

Water to the Sea

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First Draft

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The stage is empty except for a treadmill. The lighting is blue. The upstage wall is a projection screen. Blue waves are projected onto it to give the sense of being under water. On the treadmill is CLAUDE, he's a human actor dressed as a shrimp in a black beret. He speaks in a faint French accent. Why? Because all shrimp do. Just ask them.

CLAUDE

Do you ever feel as though your life is one, long, ever-repeating circle? No. Not a circle. Circles are perfect, and life is imperfect. At least my life is imperfect. My life is one, long, ever-repeating oval. I walk, and I walk, and I ingest and excrete as my body requires but there is no meaning, no purpose.

Claude starts the treadmill and begins walking at a slow, steady pace. As he does, images of wheels - gears, really - appear on the screen (the waves remain) - but they're subtle.

CLAUDE

It is like that song that they used to play years ago... it feels like twenty but I think it is closer to fifty...

CLAUDE Sings

CLAUDE

Comme une pierre que l'on jette
Dans l'eau vive d'un ruisseau
Et qui laisse derrière elle
Des milliers de ronds dans l'eau
Comme un manège de lune
Avec ses chevaux d'étoiles
Comme un anneau de Saturne
Un ballon de carnaval
Comme le chemin de ronde
Que font sans cesse les heures
Le voyage autour du monde
D'un tournesol dans sa fleur
Tu fais tourner de ton nom

Tous les moulins de mon cœur

From thin air (water?) CLAUDE manifests a lit cigarette. Bonus points if the scent of cloves washes through the theatre. Through all this, he has continued and does continue his walk on the treadmill.

CLAUDE
(inhales his
cigarette and then
blowing a perfect
series of smoke
rings a la the
Caterpillar in Alice
in Wonderland)

It all seems so pointless, do you see? Like carrying buckets of water to the sea. One drop and then another, one wave and then a dozen more, and on, and on, and nothing changes, nothing grows.

CLAUDE
(blows another series
of smoke rings)

I look in the mirror and I see myself reflected back, and if I look more closely, look into my own eyes, I see my own reflected reflection. I search for purpose and find only algae and plankton, as if I live only to keep my section of the ocean free of tiny things.

CLAUDE blows one last set of smoke rings then makes the cigarette butt disappear.

CLAUDE
Sometimes I feel as if my pulse is the beat of time, the echo of time tearing itself apart because we are wasting it getting nothing done. Here, we get nothing done while watching sunlight filter through the depths. It changes angle, but we do not change with it. We might spare a thought about changing, but we don't make the effort.

Again, CLAUDE manifests an object. This time it's a baseball. Still continuing his relentless walk on the treadmill, he tosses it from hand to hand.

CLAUDE

I am told that those who live on the land play baseball. I have heard this game described as a "tapestry of tedium." I cannot imagine that it is any better or any worse than my own spiral of ennui.

CLAUDE tosses the baseball into the wings.

CLAUDE

Spinning, always spinning. Never getting anywhere. No meaning. No purpose. Do you ever feel as though your life is one, long ever-repeating oval? It is like that song they used to sing. I think it was twenty years ago. (beat) But it was probably more like fifty.

CLAUDE begins to sing the same song again, this time in English.

CLAUDE

Round like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel
 Never ending or beginning on an ever spinning reel
 Like a snowball down a mountain, or a carnival balloon
 Like a carousel that's turning running rings around the moon
 Like a clock whose hands are sweeping past the minutes of
 its face
 And the world is like an apple whirling silently in space
 Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your
 mind!
 Like a tunnel that you follow to a tunnel of its own
 Down a hollow to a cavern where the sun has never shone
 Like a door that keeps revolving in a half forgotten dream
 Or the ripples from a pebble someone tosses in a stream
 Like a clock whose hands are sweeping past the minutes of
 its face
 And the world is like an apple whirling silently in space
 Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your
 mind!
 Keys that jingle in your pocket, words that jangle in your
 head
 Why did summer go so quickly, was it something that you
 said?
 Lovers walking along a shore and leave their footprints in
 the sand
 Is the sound of distant drumming just the fingers of your
 hand?
 Pictures hanging in a hallway and the fragment of a song
 Half remembered names and faces, but to whom do they belong?
 When you knew that it was over you were suddenly aware
 That the autumn leaves were turning to the color of her
 hair!
 Like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel
 Never ending or beginning on an ever spinning reel

As the images unwind, like the circles that you find
In the windmills of your mind!

FADE TO BLACK

FIN