

AGAINST OBLIVION (PART 2)

LIBRETTO

Words by David Gale

(Except * from White Noise by Don De Lillo)

Characters

Man: a bodybuilder-turned-politician

Woman 1: an actress

Woman 2: an aid worker

AGAINST OBLIVION (PART 2)

LIBRETTO

So this is it

WOMAN 1 Ooooh

WOMAN 2 Ooooh

MAN Ooooh

All Ooooh

MAN So this is it, so this is it

All So this is it, so this is it, so this is it

All So this is it, so this is it, so this is it

Chant # 1

MAN I was a weakling who pumped the air and grew at a pace that burst my shirts; then pumped again to a competitive level at which I quite exceeded the girth of those of a similar inflation.

I made my mark I marked my words I carried the can from station to station; building my thighs leaving cards leaving notes dropping flowers into trays for the ladies gripping the hands of the guys generally being attentive not too charming or smarmy just leaving behind a pleasant air of having been there for all to remark.

WOMAN 2 I knew quite soon when quite young that I wanted to work with the sick and the poor; and I did I lived in their huts and started up schools and became head of an organisation working with governments to ensure that the people had water could read had doctors had roads

By the time I was thirty they were ringing me up saying come on out come on over we need you; I worked for UNESCO on delegations commissions bodies and panels I had been out there done the digging and shoveling they listened to everything I could tell them

WOMAN 1 I was a treasure they loved me they waved in the street they were polite they didn't come over in restaurants; but they did like to meet me and ask for my autograph and tell me they loved everything I did

You know even the Queen so I learned and the Princes they loved me they watched me on TV at Buckingham Palace; they acted out lines from the shows and pretended like me to be common well I'm not but my character is I played a lady who's decent and chirpy who has a joke or a quip when things are quite grim

MAN Everyone thought I was a bit of a thicko, a bloke whose main qualification came out of gymnasiums; I was somewhere between a myth and a joke they didn't expect me to go for high office to have views on abortion and crime waves and cars

WOMAN 1 I had so they say always a skill and a way of presenting myself that was nice and sincere; even when young and unformed I could make conversation admired by my elders who would gather to hear my bright observations delivered with poise

WOMAN 2 What is that connection that joins us to people whose own situation is so much less is so very little lacks love lacks life has no food no fun has fear is blear is bleak is shot is shit

ALL

The underdog, the lower crust, the lambs in wire, the set upon the dust

Will you not come back?

MAN

Will you not come back?
Will you not come in?
Will you not come by?
Will you not come past?
Will you not come?
Will you not come back?
Will you not come in?
Will you?
Will you not come by?
Will you not come?

WOMAN 1

Will I live again?
Is there an again?
Will you not pass by?
Is that me I see?
There I am again
I'll be seeing me
Are you coming back?
Are you coming round?
Are you?
Is that me I see?
There I am
There

WOMAN 2

Will you not come back?
Will you not come in?
Will you not come by?
Will you not come round?
Did I get there?

Will you not come back?
Will you not come in?
Will you not come by?
Will you not come past?
Will you not come?
Will you not come back?
Will you not come in?
Will you?
Will you not come by?
Will you not come?

I am not forgot
I am not all there
Is that me I can see?
Am I in your eye?
Am I in your mind?
Who's a clever one?
Who's a cheeky chap?
I am not forgot
I am not all there
Now in your mind
I'm in your eye
When I was there were you there?

	Will I live again?	
	Is there an again?	
	Is that me I see?	
	There I am again	
	I'll be seeing me	
Will you not come back?	Are you coming back?	Is that me I can see?
Will you not come in?	Are you coming round?	Am I now in your mind?
Will you not come by?	Are you?	Am I in your eye?
Will you not come round?	Is that me I see?	I am not forgot
Did I get there?	There I am	Did I get there?
	Here	Did I arrive?
		I will be back
		When I was there were you there?

Chant #2

MAN Even the ones that took time to listen came to the view that I was simply quite simple; a man of the people who said what the people in all of their bigotry greed and plain envy wanted to hear.

As a result the men of the parties left flowers on my pillow so to speak and extended the hand of warm introduction to their groupings and gatherings; to such an extent that after a while I was standing on stages saying things about country and history and family all the things so they thought that rooted you deeply so you couldn't blow over

WOMAN 2 I got engaged I stood aside from all the gifts I could have had applied myself to schemes that tried their best to take some good and place some goods in places where the dispossessed could pick them up; and maybe get if only for a little while a little piece of their due pie the stuff they should have had in any better life just for dignity just for peace

WOMAN 1 It soon became apparent to all who had savoured my charm that here was something that should be placed under glass; hothoused but not forced just encouraged supported drawn out and channeled

I tip tapped through stage school added notes to my register polished my presence used my eyes to make contact took roles that were wholesome; added épée and riding learned to distinguish between Lancaster and Doncaster in terms of an accent became increasingly flexible

WOMAN 2 Let me get this straight I didn't ask I didn't want to get myself up on some bright list of great and good in lights and warmly known for all their selfless deeds; I stay away from that I always have I couldn't bear the thought that really all I want is them to say how truly sacrificial she must be how very modest in her needs, we should be like her.

Mind you there is the thought that in the world the ones that care are caring too for ones that need no help at all; the comforts and the perquisites all very much in place they are relieved to see that someone somewhere is picking up the tab for what they know deep down is their careless disconnection.

WOMAN 1 After some years of playing daughters and nurses I got my break in a show on TV that shot me to places that built up my clout to the point where just about anything I wanted I got; I met Paul and we married I had stables and then quite sadly and slowly I wasted to nothing with M.E.

WOMAN 2 So if I get the MBE; please can it say I did it for all of those who never gave a damn and never will.

ALL

The trodden on the overlooked the blank where once it was so full
I ate I slept I watched a lot of things I never got to touch

I Made My Mark

WOMEN

Here I come
There I was
That was me
How was I
I am not forgot
I am not all there
Did I get there?
Am I now in your mind?

Here I come
There I was
That was me
How was I
I am not forgot
I am not all there
Did I get there?
Am I now in your mind?

Here I come
There I was
That was me
How was I
I am not forgot
I am not all there
Did I get there?
Am I now in your mind?

MAN

I made my mark
I marked my words
I made my mark
All the things I did will fade
Everything I made
That was me
How was I

This is where I stood
Where I said that thing
Where I stopped that man
Here's my old coat
I was known in this street
This is where I lay down
One day I was there
The next day, the next day

Chant #3

MAN They bought the whole package the cartoon connection between bodies and values that even I knew was far from the picture;
because quite frankly what I had that they didn't wasn't conviction or fibre just a need to be better than all of the worms that surrounded me and from whom thanks to pumping I was now fully removed

If I could go back I wouldn't change a thing well I might tear up a letter or two or retract a particularly poorly composed riposte to one whose fault it was not that they had got under my skin; where endured my consuming need to endure

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WOMAN 1 When no one was looking I slipped out of the place you go when you're dead and I dropped down for a look at the place where I spent the best years of my life; well the years that I lived were the best years now that I'm dead they all seem quite good but I thought what the hell let's see what I left let's see the extent to which the marks that I made are still the concern of those that were there when I made them.

The streets were clean the people were much as they were when I saw them last year; when I was there among them and breathing and chatting saying "So how is the thing that you're doing that we hear about so much is it good is it on when's it on are you in it who's in it she's terribly good we can't wait oh it was something it was great you were good";

But they weren't they were onto the next thing; the following thing the one where the girls and the men and the guns and the cars and the sea go up in the air for a spin.

WOMAN 2 Funny isn't it? You spend so much in places and points and areas of interest with characteristics and the dark and the light and you're there with your gestures your positions your postures what you think what you do what you want and they're there with theirs; then we're here with ours then you're hit by a truck what the fuck what was that oh I see turn off the TV now dear it's time for the end.

White Noise*

***WOMAN 2** But in the end it doesn't matter what they see or think they see. The terminals are equipped with holographic scanners, which decode the binary secret of every item, infallibly. This is the language of waves and radiation, or how the dead speak to the living. And this is where we wait together regardless of age, our carts stocked with brightly coloured goods. A slowly moving line, satisfying, giving us time to glance at the tabloids in the racks. Everything we need that is not food or love is here in the tabloid racks. The tales of the supernatural or the extraterrestrial. The miracle vitamins, the cures for cancer the remedies for obesity. The cults of the famous and the dead.*

***ALL** But in the end it doesn't matter what they see or think they see. The terminals are equipped with holographic scanners, which decode the binary secret of every item, infallibly. This is the language of waves and radiation, or how the dead speak to the living. And this is where we wait together regardless of age, our carts stocked with brightly coloured goods. A slowly moving line, satisfying, giving us time to glance at the tabloids in the racks. Everything we need that is not food or love is here in the tabloid racks. The tales of the supernatural or the extraterrestrial. The miracle vitamins, the cures for cancer the remedies for obesity. The cults of the famous and the dead.*

Will I live again?

ALL

Will you not come back? Will you not come round?
Will you not come by? Will you not come in?

Will I live again? Is there an again?
Will you not pass by? Are you coming round?

Is there an again? Will you not pass by?
Are you coming round? Are you coming back?

Are you coming in? Is that me I see?
Didn't I do well?
There I am again That's me over there

I can see from here I'll be seeing me
I am not forgot I am not all there
Is that me I see?

Am I in your eye? Am I in your mind?
There I am again That's me over there

Will you not come back? Will you not come round?
Will you not come by? Will you not come in?

Will I live again? Is there an again?
Will you not pass by? Are you coming round?

Will I live again? Will I live again?
Will I live again? Will I live again?
Will I live?

Will I live again? Will I live again?
Will I live again? Will I live again?
Will I live?

THE END