



FILM TWO || anna moschovakis

[a sketch for moving pictures]

I don't know a thing about paradise || In my house nobody ever brought it up ||
In college I learned about Kierkegaard's knights || The knight of resignation || and
the knight of faith || I wanted to be a knight of faith || as did the professor || and
everyone else in the class || I assumed

I was born in paradise || and raised in science || The semester I studied Kierkegaard || I also took Calculus || which I failed || I fell in love with the sounds || of cypress trees || in the wind || There is the female cypress || and the male cypress || and it was the male I loved || The same semester I read Kierkegaard || and flunked Calculus || I also read *The Symposium* || by Plato || in English translation || You will remember || that *The Symposium* || is about a dinner party || and you are familiar || with the story in it || told by the comedian || Aristophanes || about the search for love || and the origin of longing || how we have all been split in two || broken || each half doomed to wander || far and wide || in search of || the other || We remember this story || which Socrates belittled || in common expressions || like “He completes me” || and || “How is your better half?” || and even when we refer || to finding “the one” || or our “soul mate”

In the culture to which I was born || after premarital sex || divorce and remarriage || became accepted || and then commonplace || it became possible to find || your soulmate || not just once || but twice || three times || or more || and to declare it to the world || in the media || even || in a church || Anxiety over this development || which may be described— || using a term I learned || the same semester || I flunked Calculus || and read Kierkegaard || and *The Symposium*— || as a “paradigm shift” || is pervasive || if unacknowledged || for how can you find || your other half || more than once? || They say the human body || regenerates itself || once every seven years || “they” being modern science || and in the 5th century BC || Heraclitus wrote || ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν, ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ. || which we are told meant || “You can’t step in the same river twice” || The traditional marriage ceremony || still calls for the promise || to stay together || for richer or poorer || for better or for worse || in sickness and in health || till death do us part

Being raised in science || under the sign of logic || I never understood how certain || promises || could be made || I could say “I promise || that unless something unexpected happens || I will do the dishes every night || this week” || I was very literal || Even in my love relationships || I could say “I love you today” || but not “I will love you tomorrow” || or “I’m in this for the long haul” || I would have made a terrible bride || which might be why || the only marriage proposal I received || was during a transatlantic phone call || with an unhinged person || who knew I would say no || I had a good relationship || with a philosopher || fall apart || over my inability to adequately perform || what I vaguely remembered were called || “speech acts” || a term coined by J.L. Austin || and developed by John Searle || whose class I also took in college || though sometime after || the disaster of “the Calculus”

I came to Paradise with a friend || named Hope || During our stay || another friend || went home to Ohio || with his camera || and sent a photo || HELL IS REAL || across a billboard || which I received || on my phone || Growing up I watched a TV show || on public television || called “Connections” || in which the host || followed a trail || wherever it took him || across time || space || and disciplinary divides || This was before the invention || of hyper text markup language || broadband || or the smartphone || “Connections” || was a big “influence” || on my “work”

Freud famously said that the only two things || that matter in life || are love and work || I'm paraphrasing || having never read Freud || or at least not the part where he wrote about that || I am working in paradise || There is a bird here which makes || a noise like a typewriter || Smith Corona or Olivetti || a manual || I don't know what kind of bird it is || I don't know the story of Adam and Eve || except in its most basic outline || I have thought about reading the story || in the bible || but there are so many || other books || I want to get to || first || I thought || I could kill two || birds with one stone || so to speak || by reading it in French || to practice my comprehension || so that it will in some sense constitute || work || I try to find the passage || but I can't

There is one story from the bible || that I know quite well || The story of Abraham and Issac || I know it from its appearance || in *Fear and Trembling* || by Kierkegaard || I did manage to find the story of Abraham and Issac || in the bible || It is in Genesis || I was surprised at how short || it was || and || by some of the wording || "*Or, apres ces evenements, Dieu mit Abraham a l'epreuve et lui dit: "Abraham"; il repondit; "Me voici". Il reprit: "Prends ton fils, ton unique, Isaac, que tu aimes. Pars pour le pays de Moriyya et la, tu t'offriras en holocauste sure celle des montagnes que je t'indiquerai."* || I was surprised by the use of the word || "holocauste" || when the word I expected to see was || "sacrifice" || a word which does exist in || French || spelled just as it is in English || with the identical dictionary definition || I made a note to go to the library || back home || to look at the King James version || and see what word is there

It occurred to me also || that I had never wondered at || the origin of the word
“holocaust” || before it came to refer primarily || to the events of World War II ||
which occurred thousands of years after Abraham || agreed to kill his boy || and
more than a century after Kierkegaard || wrote || under a pseudonym || his *Fear &
Trembling*

The story of Abraham and Issac is || five paragraphs long || It is told simply
|| without psychologizing || The characters are affectless || It is like a script ||
waiting for actors || to fill it with emotion

When Freud said love & work || I assume he meant meaningful work || but it
still seems || that further definition || is required || When I say I am “working” ||
in paradise || I refer to one kind || of work || to the writing of this film || which
you are now watching || and I hope || finding meaningful || as I found meaning in
the process || of its creation || Another type of work || I performed in paradise ||
was cleaning || mostly dishwashing || which I enjoy but || do not find particularly
|| meaningful || and yet another type of work || I performed || was the intensive
pruning || of olive trees || in an ancient || olive grove || which I both enjoyed || and
found meaningful || since it allowed me || to commune || with nature || and with a
notion || of the past || I was not paid for any of this work || I was not paid to go to
paradise || In fact || I paid for my room and board || and volunteered || my labor

Medea sacrificed both of her children || though no God asked her to || and unlike Abraham she has rarely || been praised for the intention || much less the execution || In a film version of *Medea* || by Lars von Trier || the scene of the execution || is filled with emotion || though stark || and wordless || “It is written on their faces” || *EXT. HILL—DAY: Woman walks up a hill carrying her two sons., etc.* || While Abraham presumably thought that Issac || after the sacrifice || would have risen up to paradise || Medea would not have had such comfort || the Greeks having a very different conception || of paradise || a place inhabited by gods || inaccessible to mortals || even after death

This || combined with the fact that || Medea’s reasons for killing her children were || more or less || selfish || make her act appear less like a sacrifice || and more like killing || like a || holocaust

After God spares Abraham the agony || of killing his only son || “*qu’il aime*” || a ram appears || and Abraham || sacrifices it instead || “*Il alla le prendre pour l’offrir en holocauste || à la place de son fils.*” || We are told that Abraham named this place || “*le seigneur voit*” || and reminded it’s still common to say “*c’est sur la montagne que le seigneur est vue*” || which is rendered in the King James version of the bible as || “in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen” || but in other, more recent versions, as || “on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided” || making me think of the “hold” || in “behold” || a link between seeing || and having || for keeps || Martin Luther King, Jr., proclaimed || he had been to the mountain and had seen the promised land || that he was not fearing any man || in a speech he gave the day before || he was killed || the soundbite repeated on the radio || every hour on the hour || April 4 of last year, the 50th anniversary || of his assassination

I do not know if it's accurate || or appropriate || to draw a correlation between the mountain in MLK's speech || and the mountain in Genesis 22

The professor who taught me Kierkegaard || Hubert Dreyfus || seemed to make a connection between King and Abraham || He seemed to suggest that both would qualify || under Kierkegaard's definition || as Knights of Faith || able to see || the dagger hanging over their beloveds || and not recoil || but love || the more fiercely

There is a library in paradise || and in it a book || called *Disbelief and Faith Are Not What You Think* || written by someone called Jean-Francois Six || I liked his name and the fact that in French the title || *L'Incroyance et la foi ne sont pas ce qu'on croit* || rhymes || "This book" || he writes || "is an invitation to an experimental faith || a humble, vulnerable faith"

In another book I found the etymology of the term || “entrainment” || now used in certain psychoanalytic texts || to describe the transmission of affect between individuals || in other words, contagion || suggesting we are not contained within the contours of our own bodies || the outlines || of our skin || The language of halfness in Aristophanes’ speech || may be an attempt to explain || metaphorically || hence inaccurately || and well before Freud and the dawn of psychoanalysis || this fluidity of boundaries

“*Entrainer*” || the infinitive form of the French “*entrainement*” || means simply “to train” || as in || for the Olympics || or || for success || in love

It turns out Heraclitus never said || the thing about stepping into the river || that it was probably a disciple || forgotten by history || or some poor scribe || bursting with intuition || I was alerted to this fallacy || as well as to the fact || that “kierkegaard” || means “churchyard” || in the philosopher’s native Danish || by the writer David Markson || another “influence” || on my “work” || another Knight || of Faith || who is now || most certainly || in paradise

Entraîner: || to pull or carry || away or along; || to train; || to lead (to); || to cause;
bring about || an invitation || to an experiment || a humble faith

When I went to paradise || it rained || I forgot my camera || and could only take
pictures || on my phone

I sent them to everyone || and saved them all || for myself

for Hope
2008, 2010

* a dust/e-chap
www.dusie.org

