

**In the Perpetual Spring**  
**(A Tour of First World Intimacies)**

**ELIES BARBERÀ**

*Translation by John Ingle & Marina Albaladejo*

## BOOMERANG

You have in your hands a metapoetical book, that's to say, a book of poetic texts that establishes itself beyond poetry because it is, at the same time, a book of theatre.

The processes of artistic creation are unforeseeable, living beings. In order to find the origin of *In the Perpetual Spring* we need to look at the 15-minute capsule entitled *Go, Marco, Go!* which we presented, through Àrea Tangent at the Girona Temporada Alta Festival in 2007. What was the subject? "Poetry on stage". Alright then. I compiled a series of poems and texts that dealt with the celerity of the times in which we live, I gave them form and it ended up being, more or less, what you will find in the third part of *In the Perpetual Spring*. I myself directed that project, with the participation of the actors Arnau Marín and Albert Alemany.

That would have been the end of it if a year later the *Esparguera Lola* Festival hadn't been interested in the capsule about Marco Pantani and hadn't offered us the possibility of making the seed grow. With the *Teatre de l'Enjòlit* we set up, then, a one-hour work of formal, similar, characteristics to be shown for the first time at the *Teatret of the Puig-Paltor*. The actress Marta Montiel was brought in and also the video creators Joan Sànchez and Quim Español. *In the Perpetual Spring* was premiered on 13th of november, 2008.

The objective stayed true too that of the capsule: to bring some originally lyrical texts to the stage. I very much liked the idea of transferring what I believe can be said in verse to a work aimed directly at an audience. I mean to say, taking that of an intimate atmosphere and moving it to that of a scenic one. My reliance on the success of the project was far greater than that felt by the actors, as they confessed to me later (ye of little faith!).

We have put on some performances of *In the Perpetual Spring*. Few, if truth be told, because it demands a very particular stage design: too theatrical to be poetry and too poetic to be theatre. And I don't need to tell you about formalities.

And now, as if by magic, Raquel Tomàs appears before us transformed into a fairy godmother and the *Lola* redressed as a wizard with a magic wand, and they metamorphose *In the Perpetual Spring* to keep it alive; this time in the form of a trilingual, illustrated book, of sound capsules and video and container of these formats at [www.dramangular.com](http://www.dramangular.com). So, in a nutshell, after flying around for two years, *In the Perpetual Spring* has returned, like a boomerang, to the hands of whom it was cast.

So, to them, thanks a million!

Elies Barberà

**IN THE PERPETUAL SPRING**  
**(A Tour of First World Intimacies)**

The characters will be called X, Y and Z in the text.

X and Y are men. Z is a woman. Their ages are estimated to be between 25 and 35.

In the staging each character takes on the name of the persona that they are representing.

Costumes: Uniform of trousers and suit jacket. Cycling shorts beneath the trousers.

The stage directions are in each case for guidance only.

*X, Y and Z welcome the public, give out programs, greet the spectators and show them to their seats: Hello, good evening; how are you? How are you this evening? Welcome to the tour that we've organized for you. Here's your seat. We hope you enjoy... The title and subtitle of the piece are projected onto the screen:*

## **IN THE PERPETUAL SPRING (A Tour of First World Intimacies)**

*The objects and elements which are to be used can be seen on the stage space and are as follows:*

*A projection screen.*

*An exercise bike.*

*A bicycle turned upside down.*

*Three coat hangers hanging from different points of the lighting bars.*

*A collection of postcards from one of the world's great cities.*

*Rubber gloves, plastic surgeon's caps, roll of plastic wrap and two red markers.*

*A box the size of a shoe-box which lights up from the inside when opened.*

*Three cycling jerseys: a pink one, a yellow one and one of a world champion.*

*Two holsters with toy pistols.*

*Some ripe tomatoes.*

*Two motorcycle helmets with a candle on top of each one.*

*Some boxes of matches or a lighter.*

*A row of small bottles of water.*

*A tray with two candles that form the number 34.*

*A small bag of flour.*

*Some newspapers.*

*Some paper bags containing peanuts.*

*X and Y also carry in their pockets lipstick, a bottle of nail-varnish and a can of hairspray each. When X, Y and Z enter the stage, the title and subtitle disappear and are replaced by the projection of the name of the first chapter:*

### **1. IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS**

*X places himself on the left and Y on the right. Z goes to the back of the stage, picks up the postcard collection and hides it behind her back. The projection disappears. Z looks mischievously at the audience. Playful, happy in the knowledge of what she is holding, she advances to the front of the stage. X and Y, knowing what Z is carrying, are also smiling. Z holds up her collection of postcards. In particular, she indicates the postcard that best represents the hub of the world. She is so thrilled!*

*The image of the postcard that Z shows is simultaneously projected onto the screen. Z recites THE FIRST POSTCARD.*

Z: hydraulic drills. the *basso continuum* of engines, reminiscent of primitive drums. gas, natural. clouds. rags. cable. connections. swings of well-being. markets. products. supermarkets. microwaves. ready-made meals. extra-frozen. chickens without eyes. saturated fats. toilet paper, two-sided, soft toilet tissue. hypermarkets. cereal bars, energy-giving, isotonic drinks. bifidobacterium, very active. macrobiotic food. shopping-centres. the ever-mutating forms of advertising, chameleons. specialist magazines. models. make-up. nail varnish. UVA rays. solar protection. aerosols. the horn of plenty. leisure centres. fashion. mirrors. piranhas. the resplendent beauty of bones. the function creates the organ: reduced skulls and stomachs. the slicing waltz of scalpels on the epidermis. implants. metamorphoses. Dr. Moreau's guffaw. the victory of plastic. the neon lights of happiness. the rubber of preservatives. selective recycling. great sophistication.

*While Z recites the text, X and Y interact with her: they paint the odd fingernail, they colour her lips. Z continues with the recital of urban wonders. The text comes to an end and X, Z and Y feel a blow to their lower bodies. Something manifests itself on their abdomens. They raise their T-shirts to investigate: there, on their abdomens, appears the tattooed image of the postcard and of the projection. They show the image on their bellies to the audience: it represents the hub of the world. Now that the image of the great city is tattooed onto their skin, the projection disappears from the screen. Showing the tattoo, the text begins:*

## **HERE/THERE**

*The title is projected onto the screen during the recital.*

Z: Everything from here.

X: Yes, of course, from here. Where else from, if not?

Y: From here.

Z: It's that it's good to be here.

X: Where better.

Y: From here on.

Z: Far from here, there.

X: There is the reason a here exists.

Y: Us, here. From here.

Z: There?

X: Unthinkable

Y: Impossible.

Z: Imponderable without a here.

X: Without a here? Can you imagine yourselves without a here?

Y: The beginning is here.

Z: There isn't there if there isn't a here.

X: And will there be here?

Z: There will always be there. How could it be here?

X: And further away?

Y: Ha, ha, ha: reality and the fourth dimension: ha, ha, ha...

Z: Ha, ha, ha...

*Y and Z laugh together, taking the mickey out of X.*

X: There, it's always night.

Z: There, everything is wild.

X: There, one man's meat is another man's poison.

Y: There, they still light bonfires.

Z: There, the sound of machine guns still roar. Constantly.

X: There, all is panic.

Z: Here, logic presides.

Y: Order, the grid plan; there is always a cause and effect.

Z: It's just that it's good to be here.

X: Here it's always spring.

Y: A perpetual spring.

Z: And that's why our nation's poor are able to go barefoot, begging on the street! *Contentedly, naïvely. X and Y look at her incredulously.* I mean, they can sleep out in the open air — on park benches; *X and Y, annoyed, leave her. Z tries to carry on explaining.* Or in cashpoint foyers in winter, ... *but her voice is drowned out by the high volume of urban music. Moving on to*

## SHOPPING

*The title is projected onto the screen for the duration of the scene.*

X: I went the other day: a long, black overcoat, right down to my feet, fantastic! A pair of jeans that fit the shape of my legs like a glove. A navy blue sweater with white sleeves and the brand name here, in the middle of my chest, really big — What? What's wrong with that? Two shirts, 2 for 1. And I go to the sales assistant: 'How much does all this come to?'

Y: €500.

X: €500?

Y: €500! *Gives him a slap. X drops to the ground and jumps back up athletically, as if nothing had happened.*

Z: I went a couple of days ago — a motorcycle helmet, black, like X's over-coat. Some new skis. A snowboard and some snow-boots (my old ones were past it). And I go to the sales assistant: 'How much does this all come to?'

Y: €850.

Z: €850?

Y: €850! *Slaps her in the face. Z falls to the floor and jumps back up athletically, as if nothing had happened.*

Y: *Pointing to the floor.* You've left a ski.

Z: *Picks up the imaginary ski.* Ah, yes! Thanks very much.

Y: You're welcome. We are here to serve the customer.

X: Then, there are the Christmas presents as well, which can be from Caga tió or Father Christmas, depending on whether one feels more Catalan or more international. A set of tea and coffee cups and saucers to replenish my parents' dinner service. With a porcelain teapot and the lot. A book

each for my sister, brother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law and her boyfriend. Twelve CDs to give to friends. A toiletries set of perfume, shower gel and body milk for Aunt Barbara. ‘How much does all this come to?’

Y: €650.

X: €650?

Y: €650! *As above.*

Z: Then, there are the Christmas presents as well, which can be from Caga tió or Father Christmas, depending on whether one feels more Catalan or more international, etc. ‘How much does all this come to?’

Y: €780.

Z: €780?

Y: €780! *As above. More slaps follow with new amounts, maintaining the same dynamic.*

Y: I love working as a sales assistant.

*The urban music can be heard again. X, Y and Z stand at the front of the stage. The volume is lowered. They resume the clownish spirit that Z had at the beginning. They want to tell an amazing story! A cross between a horror film and a thriller. They are going to tell it between themselves, finishing sentences for one another; or in unison or in canon, infecting each other with enthusiasm.*

## GHOSTS

*The title of the text is projected*

night buses, empty, passengerless. at full-speed. shedding light outwardly. shooting through the City’s arteries. four in the morning. all lights at green. where are they heading these night buses? shooting. shining spectacularly from within. if you look closely they could be miniature plastic models. night buses. hurtling down the avenues. empty, driverless

*The urban music can be heard again at a higher volume. X, Y and Z take off their jackets. They hang them on the coat hangers. The title of chapter 2 is projected onto the screen:*

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*Note on the translation:*

**Caga tió:** Literally “shitting log” or imperative “shit (presents for us) log”. A Catalan Christmas tradition carried out on the evening of the 24th of December. A short, semi-burnt log (tió) is partially covered with a blanket to conceal presents for the children. When the time comes, the children hit the log with a stick, whilst singing, in order for it to give over, or to shit (caga), its presents.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE OBSTACLES

*Gradual change in the music and lighting. The projection of the title disappears. The sound becomes an aquatic murmur and the stage is bathed in electric blue light.*

### DEAR TSUNAMI

*The title of the new text is projected onto the screen*

*In unison or in canon. X, Y and Z are three people swallowed up by the tsunami. There are also the three jackets on coathangers — six ghost-like figures?*

jungles and sky will roar, and the earth.  
giant's footstep. bite of the sun.  
poetizing the end — the great wave —  
the bellow of the Mother — gulped down the bodies  
plunged into the brilliance; the purest  
and most glorious return to Nature.  
(the tininess. the insignificance!)

the swift deployment of the media,  
morbidly salivating, stupified  
they will film the Water, the voracious Mother  
that lapped and gobbled up the Empire  
of the civilized, every last sign and landmark.  
and now the Mother Water rocks her children to sleep.  
the live broadcast.  
distant devastation for the middle-classes  
eager in front of the screen's veil.  
watching. who feels the scale of the event?

and candles on the other side of the world.  
charity. the banking organisations.  
the dead will laugh now — “man is ridiculous”.  
the dead will say now — “the most beautiful end,  
to be gulped down by the Mother. to return”.  
the clamor of their gaping eyes, full of nothing,  
bodies falling to the bottom of the sea.

*X, Y and Z are three dreaming corpses that relate their dreams to the audience. Electric blue light continues to flood the space. Also the aquatic sound remains in the background.*

Y: I dreamt I was a tear, a single blue tear in the place where all the tears in the world had been collected. White flag. The sorrow left behind. One tear in a sweet ocean of tears.



Z: I dreamt that the victims didn't receive the humanitarian aid from the blue helmets but instead received humane aid from the people that came, from all over the world, with willing hands and a smile on their faces.

X: I dreamt that Christopher Columbus and his sailors, dying of hunger, arrived at the blue shores of modern day Santa Monica, California. White flag. Mitch Buchannon and his Baywatch buddies arrested them and banged them up for arriving without identification papers.

Y: I dreamt that Ferdinand VII of Spain was sodomized by the full force of raging bronze of an equestrian statue of himself. And he nearly died of pleasure.

X: I dreamt that the 17-year-old Benito Mussolini joined the Futuristic movement as a poet and clad in a toga withdrew from a football stadium in silence.

Z: I dreamt that Francisco Franco shot out of Gran Canaria like a bat out of hell on the Dragon Rapide and ended up in his mother's quim, which, on receiving him, closed amorously like an oyster in the depths of the ocean.

Y: I dreamt that the boy Adolf Hitler was loved by his father and that, as a young man, he studied painting with the maestro Cezanne. At night he cried himself to sleep because he didn't get to meet Vincent Van Gogh.

X: I dreamt that Philip VI of Spain abdicated in favour of Joan Fuster, resurrected, blue-lipped, who, without thinking twice about it, proclaimed the third and definitive World Republic.

Z: I dreamt that I was nothing more than touch, nothing more than skin, nothing more than tissue, so that above me the wind's blue horses swirled like eddys.

*Transition. Change in lighting and atmosphere of sound. Choreography of movement to move on to the SECOND POSTCARD.*

Z: green spaces. green recycling points. solar panels. and the green parking zone, shut away. sustainability. renewable energy. grand avenues. the postmodern plan. hospitals. porters, all in white, like pelicans. chemotherapy. smart buildings. civil servants, like penguins. electronic cells and Braille-topped buttons. sensors. magnetic cards — knowing who, when, until when, what. doors, like guillotines. hermetically. and once inside, closed circuit television — knowing how, why, who with. the control of each piece. the cogs of the machine. cameras. security. the big cage. the dismantling of the terrorist group. the news, before the fact, in press. every detail and image. glistening, in the sky, the talons of the Imperial Eagle.

## **COUSIN SURGERY, SISTER ANOREXIA**

*When the second postcard has been read, the title of the new scene is projected.*

*A sensual song plays. X and Z go to the back of the stage to put on rubber gloves and green, plastic caps. One of them picks up a roll of plastic wrap. They both carry a red marker pen in their hands. Y has stayed in the centre of the stage, bare chested. X and Z start to roll the plastic round him, wrapping him up tightly, making him look as if he had lost weight.*

*It may be that he sways to the rhythm of the music. When they have completely wrapped his upper body with the plastic, X and Z stand to either side of him. The volume of the music is lowered and Y begins:*

Y: By dint of classifying the world in terms of numerous concentric rings;  
by dint of losing interest in the rings furthest away;  
by dint of gradually forgetting about them. Of expunging them. Of annulling them.  
By dint of lying on the sofa and gazing at my navel;  
by dint of reducing the world to my own body.  
By dint of thinking about myself, myself, myself, myself...  
By dint of observing other bodies. Of envying them.  
By dint of preferring the bodies of others to my own;  
by dint of desiring other bodies;  
by dint of dissolving into other bodies, I decided to lose 4 stone, get rid of a bit of animal fat...

X: From here, here, here and here. *Indicates the places by lines drawn with the marker. Each line represents a cut of the scalpel.*

Y: And a couple of spare ribs, one from each side...

Z: This one and this one. *Does the same as X.*

Y: Now I can really say I'm happy!

*Y moves happily, sinuously as if the music can still be heard. X, Y and Z recite SISTER ANOREXIA:*

X: a dark and ill will  
to dissipate: to disappear,  
to shine in abandonment, shooting star.  
and thus, diminishing, to value yourself, to love yourself,  
to shine, to disappear...  
but tell us, yes, tell us your names.

*While Y recites mechanically the names of the bones, X and Z indicate them with the marker at the same time forming a certain type of choreography.*

Y: my names are:

wrist, knee,  
sternum, collar-bone,  
kneecap, femur,  
vertebra, tibia,  
humerus, heel,  
coccyx and ulna,  
jawbone, cheekbone,  
ilium, ischium and radius.

Z: in this way, two-dimensional whippet  
in this way, the bones become you, emerging against the light  
in this way, the fallow whiteness of the lumps.

X: until turning to silk, the skin tautens.

Z: on your broken smile, skull,

a certain fibre snaps and turns it into a grimace.  
 X: queen of nodes and articulations.  
 Z: accordion of wasted flesh. sputum.  
 violated flute of your skeleton  
 the saddest bassoon sings the elegy  
 of the victory of half an ounce less:  
 you cry with happiness on the scales:  
 X: the weight that is not. Disappearance  
 Z: and like this you appear before us:  
 insectivorous, torturous,  
 tarantulan, arachnid,  
 plutonic, octopodic,  
 decrepit, dramatic,  
 pessimistic, pregramitic,  
 programmatic, cinematic,  
 fanatic  
 parchmentic  
 skull-like  
 fractalflitic  
 corpse-like  
 X: yoghurteric  
 barbiturate  
 cataleptic  
 palmistic  
 epileptic  
 post-romantic  
 melancholic  
 seraphimic  
 spasmodic  
 polyclinic  
 halitotic  
 paroxystic  
 Z: like this you appear before us,  
 white spider of parsimonious movement  
 that spins the soft web  
 where you yourself will be treasure and death.  
 Y: Yes! And now I can really say I'm happy, lying, stretched out on the sofa,  
 gazing, as always, at my navel.

*Y beams with happiness, keeping himself between X and Z, efficient doctors, who smile as much as Y for having succeeded in making their patient happy. The operation is over, Y undoes the plastic wrap and X and Z clear away their set of instruments. Z keeps the gloves on. X has gone to the back of the stage, from where he observes and relates the new scene: Z has picked up a box. Leonardo Da Vinci's Annunciazione is projected. Z moves around the stage, stealthily at times; at others as quickly as possible. X recites the text. Z represents the terrorist of the text with a bomb in her hands.*

X: in her hands she carries an announcement. she flies over the city like an archangel, with a mission: the heralding of The End. in others' hands, uncertain carnations, skateboards and thumping dins, mobile telephones, gift-wrapped packages, newspapers, beeping keys, cameras, letters...bah! trivial nonsense. she, in her hands, the delicate beats of the bomb: the tiny heart of a goldfinch. and she, who believes herself to be infinitely better than others. she, more than human. an archangel. yes, an archangel with a mission.

*The last of the text finishes when Z opens the box, which has been set down on the floor. A ray of white light radiates out of the box— the detonation. This light alone fills the space. The projection disappears. The white light makes Z turn her face and body away. It has the same effect on X and Y. Z gets up slowly, takes off the gloves and moves to the centre of the stage. Gradual change in the lighting, reverting back to how it was at the start. Z recites the THIRD POSTCARD:*

Z: the north ring road. and the south. the funeral homes. and the coastal ring road. cemeteries. the industrial belt. eco-parks. free ports. the motorway. velocity. progress, unstoppable. dormitory towns, ghostly. a particular rain, like myopia. plastic bags circling in spirals. penitentiary establishments. airports. genetic laboratories. mercantile selection. basements. fluorescents. the petrochemical industry. the glory of the bank. armour. multinationals and NGOs. the invisible net. chameleons. cyberspace. Darth Vader's get-away ships, lost, drifting through remote nebulas. the barbarous threat, far from the central solar system. maximum security. a huge slick of oil. sophism. the great lie.

*The projected image of Osama Bin Laden appears when Z says "the invisible net". The image of Bin Laden is mixed with the image of Darth Vader's ships flying off into the universe. Images of Star Wars continue as X, Y and Z get undressed and equip themselves as cyclists: X with the yellow jersey, Y with the pink and Z with the world champion one. X and Y also put on the holsters with the toy pistols and store a tomato in the jersey pocket. Star Wars fades to black. A poem is projected immediately after*

## **WISDOM**

that all is provisional  
the dune  
knows very well

*The poem disappears and the title of the third chapter is projected:*

### 3. GO, MARCO, GO! (or concerning velocity)

*X, Y and Z appear from the back, chatting like three friends (which is what they are) about sport.*

Y: To X. Let's see if you can tell me the name of the fastest guy in the world.

X: Well... right now mate...

Z: The fastest man in the world is the Jamaican Usain Bolt. He holds the record for the 100 metres flat — 9.69 seconds. He attained it at the Beijing Olympics.

*X and Y are gobsmacked. "How does Z know that? She's a woman, for goodness' sake". They look at her in silence.*

Y: So, ok X, imagine that we are organizing a race between a tortoise and the Jamaican Usain Bolt. However, given that the tortoise, in theory, is found to be at an enormous disadvantage, we will give him a metre head start over his opponent.

X: Sounds fair enough.

Z: Bah, you've got to be joking Y! But this is identical to the posing of the dilemma of Achilles and the tortoise, declared by Zeno of Elea in the 5th century BC! *Y shoots Z a hateful look, forcing her to move to the background. Z moves away.*

Y: As I was saying to you, X, we now have the tortoise placed at the starting-line and a metre behind it, we have Usain Bolt, (also at his starting-line). They're both ready to go. It will be broadcast all over the world. Every television station from every country in the world is filming the race. The official points his starting gun to the sky. *Tension*. Maximum tension. The shot rings out...

Z: BANG!

*Interrupting the story. X and Y glare angrily at Z. Z smiles maliciously. She looks at the audience. She knows she has the power.*

Y: The starting judge fires his shot and, for some inexplicable reason of cosmic magnitude beyond our comprehension, the world stops. Who wins the race?

Z: BANG!

*Without further ado, X and Y are rendered paralyzed in the position of crossing the finishing line after a 100-metre dash. Two statues, facing the audience. It is the photo finish of them crossing the line. Here we have the winner and the eternal second place — victory and defeat. Z recites V:*

Z: a

victory,

the one instant

when the tortoise

beats by a metre

Usain Bolt,

he of the invincible feet.

*On Z's new signal, X and Y break the freeze with complete normality:*

Z: Now stand over here.

X and Y: Here?

Z: Yes, here.

*Change of positions and of direction. Z makes them freeze and unfreeze with a signal. Now, left profile. Maybe, each time one or the other wins. Ditto. Now, backs to the audience. Ditto. Now, right profile. The process is repeated, becoming faster and faster. Faster still! An audio tape starts — excerpts of goal celebrations by radio commentators can be heard. X and Y change from being speed-cyclists to footballers and eventually begin to celebrate the goals. Z joins in with these celebrations. They separate and each one goes their own way. They end up at three different extreme points of the stage, looking at each other. Their positions now resemble those of gunslingers preparing for a duel. Yes, it is a gunfight. We have X on the left, at the back, Z on the right, at the back and Y on the right, at the front. The same tension as in the freeze frame before but this time we see that they are not statues but gunfighters caught up in the tension of a showdown. Z acts as referee. X and Y scrutinize each other to see who draws first. Maximum tension! A digression is introduced: Z leaves her place and recites the following poem:*

Z: and in this swift and villainous world  
how will Billy the Kid manage to stop?  
how will Pat Garret manage to stop?  
how to stop the fastest gunslingers?  
how will they dare to leave the dance?

*Y (Billy) pulls before X (Pat). He aims. There is no way out. X pulls the tomato out of his jersey pocket.*

Y: to outpace the Conscience.  
to draw the colt before the Conscience:  
to shoot. the flash. the smell of gunpowder  
up the nostrils and down the throat, like cocaine.  
and to run. to run and zigzag.  
and to escape victorious, at a gallop  
on the trustiest steed.

like a hole,  
the blustering dust cloud of the escape.  
and to cross the North River safe and sound,  
beyond the border between right and wrong.

*Slow motion. During the text, Billy fires his gun on the cry of “shoot” and kills Pat, who squashes the tomato he held in his hand. Pat dies in slow motion. And as he is dying he takes off the holster and lets it drop to the floor. While this has been happening, Y has reholstered his pistol and run to his “horse” which is the exercise bike. The text finishes here.*

*X moves towards the upside down bicycle. Z picks up the holster and the tomato from the floor. X takes hold of the pedals of the bike and starts to turn them until he attains the same speed as Y. They pedal in unison. Y stops and X carries on at full speed. Y is positioned on the exercise bike, standing up on the pedals with his arms flung out, his chest pushed out and*

his head back — he is a runner crossing the finishing line victoriously, or an indian riding freely on horseback against the wind. He rides joyously as X moves the pedals happily. An emotional connection has been born between X and Y. They are having a great time like this, with the speed, the wind in their faces... They laugh perhaps. Z laughs with them, as she observes the scene. Y surrenders his almost ecstatic position and gets off the bike — Z gives one of the helmets to Y. Y positions himself behind X, who continues turning the pedals happily, riding freely over the meadowland. Y puts the motorcycle helmet on X — we are reminded that the helmets have a small candle attached to the top — he closes the visor. X receives the imposition of the helmet as if he is being locked in a cage. The feeling affects the pedalling, which becomes more agitated. Y lights the little candle on top of the helmet and the title of the text is projected:

## MOTORWAY

Z: Like this.

X: *Distressed*. Like this?

Z: This. *Taking his head*.

Can you see anything? *Messes with X's head*.

X: I don't know mate — see... see, — I wouldn't really call it seeing — everything's blurred.

Y: Well, from now on you're not going to see anything.

You won't see the countryside.

you won't see the irrigation ditches that wind like water snakes into the allotments

nor the houses in the country

nor the tall palm trees of the most beautiful gardens

nor the clusters of vibrant sunflowers

nor the ever autumnal reed-beds

you won't see the rushes at the side of the motorway

you won't see the scenery

you'll sense it only from the corner of your eye,

and it'll only make you angrier.

you'll sense flash images from within a devilish wind

you'll keep one eye on the asphalt surface devoured by the mouth of the vehicle

and fix the other eye on the side window pane

you'll be a chameleon at 100 mph

trying to catch the landscape amidst the whirl

and you won't be able to contemplate the landscape

impossible to experience any landscape in the transience.

*When this fragment of the text finishes, Y leaves X and goes to the centre of the stage. Z brings another helmet with a candle on top and puts it on Y. Z lights the candle. Meanwhile, X continues with the text Motorway:*

X: in passing

in passing

we forever live in passing

over things

forward  
like those that flee  
forward  
by the toboggan of celerity  
consumed by the whirl of the days  
searching for the limits of the outer  
stretching the limits of within.  
Y: speed,  
X: a polyp of ice in the throat  
Y: speed!  
X: and a crab in the intestines  
and outside the resistance of the reeds whipped by velocity  
the persistence of the reeds  
the insistence of the reeds on immobility  
the astonished presence of the reeds  
open-mouthed spectators.

*X finishes the text at the same time as he stops turning the pedals so that the wheel turns by itself. He gets up and moves to the centre where Y is waiting for him. They both look at the audience, helmets on and the candles lit. From the back of the stage, Z starts to make a rhythmic gesture: he keeps his right hand still, about two feet in front of his chest, with his left arm he draws a circle that passes in front of his chest, the back of his left hand making contact with the palm of his right, therefore, producing a clapping sound. This gives us a rhythm. X copies Z's gesture and picks up the rhythm. The movement and sound are reminiscent of the circular movement of a wheel. Y recites THE DIVE over the rhythm produced by Z and X. The rhythm speeds up until the words "getting away", where it stops. Y continues with the text, however. X and Z say the words in bold.*

Y: the din of the underground. the wolf's mouth. the maelström. the vibration. the time zones, piling up on top of each other like pigs on heat. the hissing of valves. breaking the limits. the salvation brought by the weekend — Sunday bliss. **getting away**. heading off in the car towards snowy woods in the north, straight up the motorway. wonderland. the promised dose of calm. the reward. the ski-slope. the snow. the health spa. **learning to live without anxiety**. without foreboding. in the quest for interior equilibrium. the yoga classes. the sauna at the gym. essential oils. the cervical massage of self-esteem. the naturopathic diet. **chill-out**. upon the asphalt the snowflakes fall like feathers, like oblivion: everything wiped out. the four wheels skidding, and suddenly, the dive into the waterless pool.

*Ceremoniously X and Y take off the helmets: it is our tribute to those having lost their lives on the roads. They will leave the helmets on the floor. The candles still burn. Music that reminds us of a certain cycling competition breaks up the scene. This provides the stimulus for Marco Pantani (Y) to run towards the exercise bike. X is his trainer, Z his assistant. Music! X and Z shout out slogans taken from the verses:*



“transiences, instant ablaze  
with dawns and falling, celerity  
of the explosion of the present in the present  
and that’s it. nothing more. that’s the lot.  
beginning and end.”  
“flash of living knows no after,  
nor promised glories nor hopes.”  
“blessed transience that of the  
flight of glow-worms, zigzag, spasm.”  
“the fearful insult of nationalism,  
the sick hideousness of paralysis.”

*X and Z carry out a series of activities around Y — they increase the pressure of the pedals of the exercise bike. They get on behind him. They continue shouting slogans. They give him newspapers for him to put down his jersey. They write his name (Pantani) on the floor. They run at his side spurring him on. They throw water at him. Pantani moves away from them. X prepares an effervescent medicine for him. Pantani rejects it — X drinks it. X throws more water over Y. More slogans. The moment of the confetti arrives. Pantani has continued pedalling, faster and faster. X and Y prepare the flour-cake for the champions birthday — 34 years old. The music fades. They bring the cake singing: “We are the Champions!! We are the Champions!!” Before Y can blow out the candles X and Z end up blowing all the flour in his face — Y looks like a ghost. The light dims and a phantasmagoric hue presides. Pantani regains himself and continues pedalling in slow motion, with effort, standing up on the pedals. Over this image, X reads LATEST NEWS ON MARCO PANTANI. The title is projected onto the screen:*

## **LATEST NEWS ON MARCO PANTANI**

X: The red-carpeted corridor. the finishing line: room 214 of the hotel-residence Le Rose. no flashes this time. a fluorescent light flickers. tottering to the finish. flapping like pennants, the pink curtains. the memory of the “maglia” hugging the torso. the television — any sports channel. the waiter arrives. brings the ham omelette for the champion. desperate squawks of seagulls — the litany of dismay. night falls over the Adriatic. the torpor of the winter beach. the throat burns with saltiness. the victories... and the cocaine transformed into crack, from the first drawer in the bedside table, sing the hymns as only sirens know how.

*Towards the end of the poem, as Y is about to celebrate crossing the finishing line, he takes a tomato out of his jersey pocket. He squashes it right at the end of the text. Moment of silence. Almost dark. When the silence comes to an end X and Y move behind the helmets which have been left at the front of the stage and lie down on the floor, positioning their faces above the flames of the candles, giving their faces the appearance of being illuminated. From this position they recite V2. Z begins:*

Z: a  
victory,  
the one instant  
when the tortoise  
beats by a metre  
Usain Bolt,  
he of the invincible feet.

*Y continues.*

Y: the tortoise gulps down  
the pill  
of satisfaction  
even though it knows  
that the Everything will leave it behind  
again,  
as always,  
so fast,  
so furiously,  
like the air-bound shot of the thunderous judge

*Finishes and blows out his candle. X continues.*

X: a  
gust of wind  
will blow out the flame.  
as always  
the dust cloud  
of defeat  
will envelop  
the stone body  
of a tortoise.

*Finishes and blows out his candle. A haiku is projected at the back:*

## **RITMUS**

a river, life  
is not contained by dams  
only flowing

*The projection of the haiku disappears and is replaced by the title of the fourth chapter:*

## **4. THE MONKEY IN THE ZOO**

*At the back of the stage we see Z in a simian posture. X and Y also start to adopt, bit by bit, apeish habits. They move around the middle of the stage. They pick up the packets of peanuts, eat a few and then, for mirror effect, they throw peanuts to the audience. Starting from a certain moment the projected presence of Snowflake is made visible, with the open, cancerous wound in his chest as he could be seen during the last days of his life. At X's intervention the light drops to total darkness. Finally, only the projected image of Snowflake remains visible.*

Z: Just now as I was in my cage, calm as always, like every other day, looking wherever I might happen to, that a thought occurred to me which has opened my eyes: it emerges that my existence as a monkey is identical to the monkey-existences of all other monkeys. Our lives are all worth the same. No more nor less than the rest of existences, mine, because I am as I am, in spite of everything, the cogs of the Machine will continue to turn. Without a creak. With spherical perfection.

Y: The keeper gives me a sugary sweet at the end of the month. (I have to do something pretty outrageous for him not to give me one!). From the turret, the Guardian Angel constantly observes, rifle at hand. In the zoo everything is under control. We store the black boxes from each day. Everything recorded in images. We have satellites that capture it all. We wrap reality up in images. We can rest assured — somewhere up there the Imperial Eagle is watching over us for our Safety. And over there, inside the forest, there are Wolves and Wild boars that look out for our Well-being. We've never seen their faces and we blindly trust in them.

X: The wise have told us that we have a glorious past, a great History, because we monkeys have a History. They have told us that we come from the Reconquered Land, from the jungle where one lived in Harmony and absolute Liberty. They have recounted wonders of King Kong, the conqueror. They have spoken to us of great deeds, of the expansion of the ancient empire over the sea, of fires and canticles, of ritual sacrifices. They have spoken of the big Birds, gone today; of the extinct Panthers that strode through the silence. We've heard it said that all the prairies of the North, where the wild, thoroughbred Horses once ran, have been blackened. They say that the Earth beat like a drum under the roar of their galloping hooves. And that they vanquished over wind and rain, thunder and lightning! Hawks, Sharks, Lions, Dragons... where are you?

Z: This is what I was just thinking. My existence devoured by the System. What can I do about my impoverished existence? For the moment, nothing more than keep the faith of each day:

Supermarket products  
Neon lights of happiness  
Electrical appliances  
Consumer paradises  
Television channels  
Saint Madonna  
Saint Michael Jackson  
Saint Ovidi Montllor  
Saint Lionel Messi  
The construction market  
Investment stability  
The constant growth of the GDP  
Mortgage prices  
The Euribor, Dow Jones, the Nikkei 225  
The value of the euro  
The price of a barrel of oil  
American industry

Democrats and republicans  
The wars of the Third World  
Tropical storms with names of people.  
Y: And here we have neither moss nor bamboo.  
X: It appears to be too late. Night has already fallen over the zoo.  
*The image of Snowflake disappears and is replaced by the words*

**THE END**