elder's language is Halkomelem; the sur-titles are in English.]

Longhouse Elder:

[Sonorous, lively]

My dear ones, there is a name to be given tonight.
A very important name
It came from the north
and it is here.
We have some work to do tonight,
important work to do.

The family from the north
they say yes:
the 'one who needs to be fed'
has to be given a name.
So we ask this house:
Do you stand in the way of this work?

The name means "I am two."
What has been cut must be connected.
What has been split could be restored.

But if you say no, then no.

[He waits and watches. He determines there is consensus.]

[He raises his voice]

The family from the north
says one witness will be paid.

They say: Tom Price, witness this.
Tom Price, witness this.

[Two native dancers bring Price down from the bleachers. The escorts put a blanket and headband on Price. They pin money on the blanket. As they do, the Longhouse Elder says:]

You are here to remember
this work we do tonight

It will be written on your heart.

[Price is returned to the bleachers]

Now I am calling the hungry one
I am calling him out
I am calling the hungry one
I am calling him out

Austin Hart
Austin Hart

[As the Longhouse Elder says this, the light focuses on Hart and Paige. Paige is asleep in her father's arms. Austin stands up. He is bewildered, not knowing what to do with his sleeping child. As he looks around for help, an elder reaches out and takes Paige. Hart is escorted to stand near The Speaker. The escorts now proceed to blanket Hart.]

The way this name wants to come out
is to dance
Maybe it has never danced before
or it could be tired

[Gently teasing]

If the name comes out and dances
Maybe Austin Hart will see
Maybe Austin Hart will hear
and even know

The name knocks hard
and you can't hear it?

Maybe the name will dance.

This is the work we have to do.

[The Longhouse Elder addresses Hart]

This blanket is like the name.
It covers you; it protects you.
The name is your skin now
The name is you.
Nahanee.

[There is another cracking sound of lighting and a dancer steps forward, as if coming through the fire. He moves around the longhouse with an unsighted mask made of wood. He moves quickly and then, because he cannot see, he stops, stumbles, and cannot continue.]

[Blackout. Then lights up but still dim. Everyone is moving out of the longhouse. Price is carrying Paige. Hart remains sitting on the bench. Light on him.]

Hart:

[Bewildered]

I have a name I know nothing about—
—and it comes with a dance that
stumbles and is blind.
I have seen something I cannot comprehend.
I don't know who I am.
How can I leave?
Where would I go?

[Realizing]

On Ninstints—the man who watched me the entire time—
I have the same fate as he.

Who is Nahanee?
My own reflection in a pool
now cracked and dry?

[The Lover appears beside him on the bench]

Hart:

Where did you come from?

The Lover:

I have been following you.

Hart:

But why here?
They might find us together.

The Lover:

[The Lover has a box which she places on his lap. She indicates that Hart should open the box. He lifts out the unsighted mask made of stone.]

My god.

Spirit Chorus:

They gave us artifacts.

Hart:

[To The Lover]

Where did this come from?

Spirit Chorus:

We gave them stone.

Hart:

Who made this?

Spirit Chorus:

They gave us artifacts
made out of stone.

Stone means eternal,
Stone is forever.
What is the lesson?
What is the meaning?
Why is this here?

Hart:

This mask made from stone weighs heavy
on my soul.
These eyes never open.
These eyes never seeing.

Hart & Spirit Chorus:

These eyes forever closed.
These eyes forever—

Hart:

—searching inward.

The Lover:

You must put it on.

Hart:

[Amazed at the audacity of the suggestion]

Shall I?

The Lover:

Yes.

*[Hart puts on the mask. Blackout. Then lights up gradually as
Hart removes the mask slowly from his face.]*

Hart:

I know this darkness
It has held me in its grip.
I know its smell.
It is a Ninstints night.
I am laid open by this shape.

The Lover:

[Hart is self-absorbed, inward. The Lover brings him out.]

There is another mask
which completes this one.

Hart:

But where?

The Lover:

You must find it.
I'll help you.

Hart:

But how?

The Lover:

The twins are made of stone.

Hart:

They are immortal.

The Lover:

Give up immortality
It's in your way.

The masks are the same size.
They fit together.
They are danced as one.

Hart:

Nothing the same size fits together.
I doubt you
I doubt my everything.

The Lover:

The unsighted mask is out.
The sighted is inside.

Hart:

You toy with me.
What good is sight if it is always
led by the blind.
You pin me with this paradox.

The Lover:

Cup your unanswered passion—
Meet it—
And take it down deeper
into want
into lack
into loss:
The words that open the throat.

Chorus:

Reach down into desire
and pull it up
to find the sighted mask.

The Lover:

We will reunite the masks—
Now.

Hart:

I will
Because of you.

Chorus:

Use your love;
use your desire—
use your need as your horse
and ride.

Act II
Scene 3

Returning Home

[Two months later in Hart's living room. Hart enters the darkened house, just having returned from Paris. He is carrying a box with the sighted mask in it which he obtained from the Musee de l'homme. When he turns on the lights, a group of his friends are there waiting in the dark. They call out—"Surprise." Champagne is served. Candles are lit.]

Friend's Voice from the Crowd:

Austin, the box,
open the box.

[Austin sets the 2' x 2' box down in the middle of the room. He opens it and pulls out the sighted mask, holding it up for everyone to see. At the same time the mask is projected on a large screen at the back of the stage, to show the front view and the mask in profile.]

Friends' Voices:

Congratulations.
This is wonderful.
Congratulations.

[Exit friends]

[Hart turns out the lights to go to bed. The stage is lit only by candles.]

The Lover enters. She is also carrying a box, the same size as the one Hart has.

They embrace. She opens the box with the unsighted mask from the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

She turns her back, puts both masks on, and dances with the two masks. First the unsighted mask is outside; she turns and then

the sighted mask is outside. Stone can see. (The stone mask is opening and closing its eyes.) (The twin masks are worn as one.)

The masks are projected as she dances.]

The Lover:

Tell The Collectors
to return the masks
to the natives.

Hart:

So they can forever dance.

**Act II
Scene 4**

The Last Lecture

[In the lecture theatre at the museum in Victoria. The stage audience is in the position of the class. The Chief Collector and other Collectors are sitting within the stage audience. Hart's mood is at first confident, animated and playful. He is clear, precise; his intelligence is obvious and attractive. He puts himself completely into his lecture.]

Hart:

First I must tell you
about the beginning of the world.

Chorus:

There was a gap.

Hart:

It yawned.

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Chorus:

It was a very large gap.

Hart:

Earth was not found yet
nor heaven.
There was grass nowhere
It was called grass-nothing.

Chorus:

To the north and south of nothing
were regions
of ice and fire.

Hart:

The fire created heat
and the heat melted the ice
to the north
of the place of nothing

Chorus:

Ice became a drop
Became a shape
Became a bear—

Hart:

—who was hungry.

Chorus:

But what did he eat?

Hart:

It seems there was also a cow.

Chorus:

But what did it eat?

Hart:

It seems there was also salt—

Chorus:

At the end of the first three minutes
the universe
was mostly light.

Hart:

This is Raven's story.
It's the only one to tell
It goes like this:

Raven
being born
needs a mother
to be born
needs to love
being born
makes the light

In a box
That none can see—

The Chief Collector:

[Seated in the audience, interrupting Hart]

Come come now.
Antecedents
Consequences—
Mr. Hart, deal with cause and effect.

Hart:

I shall
All at once.

The Collectors:

[From the audience]

Where is the beginning?

[The Collectors, including the Chief Collector, start to move onstage from the audience]

Hart:

Begin with yourself—
Or with this.

[On the screen behind Hart is projected a photograph of a Haida box. Hart points with a light to the box and moves the light along the form lines.]

Hart:

This stroke
contains so much exuberance:
lavish abounds
within the shape of the line.

Student Chorus:

[From the audience and then gradually moving on stage. Upbeat, supporting Hart.]

It begins from a point—swells—touches
and then is diminished
It does not return.

Hart:

But it will return.

Student Chorus:

But it will return.

Chief Collector:

[As an aside]

The edge is gone from his voice:
not false but compressed;
not reduced but intensified—

[Realizing]

He is not trying to please us.
He just stands there, confident,
alone.

Hart:

The past is not dead
it only seems inaccessible
but just for now.

The meaning of this Haida box
inaccessible but just for now.

Something is at work here
which we don't yet understand.

We will.

[As artifacts are projected on the screen]

Hart:

This Tsimshian artifact—
Boas tells us—

Student Chorus:

[Different voices from within the Chorus now on stage]

—is a frog—
—is a crest—
—another myth—

Hart:

And meaning lags.

Student Chorus:

This is a helmet—
— a hat—
— a masterpiece.

Hart:

But why are the hands here?
What is the agenda?

Student Chorus:

Where is the meaning?

[Hart becomes conscious of The Lover's presence.]

Hart:

[The photograph of a hand hammer is projected on the screen]

Figure 35
Hand Hammer-Stirrup Maul
Smithsonian

I call it the double-take.

You grasp the thing
You have it in your hand
and then—

Voice of The Lover:

—it grasps you.

Hart & The Lover:

This is a problem
working itself out
over generations—
the hand that grasps
is grasped.
Consuming itself in beauty.

Student Chorus:

Consuming itself in beauty.

Hart & The Lover:

I have the thing
I have it in my mind—
I understand—
and then it grasps me—

Hart:

—in ways I could not expect.

The Lover:

More care is required
as the problem evolves.

Hart:

These objects show us
what the spirits look like.

Student Chorus:

Otherwise how would we know?

Hart:

[Projected image of the Sechelt Man]

The Sechelt man:
the biggest and the best
of the powerful males
pounds his sex right at you—

But his phallus has arms—

Hart & The Lover:

[The Lover sings each line first and then Hart repeats it]

You cannot divide
its thrust from its embrace
or Mother from the Child.
Eternally human:
Divine.

Hart:

These objects do not smash things—
their strength is in waiting
for us to understand:

Hart & The Lover:

[Alternating]

—that this end is phallic
this end is vulvic.
A vessel in the lap
between its legs

The Lover:

You must have it both ways
Always.

Hart:

This is not child's play
It is life and death.
Still I jest.

Put your head, eyes open,
into the mouth of the bear
and taste his tongue

[Image projected now of the Raven Rattle]

Or the exchange of a tongue

Scholars say this posture could be sexual.
Scholars like to consider this joining of tongues.

The Lover:

As Raven becomes the frog,
his tongue touching man
Shaman.

*[The light, which has been playing on the objects, becomes stark,
white, like an interrogation]*

The Chief Collector:

Hart, this is outrageous.
Antecedents, consequences—
you must deal with cause and effect.

The Collectors' Chorus:

We came for provenance:
facts, science, content
Please, give us some sense.

Hart:

This is my experience.

The Collectors:

Then your experience is corrupt.

Hart:

If I am wrong about this
then my whole argument fails.

The Collectors' Chorus:

His whole argument fails.

Hart:

[Projected image]

The seated human figure bowl so thin
as if he were starving
but his face:
full, healthy and happy.
That is what it means.

The Collectors:

[Alternating]

When were they made?
What language did the maker speak?
What were their clans?
When did they live?

Not what they mean.
And certainly not their sex.

Draw us a map
Show where we start from
Where are we now?
Where are we going?
Give us provenance
or you're a dead man.

Hart:

[Growing uncertain]

If I am wrong about this
my whole argument fails.

The Chief Collector:

Do you invite consequences?
Be careful, Mr. Hart.

Hart:

The consequences fall—

[On the screen are the twin masks. Hart regains his composure.]

— but all the meaning—at every level—
rises up.

I know now
these masks belong together.

Chief Collector:

[Aside]

What a discovery.

Hart:

They enable stone to see.

Chief Collector:

[Aside]

What a find.

Hart:

They must be returned to their owners
Where they belong,
so they can dance.

Chief Collector:

They are priceless.

Hart:

[On the screen is Raven and First Man, carved by Nahanee on the top of the argillite box. Hart seems distracted but speaks passionately.]

Sometimes I see his face;
Sometimes I hear his voice;
Can you see his face?
Can you hear his voice?
If you stay quiet
and listen—
reach down inside a well.

You are thirsty,
and there is water to drink.

Some Collectors:

[Repulsed by Hart's yearning and his personal tone]

You're drunk.
You must be drunk.

Some Collectors:

He's drunk.
He must be drunk.

The Chief Collector:

You're crazy
You must be crazy.

The Collectors:

He's crazy
He must be crazy.

The Chief Collector:

Are you on drugs?

[The Chief Collector starts to leave followed by the other Collectors and then the students]

Hart:

[With growing bewilderment, watching them go]

Sometimes I see his face;
Sometimes I hear his voice—

These masks, they must be returned to—

[Exit everyone]

If you look with your soul:
reach down inside a well.

[Despondent]

I am thirsty.
Where is there water
to drink?

[Lights out]

Act II
Scene 5

The Taking of the Masks

[The next day, in Hart's office at the Museum in Victoria. Mary-Anne enters and starts to help Hart pack. The twin masks are on his desk beside their boxes.]

Hart:

[Picking up a photograph of the Black Box]

This design strains to say everything.

Mary-Anne:

[Almost pleading]

Everything is too much.

[She continues packing]

Everything is too much.

Hart:

[Referring to a number of ancient and more recent slope-handled mauls]

The ordinary beauty of this maul:
it has a purpose
a function, a task.

And the extreme and awful beauty
of this: startling, intense,
but lost in function.

They come from one another.
But how?

Mary-Anne:

This maul must grind food
not your soul—
It must grind nourishment
not your life—
not your family.

Hart:

Why did this—
move to this?
Do you know?

[Holding two mauls outstretched, one in each hand]

I conduct the answer
through myself.

Mary-Anne:

But you are not copper,
not metal, not a wire.
You are skin and bone.

Maybe the form needed to begin again.
What's wrong with that?

Hart:

[Thoughtful and slightly absent]

The twin masks
eluded my knowing.
I needed help to see.

Mary-Anne:

[Realizing what he is really saying]

From the woman who came to the museum—
months ago.

Hart:

[Alarmed, defensive]

No.

Mary-Anne:

You needed *her*.

Hart:

No, no.
I need you.

Mary-Anne:

[Emphatic]

I'm here.

[With growing annoyance]

Our union is not so barren
that we have to break its shape
in order to locate our hearts.

This new one
she has some passion—
she burns, but she doesn't burn up.
Why is that?

Does she have a power she stole
Something she got on the cheap
and didn't pay—
is that your game and hers?
Or just your own?

[Enter Chief Collector]

Chief Collector:

[Controlling his excitement; conniving and ingratiating]

The masks, Austin,
where did you get them?
What a discovery you have made.

Hart:

Yesterday you were angry.

Chief Collector:

Worried that you were vulnerable,
wanting to protect you
wanting to promote your cause.

And concerned
that you would return the masks—
Not angry with you.

Hart:

[Absorbed]

If you came upon them separately
you would want to collect them;
you would check your wallet
you would ask the price;

But together
you do not ask.
You could not pay.

Chief Collector:

Why return them?
Keeping them, we share their power.
Keeping them, your fame is secured,
forever.

Hart:

It is too much for us to withstand
seeing them side by side
in our present state.
Our arms, weak from not carrying
Our spirits, tired from not engaging
They sear us,
too much beauty seen.

They were meant to be danced
as one.
They must be returned.

Chief Collector:

[Teacherly]

You invoke the people

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who danced these masks—
and they are all past.
You invoke the man
who made these things—
and he is long gone.

You're making it up.

Hart:

They move between life and death
like a sound.

I see the truth now.
They must be returned.

It makes us poor to have such riches
we cannot use.
You cannot give sustenance to these twins,
nor they to you.

Chief Collector:

The Raven Rattle gives sustenance to you.
I know what you've done.

Hart:

[Startled]

I was going to—

Chief Collector:

Return it?
In your own good time?

Hart:

I only borrowed it.

Chief Collector:

As we will the masks.
Otherwise your theft of the Raven
will have to be made known.

And I've always wondered,
are you working on your own?

If so your fame will be greater.
You'll be at the top.
Alone.

Hart:

[More reflective than responsive]

Alone.

Chief Collector:

[Pleased]

So you *are* working alone.

Hart:

[Still lost in thought]

I flew so high.

Chief Collector:

Don't fail.

Give them to me.
They will be saved, forever.
Your work will be immortal.

Mary-Anne:

[Going to the Chief Collector, standing very close to him]

You butcher the living
and try to revive the dead.

You would cut out a tongue
take an axe to a face
split eyes apart—

What good is it to be blind, half-sighted
to see one dimension instead of all?

You belong to the cruelty which abounds.

[To Hart]

Austin, for god's sake
stand up to him.

Hart:

I can't.
We are the same.

Mary-Anne:

Your obedience defeats me
as well as the fury which I consume.

[Exit Mary-Anne]

[Hart takes the masks from his desk and puts them in the two boxes. He hands them to the Chief Collector, who starts to leave.]

Hart:

[Almost pleading]

But they will be returned—

Chief Collector:

[Gloating]

Of course.

In our own good time.

[Exit the Chief Collector with the masks]

[Enter The Lover, having passed the Chief Collector carrying the boxes]

The Lover:

Austin, what have you done?

Hart:

He promised the masks would be returned.

The Lover:

You believe him?

[Hart doesn't answer]

You believe the lies
you yourself propound.

Hart:

I will get them back.

The Lover:

Rip the strings, break the bow,
mar the fingers of the player.
The instrument will not speak again.

[Furious]

How could you do this?

Hart:

I lost my way.

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The Lover:

You are lost to me.

[Starts to leave]

Hart:

I must follow you.

The Lover:

[Angry]

Follow yourself.

[Exit The Lover]

Hart:

I've trailed her
to seek her warmth
as though she has a nest
and me, a coloured piece of string.

I have no need of her.
I am going beyond the masks.
I am, myself, the grail.

[Curtain]

Act III
Scene 1

Mary-Anne's Decline

[Four months later the Hart's new home in Vancouver. Hart is hosting a party for people he has met at the University.]

The Collectors and the Women Students in the scene are all wearing blank-faced masks. As the scene unfolds their actions slow and they become more and more immobile.

Beside a long couch is a table with drinks; hors-d'oeuvres have been served. The Collectors of the University are around Hart. The Chief Collector is there, his back to the audience. The Women Students are in a separate group. Mary-Anne is standing alone. She has already had quite a lot to drink.

Paige and Jacob, the Hart children, are also present.]

Mary-Anne:

[Referring to the Collectors]

These men
they are meant to impress me,
but instead I lose touch with the location of my soul.

Why are we so far from home?—on a narrow path
at the edge of a cliff
at the edge of a knife—
sharp, I have become,
to protect myself from these strangers.

Or am I in a boat, drifting slowly
away from shore?

Either one.

[Some women students move across the stage to join Hart and the Collectors.]

Austin, it's hard to breathe
Who is taking up all the air?

[Hart separates himself from the group to go to Mary-Anne. He is intercepted by the Chief Collector.]

Chief Collector:

We're so delighted you've joined us.
Our collaboration is of brilliant minds.

You can be most loved, most desired, most revered
Most published—
If you play it right.

Collector's Chorus:

Which means playing with us.

Hart:

[Nodding but distracted by Mary-Anne. Aside]

She leans so far over,
Uprooted because of my ambition,
Helping me in my desire.

She knows my deceit.

She is acid—
I speak to soften.
She cries—I sing to balance
in this harmony reversed we score.

Does she go unanswered,
drifting out of life?
I must anchor her.

Mary-Anne:

[Aside to Hart]

You are double now

And you have split me in two.

I am your wife,
and your lover, where is she?

Make her your wife
or me your lover.
Choose
join
or we will sicken.

[To herself]

How strange to feel so clearly
the slow dying of my soul.
But I sing into a storm.
My song falls at my feet.

Hart:

She breaks my heart
But no heart is useful unless it's broken—
unlike a wheel.
I don't mean cracked
but broken
to invite the gods.

Chief Collector:

Your wife, Austin,
is she alright?

Hart:

In the springtime it's hard to breathe—
with so much pollen in the air.

Mary-Anne:

[Aside]

He's still The Collectors' darling
in love with the narrow mainstream

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But not with me—

[To the Women Students, and referring to The Collectors as she moves closer to them]

Have you noticed, about men—
how they fool their prey.
with expressions inert, scoured out
on the way to becoming stone.

There are so many dead people
talking in my head.
And the living, they never look me in the eye.

[She moves between the Collectors' Chorus. They are frozen in position.]

[To the Chief Collector]

I always thought you would be more—
authoritarian—like a general.
You're not.
You seem like a lumberjack.

[She takes a large drink, becoming bolder]

Collector's Chorus:

[Still immobile but turning as a group to Hart]

We hope she's not a detriment—

Chief Collector:

—to your aspirations—
that's my only concern.

Collector's Chorus:

[Turning as a group to the Students]

And these woman students
what are they all for?

No one needs this much research.
People will talk.

Chief Collector:

I won't let them talk.

Mary-Anne:

What would they say?
That Hart's a rounder—
doesn't like to stay home?

Collector's Chorus:

[Turning as a group to Mary-Anne, snide and challenging]

You should know better than we.

Mary-Anne:

[Offended]

Austin.

Hart:

I'm listening
But what are you trying to say?
You're drunk
and we have guests.
Can't you be wife for once?

Mary-Anne:

You want me to act like a wife—
but where has my husband gone?
I am a hospital chart to you:
People see my state
and think you're ill.

Chief Collector:

We seek perfection for you
That's all we want.

Mary-Anne:

[To Hart]

But what if there's no where to go
no hero you need to be
no one who wants to be saved—
only living, unaided, in this real time
What then?

Don't you see you are the wager.
Now that they have your mind
They want your heart

Hart:

They've become my friends.

Mary-Anne:

[Dismissive]

Friends?

[Indicating the Chief Collector]

Every time I see that man, he seems more foul.

Hart:

[Annoyed]

They've helped me.

[He turns away from her]

Mary-Anne:

*[She starts to cough. She seems quite ill and then rallies again.
She looks at Hart.]*

Someone draws you away.
I am not blind
I am not stupid, dumb or thick
I see the earth
and the entire lay of the land.

What makes you turn away, I ask—
and ask—
This is the answer
Or at least a start:
You have found another
to use as you once used me.

Women Students:

What is she to do?
Stay and mind the house
Lock all the doors,
keep the robbers away
and hope the children will grow
without much light—
while you go further astray?

Mary-Anne:

[Bitter, angry]

Perhaps I'll leave.

[Tries to stand but can't]

I have made myself into a shape
that fits inside a cage
and the door grows small

My wings, they seem all broken.
I've had a fall.
I can't get up.

Hart:

[To his guests]

I'm sorry,
perhaps you should go.

A Woman Student:

Do you need some help?

Hart:

[Upset]

No. Please leave.

[The guests slowly, in a jerky fashion, turn away, and create a wall with their backs. Mary-Anne sits on the couch, with Paige and Jacob, her children, asleep on her lap.]

Mary-Anne:

I ride a horse of fear.
I fade.

[As she slips deeper into a reverie]

I am dreaming:
We are in bed
and you get up to leave—
I ask
“Why does my body repulse you?”
You hear my question
You take pity on me
and you return.

You say “I am looking for a boat.”

I have failed
I don't know why.
It has to do with
being a woman in this world.

Hart:

[To himself; trying to mobilize into action]

Her boat is wrecked.
I have to pull it from the sand

Mary-Anne:

[Lugubrious, searching]

The earth is round
Someone can see
how to get home

My eyes
are being put out

[Mary-Anne gropes for her glass. It's empty. She picks up the bottle of Scotch on the table but it's empty. She lifts a knife from the party tray beside the couch. While she's singing, she is slowly cutting her wrist. Hart doesn't notice.]

But rain has the feel of life
even on a shipwrecked boat.

[She starts to sway]

Hart:

The wheel rocks on its base
but doesn't go around.
The wheel rocks on its base
the cycle smashed.

Mary-Anne:

I'm smashed.

[Dripping blood from her wrist onto her sleeping children's heads]

But rain has the feel of life.

Drops of rain
all over my daughter
drops of rain
all over my son

But this rain has no life
and this blood carries no wine
to drink.

Hart:

Don't drink.

Mary-Anne:

Drink.

Hart:

Don't drink.

Mary-Anne:

Sometimes I can
Sometimes I can't
access the will to live.

[She covers her wrist in a towel]

Hart:

Life should have gently washed her face,
like a wave
instead of this.

I am ashamed.

Chorus of Women Students:

[Still with their backs turned]

Look at her. She is your wife.
Look at her, she is your child.
Your son.
Austin, don't be put to sleep.
Be her lover who never sleeps.

Hart:

[Going over to Mary-Anne. Seeing the blood]

Oh what have you done?

[He tends to her]

Mary-Anne:

[Halting, difficult]

Sometimes I can
Sometimes I can't
access the will to live.

Hart:

Something is lodged in my muscles
from years of flinching;
the caustic thing about the world
is held inside my bones—

Mary-Anne

—and blossoms on my wrist.

Women Students:

Call your family into your dream
Give them food
Let them breathe.

[Hart turns away. Mary-Anne puts her head down. When she raises her head she has the same blank-face mask as the others.]

**Act III
Scene 2**

The Shattering

[In the foreground Hart is sitting on the edge of a psychiatrist's couch. Mary-Anne is behind him, wearing the blank-faced mask.]

Hart:

[Distraught, perplexed]

Something has happened
I've really hit bottom.
I'm on solid rock
and in some kind of hell.

My nights trail into my days,
like unwanted children;
They will not let me go
or take me with them.

Dr. Taft:

[Dr. Taft, the psychiatrist, has the face of the Chief Collector. He mouths the words, "Have some backbone."]

Hart:

I cannot hear you
because of the sound of the rats
running in the walls.

Dr. Taft:

[Mouths words that gradually become audible]

Sometimes you are angry.
That's fine
But don't break the law

You must always abide
by the law.

Take these pills.
You'll feel better.
Take lots.
They'll do you worlds of good.

Hart:

My heart is cracked.
The gods, they are repulsed
by this cracked thing.

[Dr. Taft turns away]

[Exit]

Mary-Anne:

[Dazed, absent]

I can hear your call
but I can't tell
if it is a cry for help,
or just a cry.

[Exit Mary-Anne]

[The stage set transforms into Hart's house. Three floors can be seen, like a doll's house with the front open. Hart is on the main floor. Paige and Jacob are in the basement of the house. There it teems with life; the rest of the house is almost empty. Hart walks upstairs to a platform, his study. He roams his almost empty study. He takes some pills from a drawer. He picks up a book, puts it down, takes his manuscript and goes to his desk. He is edgy, trying to work on a book about Nahanee.]

Hart:

Writing is
giving birth to axes.

[Hart then looks in the mirror. He picks up a piece of wood and a knife and starts carving a mask, as if carving a self-portrait.]

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He hears a noise, and is startled. He looks quickly around.]

Someone is coming up the stairs—
Who is it?

*[Listens, tense. Lights up on two figures approaching from below.
It is Paige and Jacob coming up the stairs.]*

My children
coming up the stairs.

[Forcing himself to consider who they are]

My relations. My relatedness. Connect.

They strafe my clothes, my hair, my skin.

Are they mine?
Do they look like me?
Is Paige the child of a man
or a bird—
with the hands of a woman
or the claws of a bear?
Her child, does she have wings?

Did they come from me?

[To Paige and Jacob]

Go away.

[The figures turn away and descend.]

Hart:

*[Deliberate, as though working through a riddle and trying to get
it right]*

Man took an animal
as a guardian spirit
to acquire the eagle's certainty
that its offspring would be its own kind.

That my child would be human
and not the monster
I have become.

Mary-Anne's Voice:

What is the certainty you need?
As a father, as a husband, as a man?
Are you so afraid of your seed?
How is the eagle going to help you with this?
Wake up to your wife
To your daughter—
to your son.

Wake up to me.

[Hart continues to carve a mask. The voices call him.]

Separate Voices:

The house needs repainting
And the garage as well, before autumn.
Water overflows the eaves
They haven't been cleaned.

Separate Voice:

The pole needs repainting
Water overflows all the barrels
It just spills out.

Separate Voice:

The house needs repainting
And the garage as well, before autumn.
The eaves have to be cleaned.

Nahanee's Voice:

[To Hart]

We know they won't make
a continual noise of singing at Ninstints,

as they used to
when you were young.
We need you.

The Lover:

Your spirit must strive
within the needs of the day
or your humanity is lost.

Hart:

My mind swims.
I can't think.
I can't think what—

[Holding up the rattle he took from Ninstints]

—this is about.

*[He then holds up the mask he made of his face. It's as though he
now has it confused with the unsighted twin mask.]*

This mask, where was it found?
Who made it?
Who found it?

No back, no neck, no chest, no body, no legs
nothing to stand on
nowhere to walk to
no place to get to, no way to get there
a severed head

Broken off.
It's all broken off.

[He takes the mask, throws it, and it smashes, shatters.]

[Lights out.]

**Act III
Scene 3**

Raven Transforms

[Nahanee and The Lover are standing alone on the empty stage]

The Lover:

He let the masks be parted.

Nahanee:

You are angry.
You are suffering their loss as well.

The Lover:

I have followed him like a scent
along a disappearing trail.
I have done everything to let him know
how much I care.

The wager is lost.

Nahanee:

Your love for him is real
and not just orchestration
for the play of gods.

Do not abandon him,
at least for my sake.

The Lover:

Sometimes I am startled to think:
that's me
the way he holds his head—
that's me
the way he knots his soul.
He could have brought
his caring into the world.

Nahanee:

The masks are only things,
now things that have gone away.
But if they have taught you,
the dance is in you.

The Lover:

[She has been listening, full of sorrow]

If a stone could weep—
I could weep.

Nahanee:

[Upset]

You are not stone.

The Lover:

[Emphatically]

Nor do I want to be a god.

Nahanee:

[Concerned]

Meaning what?

The Lover:

I have led him astray.

Nahanee:

But how?

The Lover:

He does not know I am Raven
luring him by this form.

Nahanee:

And so?

The Lover:

I ask him to make divine choices
And yet he's only a man.

His wife is right.
I have something I got on the cheap.
I burn but I don't burn up.

I must join him on the ground.
I must join the rest.
I will not defer this heaven
or this hell.

The stakes must be high for all.

I quit this godly form.

[The Lover transforms from a young and beautiful woman back to Raven and then to a middle-aged woman.]

**Act III
Scene 4**

The Dance

[Stage lights dim. Late Sunday night, at the Museum of Anthropology. Hart walks down the long ramp between the poles that he brought out of Ninstints; he has a flashlight which he shines on them. There is a lecturn set up for a class, with chairs in front. On the wall is an enlarged photograph of the sighted and unsighted masks. Hand-drums are also hanging on the walls. Hart is carrying the Raven rattle which he found on Ninstints.]

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Hart:

I walk amidst these amputated poles,
my purpose blind.

The empty classroom,
the theatre of my delight,
all hollowed out.

[Looking at the poles]

Before,
I could say "this is that"
against all comers—
Today I don't understand a thing.
The stolen Raven, my golden bough, a crime.

There were times before
when I didn't keep track of the sun:
my eyes adjusted.
But this sudden darkness has left me felled.

I've lost the trail
of the god who was seeking me.

[Looks at the twin masks, thinking of the creator of the masks]

I thought I glimpsed you a hundred times,
and around a hundred corners, you disappeared.
Then I calculated the cost of leaving
all that I had
to follow only you.
I am still adding the sum.

I am thirsty
Is there water to drink?

[Looks around]

I yearn.
My puny hunger stinks.

Objects once hurled outward
Inhurl until there is
such density of disbelief.
I have loved nothing
as much as that great
useless love.

I collected facts,
like earth around roots,
to anchor me.
Now I am filled with fear.

[A sound of something snapped]

What is that?

The drums—they adjust to my presence
Stretch out to me.
Split.

I have been here before.

[The 1956 film of the expedition to Ninstints Island is shown on a large screen filling the back of the stage. It shows Hart, as a young man, walking amongst the poles, testing them, while Hart, on stage, walks and paces.]

What was once light—
almost light—
eager, innocent, without regret
is a lodestone.
Is cement.

I left boot-prints
in the sand.

And now so much alone,
my family become an idea.

But this is not idea
being thus walled in.

Inside the contour of my soul
an avalanche has started. I am falling.
I give this back before it is buried too.

[He places the Raven Rattle on the lap of the Weeping Woman pole on stage.]

[The film shows the Weeping Woman pole being lowered, but unlike on the expedition in Act I the lowering is in slow motion. The film merges with the pole coming down on stage. Hart places his jacket down to protect its fall. While this is happening the chorus sings:]

Chorus:

What has happened to our love—
florescence—
our mutual song?

What has happened to the news
of a human race
that comes across the waves
on feathers we set down
to lay aside, to open?

[The Lover appears on stage, now as the elderly woman.]

Mary-Anne, wearing the blank-faced mask, enters stage right. Paige and Jacob follow behind her. Tom Price, the Collectors and the natives and non-natives who were on the expedition, all enter, wearing the same blank mask. They form two lines on either side of Hart.

Hart doesn't notice them.]

Hart:

I wanted to say to Mary-Anne
you have gifted me.

The Lover:

Admit her.

Hart:

But she can't hear me.

The Lover:

She will.

Hart:

And my children,
and my friends—

The Lover:

Say it, say the words—
admit them.

Hart:

They are gone from me.

[The figure of Hart as a young man comes out from the film and onto the stage. Nahanee, shown in the film behind a pole, comes on stage. Then, Nahanee's grandmother who wept in Act I, joins him. They do not have the masks on. Hart still doesn't see them.]

Nahanee:

You came toward us like an echo
Answering our very own song.

[Hart faces himself on stage as a young man. They move toward one another.]

Chorus:

We create one another
We need one another
We feast at each other's tables
We take care.

[Hart removes a hand-gun from his pocket and points it at the face of his younger self.]

As he is doing this, the Lover goes to Mary-Anne and removes her mask. They start to dance, formal, ceremonial. The lights strobe on and off so that the stage is dark then bright then dark, showing the opposites of day alternating with night.]

Grandmother:

[In a tremulous voice]

What will happen to our love—
florescence—
our mutual song?

Voices from the Chorus:

[One voice starts then another is added]

What will happen to the news
of a human race
that comes across the waves
on feathers we set down
to lay aside, to open?

[Hart sees Mary-Anne and The Lover dancing and is distracted. He lowers the gun to his side.]

Mary-Anne removes Paige's mask; they dance, then Paige dances with her brother, taking off his mask.

And so it goes, one dancer removing the mask of another. The Collectors, the natives and non-natives dance.

Hart is looking at everyone. His younger self takes the gun from him.]

Paige:

[Strong but plaintiff]

You held me in your arms.

I looked in the same direction as you.
Your dark-filled song
sings through to me.

Not a wolf
Not a raven
but my father—
a man—singing his song.

The Lover:

A human song.

Price:

You have gifted us.

The Lover:

We have danced.

[Mary-Anne goes to her husband]

Mary-Anne:

I have danced with you.

[Hart turns away. The strobing stops. He slowly follows his younger self, who also moves away. Everyone changes partners as the dancing continues.]

Grandmother:

Raven was bored without first man.
He cried
And someone heard his cry
In the cave where the winds are born.
The sound was irresistible.

[Children come out from the tears of the Weeping Woman pole, and dance.]

Nahanee:

A figure emerged
Going towards it—
Drawn by curiosity
and being so alone.

Chorus:

Someone will come again
to see the stolen light
revealed
and know its bidding.

Mary-Anne:

A naked creature:
without wings,
without feathers,
wanting to sing—

The Lover:

—to awake a sleeping god
not weary of waiting for us.

We can be welcomed
and not seek to conquer.

Entire Cast:

Florescence.

Mary-Anne:

We'll meet again at the gate.
We'll walk along the beach.

Chorus:

You are the river
You are the thirst.
You drink.

The Lover:

This brief moment, your life,
has one glint of recognizing.
It's comforting.
You turn your gaze to the river.

**Mary-Anne, Tom Price, Nahanee, The Lover
& the Children:**

We are the swimmers.
The light is a river,
carrying us upstream

The light is a river,
carrying us back home
to the source.

Entire Cast:

Between God and the world
is creation.
Between God and humanity
is revelation.
Between you and me
is redemption.

Creation.
Revelation.

[The lights go down. As they do, the young Hart stops, turns and faces the older Hart. The young Hart raises the gun to the older Hart's head. Everyone freezes. Lights out. The sound of a shot is heard. Then the ringing of a telephone as the curtains close.]

The End

