

# How to Stay Occupied

I' m with you  
Bank of Ideas  
08/12/2012

# I' M WITH YOU FRIENDS, WE NEED YOUR HELP

Johanna Linsley

PROMPT

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In the name of SPEED and URGENCY, we are asking you to contribute a few sentences to us. We invite your poetic, u/dys-topic, wild, hilarious, tragic and utterly practical responses to one or more of the following questions:

1. What are your demands?
2. Where should we live?
3. How is 'it' distributed?
4. Who calls the shots?
5. When do we stop?

**1**

1. When do we stop?
2. When do we stop arming ourselves for the worst?
3. When do we stop preparing for battle?
4. When do we stop feeling alone?
5. When do we stop remembering?
6. When do we stop waiting for the backdoor to open, and for you to walk through it, heavy footed?
7. When do we stop waking up to that day, 4 am I think, and that phone call, and knowing it was going to be up to us?
8. When do we stop pressing the gas pedal? It will only go so far as the floor, really.
9. When do we stop preparing for another disaster?
10. When do we stop holding hands?
11. When do we stop wanting to be kissed?
12. When do we stop swimming in ice blue eyes?
13. When do we stop fearing the worst?
14. When do we stop loving ourselves?
15. When do we stop listening to the hateful voices?
16. When do we stop loving?
17. When do we stop picking up the rock, in our glass houses?
18. When do we stop untying our shoes?
19. When do we stop unfettering ourselves?
20. When do we stop drinking enough water?
21. When do we stop playing yahtzee there in the King ' s summer cottage, late in the evening, a too-warm fire burning to keep the mosquitoes away?
22. When do we stop dangling our toes off the dock? Careful, she says, they ' re snapping turtles.
23. When do we stop hating people for their decisions?
24. When do we stop wishing it away?
25. When do we stop driving back down meadow road at 17, listening to Hole and crying our eyes out about people we ' ll have forgotten about when we ' re 30? But not that driving and not that 17 and not that Hole - or even that crying?
26. When do we stop baking lemon cake - the kind you really like?
27. When do we stop calling our grandmothers, like good grandchildren?
28. When do we stop feeling indebted?
29. When do we stop paying back our student loans?
30. When do we stop leaving the bathroom light on?
31. When do we stop filing taxes?
32. When do we stop paying taxes? Do I have to pay taxes here? I ' m still confused about this.
33. When do we stop wishing we were more religious?
34. When do we stop thinking we aren ' t religious?
35. When do we stop feeling apolitical?

## R. Justin Hunt

When do we stop?  
Something for  
souls already  
occupied

36. When do we stop feeling political?
37. When do we stop agreeing with those early feminists that feeling is political?
38. When do we stop finding power in secret struggles?
39. When do we stop asking why?
40. When do we stop mixing the bread dough? It gets so flat the more you mix.
41. When do we stop making things so much harder?
42. When do we stop wanting?
43. When do we stop wanting you back?
44. When do we stop dreaming you 're still right there?
45. When do we stop performing?
46. When do we stop clapping at the end of dance performances, especially at Sadler 's Wells?
47. When do we stop using performance as a means for therapy?
48. When do we stop going to therapy?
49. When do we stop analysing everything?
50. When do we stop giving a shit?
51. When do we stop neglecting to top up our oyster card on cold nights in East London, drunk and horny and trying to impress the guy from the bar?
52. When do we stop waking up too early because we can 't sleep?
53. When do we stop wishing they would write us back?
54. When do we stop thinking geminis are a good sign to date?
55. When do we stop dating? It 's really all a lot of expensive bullshit.
56. When do we stop worrying about money?
57. When do we stop needing money?
58. When do we stop needing?
59. When do you stop needing him to have known that you weren 't happy, but you would be?
60. When do we stop having to hear the truth from a third party?
61. When do we stop crying alone because it 's too painful to cry in front of others?
62. When do we stop screaming alone, so that we might be more loudly heard?
63. When do we stop covering for other?
64. When do we stop insisting that we had no idea that our sister was married for a year over chicken, mashed potatoes and peas?
65. When do we stop covering up our mistakes?
66. When do we stop thinking it wasn 't a mistake?
67. When do we stop wishing it were?
68. When do we stop loving something that is gone?
69. When do we stop going away for fear of loving?
70. When do we stop taking a stand?
71. When do we stop standing still?
72. When do we stop thinking that what has happened so far can 't help us move forward?
73. When do we stop thinking reflection isn 't also a step in the right direction?
74. When do we stop ourselves?
75. When do we stop?

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When do we stop?  
Something for  
souls already  
occupied



# Arkem

Occupy your nature

# Arkem

Occupy your nature



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# Mary Paterson

## Getting to Know You

### Instructions

1. A, B and C are separate speakers.
2. Stand in a row, facing the audience.
3. Shout each question like a rallying cry.
4. Pause at the empty lines.
5. Start at a comfortable pace, then speed up to make sure you fit it all in within three minutes.

A	Are you here?
B	Are you legal?
C	Are we in this together?
A	What is the difference between an animal and a bird?
B	What is the longest time you have spent watching a bird of prey hunt a creature on the ground?
C	What is keeping you awake?
A	Are you asking for it?
B	Are you asking for it now?
A	What is the difference between the sound of birdsong and the sound of a car alarm?
B	Do you own a mirror?
C	Can you be more specific?
A	Do you like to lie?
B	What are you sharing?
C	Do you take photographs of yourself on your phone?
A	Are you now or have you ever been trending on Twitter?
B	Is this an ambition of yours?
C	What do I have to do to make you die happy?
A	Who is looking after your most elderly relative?
B	Are you being followed?
C	Are you in the public interest?
B	Are you hungry?
A	Are you ready?
B	Is this how you keep up with things?
A	Is this what you wanted?

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B	Is this what you asked for?
C	Are you asking for it now?
A	Have you forgotten something recently?
A	Do you like to stand too close to people on purpose?
B	Do you prefer conversation, fashion or physical comfort?
C	Can you bear the sound of other people breathing?
A	Do you think it is warmer in cities?
B	If you saw me crying on public transport, would you offer to help?
C	How many people do you need to make you feel anonymous?
A	What is keeping you?
B	What is keeping you here?
A	Are you asking for it?
B	Are you asking for it now?
A	What is the difference between a list and a manifesto?
B	What is the difference between my priorities and your material comfort?
C	What is the difference between privilege and capacity?
A	What is the point of it all?
B	Do you wear a name badge?
C	Do you work for the man?
A	Are you on a committee?
B	Would you like to know my nickname?
C	Do you announce things to strangers?
A	Do you have sympathy for the rioters?
B	How much money do you owe?
C	What are you losing hold of?

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**7**



A	Have you been inside a prison?
B	Do you feel sorry for the Germans?
C	Do you think it is time to move to Australia?
A	Are you really from here?
B	Are you jealous of someone?
C	What is brand new?
A	What is easy to assimilate?
B	What is child' s play?
A	Is this what we asked for?
B	Are we asking for it now?
C	Are we asking for it?
A	What is the first thing you lost?
B	What would you give me if I gave it back it to you?
C	What would you give me if I gave it back to you used, photographed and wearing someone else' s name badge?
A	Do you really think you lost it, or do you think somebody took it away?
B	Do you think somebody took it away for your own good?
C	Do you think somebody was acting in your own best interests?
A	What are you interested in now?
B	Would you die for your beliefs?
C	Would you die happy?
A	Would it help if I wasn' t here?
B	Is there something I can help you with?
C	Do you clear your browsing history?
A	Is this what we asked for?
B	Are we asking for it now?

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C	Are we asking for it?
A	Do you smoke?
B	Are you familiar with the phrase, 'No smoke without fire' ?
C	Are you a smoker?
A	Is this acceptable?
B	Is this funny to you?
C	Would you prefer to be poor or elderly?
A	Do you like to dance?
B	Do you believe that children are the future?
C	Would you prefer to be here, there or everywhere?
A	Do you feel close to me?
A	Are you worth it?
B	How many people do you know, who are one of us?
A	Is this what you wanted?
B	Is this really what you wanted?
C	Is this everything that you wanted?
A	What is dignified about silence?
B	Do you have a nectar card?
C	Is this inevitable?
A	How often do you feel lonely?
B	Have you tasted discomfort?
C	Have you tasted rage?
A	What is the difference?
A	Is this everything that we wanted?

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B	Is this everything that we asked for?
C	Are we asking for it all, right now?
A	Have you been hoarding canned food?
B	Do you plan to have any more children?
C	Are you proud of your heritage?
A	Can I share your promises?
B	Can I share your supplies?
C	What are you making up?
A	What are you making up for?
B	What is keeping you here?
A	Do you have an idea?
B	Do you have any idea?
A	Is it my idea?
B	Is this my idea?
C	Is this public enough for you?
A	Do you think I am listening?
B	Have you lost something recently?
C	Have you forgotten something in the last 5 days?
A	Do you remember the first time?
B	Do you remember the difference?
C	Do you feel any better?
A	Do you have something to say?
A	Are we asking for it?
B	Are we asking for it now?
C	Are we asking for it?
A	Are we asking for it now?

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## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This piece is in complete silence, framed by a statement which will start and finish the piece.

2. People should turn to the person sitting next to them and establish eye contact with them - and them alone. The room should be still. The eye contact and the silence should last for 3 minutes and should not be broken. When finishing, the two people should make one gesture to one another (depending on what has passed, what the atmosphere is etc).

3. Read: This is stated by Doreen Massey at a lecture on The Artist As Citizen:

"It's not a matter of whether you belong to a PLACE, but if a place belongs to YOU."

4. The piece ends with the same line spoken.

5. A single gesture between two.

END.

# Caroline Smith

# 12

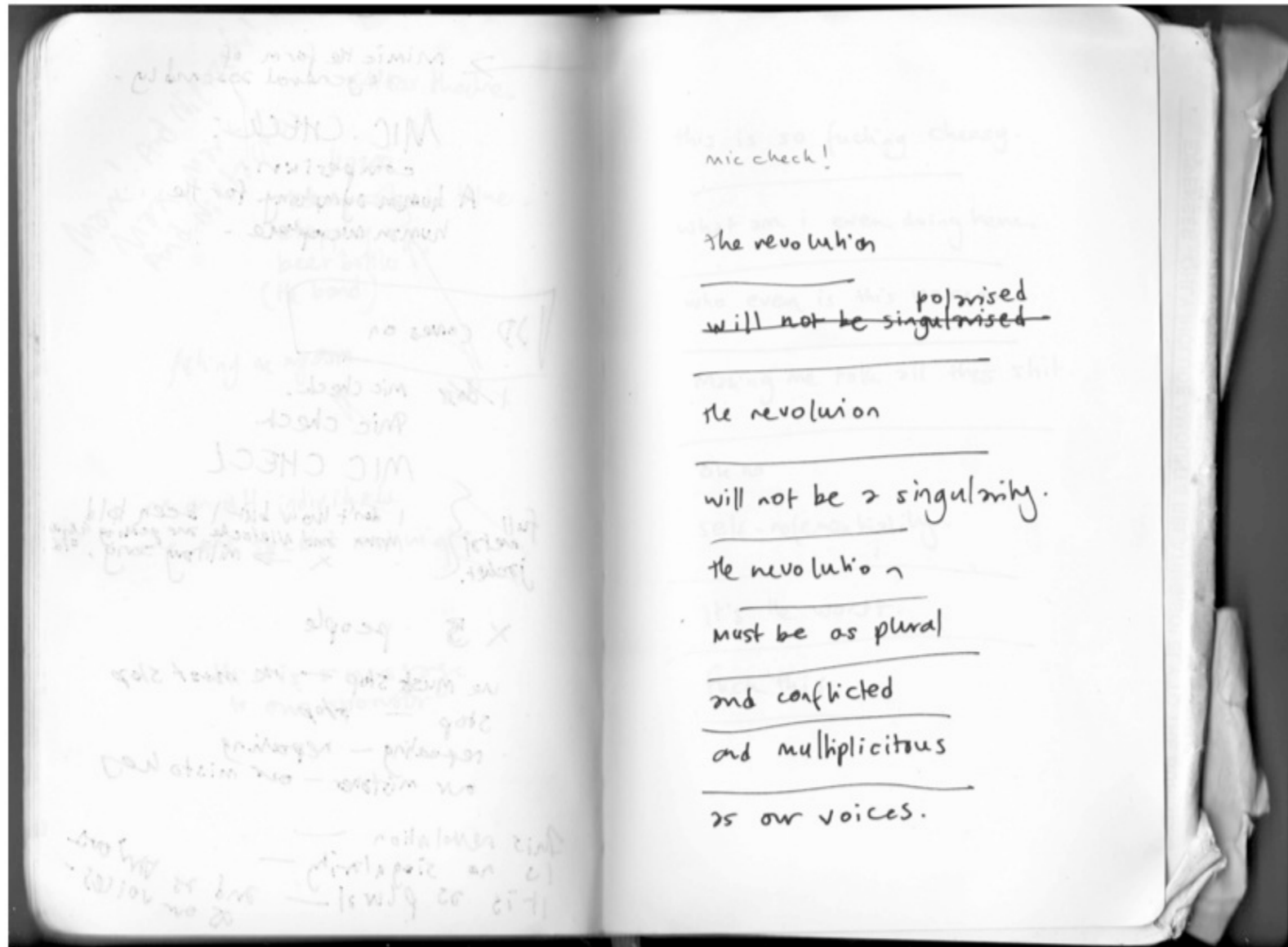
# Caroline Smith



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# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone



# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone

### PART ONE

SPEAKER appears before the gathered crowd, carrying a wooden spoon.

SPEAKER (with the spoon close to their lips, very soft; makes a noise like the clearing of the throat). Mic Check.

CROWD shift about a bit, not sure when it will start.

SPEAKER (still talking into the spoon, now audibly) Mic Check.

CROWD: Mic Check.

SPEAKER (louder) Mic Check!

CROWD: Mic Check!

SPEAKER (roaring into the spoon) MIC CHECK!

CROWD: MIC CHECK!



SPEAKER: The revolution

SPEAKER: Will not be polarised.

SPEAKER: The revolution

SPEAKER: Will not be a singularity.

SPEAKER: The revolution

SPEAKER: Will be as plural

SPEAKER: And conflicted!

SPEAKER: And multiplicitous!

SPEAKER: As our voices.

(a pause.)

SPEAKER: This is so fucking cheesy.

SPEAKER: What am I doing here.

SPEAKER: Who even is this person

SPEAKER: Making me talk

SPEAKER: All this shit. .

SPEAKER: Oh, no.

SPEAKER: Self-referentiality.

SPEAKER: It' s the worst.

SPEAKER: Oh fuck it.

CROWD: The revolution

CROWD: Will not be polarised.

CROWD: The revolution

CROWD: Will not be a singularity.

CROWD: The revolution

CROWD: Will be as plural

CROWD: And conflicted!

CROWD: And multiplicitous!

CROWD: As our voices.

CROWD: This is so fucking cheesy.

CROWD: What am I doing here.

CROWD: Who even is this person

CROWD: Making me talk

CROWD: All this shit.

CROWD: Oh, no.

CROWD: Self-referentiality.

CROWD: It' s the worst.

CROWD: Oh fuck it.

# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone

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## PART TWO

SPEAKER puts down the wooden spoon and divides the CROWD into four parts. SPEAKERS then nominates four CHOREGI.

CHOREGUS 1 (BASS) is instructed to lead their chorus in [faking] an orgasm.

CHOREGUS 2 (TENOR) is instructed to lead in the following:

BASS: We must stop

CHOIR: We must stop

BASS: Stop!

CHOIR: Stop!

BASS: Repeating

CHOIR: Repeating

BASS: Repeating our mistakes.

CHOIR: Repeating our mistakes.

CHOREGUS 3 (ALTO) is instructed to lead in the following:

ALTO: Marx! And Nietzsche! Marx, Marx/ and Nietzsche!

CHOIR: Marx! And Nietzsche! Marx, Marx/ and Nietzsche!

ALTO: Marx! And Nietzsche! Marx, Marx/ and Nietzsche!

CHOIR: Marx! And Nietzsche! Marx, Marx/ and Nietzsche!

ALTO: And Negri! And Žižek!

CHOIR: And Negri! And Žižek!

ALTO: And Negri! And Žižek!

CHOIR: And Negri! And Žižek!

ALTO: And Tiq-Tiq-Tiquuuun! (drawn out at the end: like “tic-tic-tic-boom” ).

CHOIR: And Tiq-Tiq-Tiquuuun!

# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone

CHOREGUS 4 (SOPRANO) is instructed to gather his choir into a circle and lead them in the following [the second line is spoken (led) by each member of the circle in turn].

SOPRANO: We are all individuals!

CHOIR: We are all individuals!

CHORISTER 1: I am special and unique.

CHOIR: I am special and unique.

SOPRANO: We are all individuals!

CHOIR: We are all individuals!

CHORISTER 2: I am special and unique.

CHOIR: I am special and unique.

And so on, around the circle.

The SPEAKER may lead the four parts in a rehearsal run before counting all parts in, one by one, and then in chorus, using the wooden spoon as a baton. The SPEAKER may keep time by banging the wooden spoon against the nearest hollow thing, or may instead choose to play Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" on the kazoo, to represent the Modern Constitution and the hopes of our forefathers. The piece should continue for a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of fifteen; duration can be determined organically by the choir, or enforced by the SPEAKER.

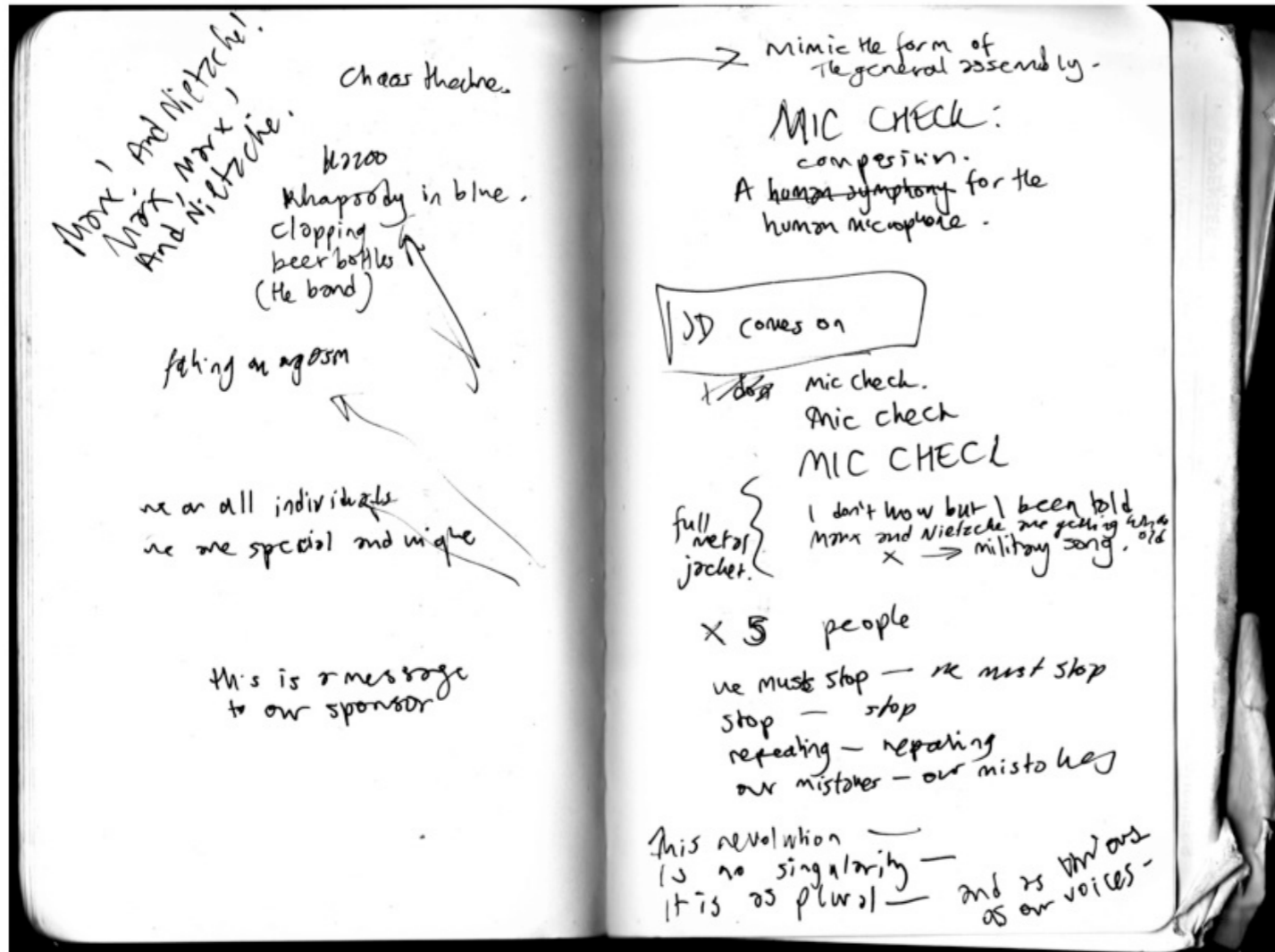
Composition For the Human Microphone has been written for maximum atonality, arrhythmia, chaos and difference. There may or may not be a moment at which the voices come together in some form of harmony; if this doesn't happen, however, that's okay and even to be expected since participatory democracy is a work in progress. The AUTHOR asserts no authority over this piece, although the SPEAKER's authority is to be respected at all times throughout, unless rightfully challenged under the No-Gods-No-Masters Clause. Until then: Viva la RevoluÇion.

# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone

# Jesse Darling

## Composition for the Human Microphone



[JD, London, 2012.]

8 December 2011, London

I woke up in a new bed, well  
I laid in luxuriously  
I was warm and I was comfortable and I was enjoying the light  
I was daydreaming  
But I was annoyed at myself  
Because last night I couldn't do what I'd set out to do that evening  
I couldn't bring myself to  
Make the move that I so wanted to make  
The move that seemed so easy in dreams but so impossible in confrontation  
Because I was somehow, somewhere, irrationally  
Fearful

Fearful of rejection (which logically I'm quite sure would not have come)  
Fearful of putting myself on the edge, making myself vulnerable and responsible and risking comfort  
I despise this fear, it is poison  
And rationally, existentially  
I know that audacity in fact very rarely brings about rejection  
And that being comfortable, secure, and acceptable is not what I want - in theory  
For surely if audacity could bring about rejection, in any form  
Then it is a pill worth swallowing  
For it can only help

Whereas fear, the opposite of audacity - or **boldness** as we may like to call it  
Is like being rejected without even the attempt!  
Automatic-reject!

So to choose fear over audacity  
Because there is less chance of overt rejection  
Is like choosing rejection straight up  
Choosing rejection before even permitting the attempt  
Choosing rejection before even attempting to move

I know all this! And yet ... the fear is there  
So how do we confront?  
How do we move?  
We must move!

I propose the attempt itself as the kernel of audacious and bold life  
We know we must move  
We must move in all directions  
In any direction  
We must only ensure that we are not deluding ourselves that rejection isn't worth the risk

So don't let me stand on the safe side  
The side where my sensible, well-trained mind is very comfortable, actually  
The side that prevents us from moving

The side where there are no attempts, just pre-empt

# Eleanor Weber

20

25 April 2011, London

I am bleeding on the inside  
For this world

Which gives me everything  
And yet  
Doesn't let me have it  
Really

Sometimes this abstract burden  
Of barbed wire and cruel determinism  
Of arbitrary rulings  
Upon our lives  
Makes my heart writhe and pound  
Within the chest I thought was mine  
But which, I have learnt, has nothing to do with me  
And everything with territory and skin

They tell me I'm lucky to have them  
My pay-off is security and wealth  
But only if I respect their game  
If I don't, well, *tant pis!*  
It's majority rules in this world, baby  
Or was that minority wins?

Doesn't anyone ever think that  
Without wealth there would be no poverty?  
Without security there would be no danger?

You've got it mixed up, girl!  
They say  
*Girl*  
But oh no  
They forget that neither is possible  
When the soul is oppressed  
By fear and hate and  
Me versus you  
Us versus them

Same bullshit, really

Yet my heart still pounds inside a skeleton  
That will one day -  
Indiscriminately -  
Be rotten  
In this Earth  
The very same Earth  
They told me wasn't for walking on  
But ruling on

I choose not to believe!  
But bleed, anyway

# Eleanor Weber

# 21

**<3**

**Eleanor Weber**

**mi**

**'n'**

**u**

**t'es**

**UBS**

**22**

I saw pictures of them dressing, all breathing,  
all bare in the fires, the banks, the parlours,  
the coding heat, the topic shakes, slacks,  
looming ill over necks & ties, in my coat  
made of feelings, in the semi-dark  
of your smile I run away from naming.

The parlour has collapsed, is filling with snow,  
mother is by the bureau, my schoolgirl god  
in a coat made for crying, lips like thick  
flames & she places her strange head upon  
my chest & begs to bend to each amber flag,  
hands about her ears in a clement gesture.

We fasten ourselves up like girls in parlours,  
Shun sofa secrets, deaf words, these histories:  
Domestic relics, my baby gods, now dead—  
the sensation of it is gelatinous,  
piles of cold carpet everywhere underfoot,  
like snow – the room is filling with snow—

mother is by the door, & it is hard  
to see her through the smoke, a sweet-smelling  
smog pooled around us & we are melting,

# Sophie Robinson

Parlour  
/  
a Protest  
a Poem

23



we're like honey – this is for you – I'm young &  
I know nothing – I occupy all of your time.  
I like having art poured into me wide-eyed.

Mother's by the mantle, it's too dark to see,  
I'm freshened by hot bile, this nuance  
of your love's long guts glued onto me.  
I like having money poured into me  
with eyes closed or rolled inwards  
in prayer, & that way I'm your trinketry.

Soft fists tumble onto me like snowflakes:  
this is the louse of love, this is its bite.  
I am now covered in a brotherly blue,  
the ultramarine of fresh men – sticky, thick.  
Snow piles in each tidy corner. Elsewhere  
there are fires. Mother has left the room.

The police are on their way. It is too bright  
to see. A series of arms appear  
to wrap around each other in blind  
solidarity. This is for anyone.  
A Molotov cocktail sings. This is not love.

This is for no thing—

# Sophie Robinson

Parlour  
/  
a Protest  
a Poem

24

## Season Butler



25

# Season Butler

“An eating princess cannot talk.”<sup>1</sup>

It’s an old story. The more we believe in something, the more we allow ourselves to be convinced by it, the bigger it gets and the more powerful it becomes. The longer dead the author, the more difficult it is to question the story’s veracity. As with monsters, so with princesses.

Purity is the defining trait for princesses. Purity is white.

There is a contemporary trend towards The Sassy Princess, the one who stands up to her father, speaks her mind, runs away and even chooses her own husband. But she still tends to marry, and tends to marry a man, and in the end she seems pacified.

“It is a mistake to confuse bad behaviour with personality.”<sup>2</sup>

Princesses seldom narrate. Seeing a princess engaged in the act of narration means one of two things: that progress has been made, or that you have an impostor in your midst. When we do hear the princess speak, especially this new Sassy Princess, we often find, ironically, that she’s from America, a country with no ostensible monarchy and no history of one. But her accent is vaguely affected, disembodied, positioned in class rather than place.

“It only takes one princess to make a party.”<sup>3</sup>

In storybooks, the princess never takes a role in legislation, visits parliament or issues decrees. She is the delicate, decorative facade that distracts from class conflict. She is the false feminisation of the impotent phallus of the patriarchy. Her heaving virgin bosoms cannot feed a nation.

It is vulgar for a princess to pose for playing cards.

Because the princess is pure, we do not see that the system is corrupt. Because she is beautiful, we do not see that her existence is made possible by cruelty. Because she is slim, we cannot see that she is starving.

As we enter the festive season, consider that the word tradition may be defined as something we know is fucked up and do anyway.

“A talking princess doesn’t cry.”<sup>4</sup>

That’s all I have to say.

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1 Prussian proverb in Lechermeier, P. (2010). *The Secret Lives of Princesses*. London: Sterling.

2 Ibid. Scottish proverb.

3 Ibid. Greek proverb.

4 Ibid. Yiddish proverb.

## Season Butler

