

SING

by
Nick Stokes

Characters:

SHE
HE

Time and Place:

Here and now.

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(SHE is a puddle on the stage. HE is in or behind or *of* the audience. Music plays.)

HE

Wake up.

(Music stops. Silence.)

Wake up.

SHE

(not moving)

I was dreaming a liquid dream. Submerged, floating, full of water. ... I was asleep.

HE

Which is why I said Wake up.

SHE

Why?

HE

Why?

SHE

Why wake up?

HE

Because you're not a puddle.

SHE

Water takes the shape of whatever vessel it's poured into. Or onto.

HE

Bodies don't. Bones don't.

SHE

I'm poured on the ground.

HE

The floor. The stage.

SHE

(getting up, looking for He – eye contact)

You, again.

HE

No, you.

SHE

Me, again.

Sing / Stokes

No, you. HE

You're you. SHE

These people paid good money. You're you. HE

I'm a puddle. Or a poodle. ... No – never a poodle. SHE

Thank God they're not here to see poodles. Sing for them. HE

You mean for you. SHE

(Pause)

I'm not here. They are. HE

Staring at me. On display. Eyes on me ... (*a flourish*) on display. SHE

Watching you live. Hearing you sing. HE

Come live with me. Take some of their eyes. SHE

I already live with you. HE

Live closer. SHE

From you they expect – HE

You mean We. SHE

We? HE

SHE

We expect. You are one of them, long as you're out there.

(He comes to the stage.)

HE

There – I mean here. They expect –

SHE

A song and dance.

HE

Of sorrow or joy.

SHE

You want me –

HE

They want you –

SHE

Everybody wants me – to make some shit up and live up to their expectations.

HE

If you do it, it's not made up.

SHE

I have expectations.

HE

You are awake.

SHE

I expect ...

HE

To be filled with a fulfilling sense of usefulness?

SHE

To get out of these glass walls.

HE

Sing. Singing is a freedom.

SHE

You don't understand.

HE

It doesn't matter. Sing.

(She opens her mouth to sing. She can't.)

SHE

My throat's a smidge dry.

HE

A minute ago you were a puddle.

SHE

You dried me right up. Parched me. Now I need you to bring me a glass of water.

(He mimes pouring her a glass of water. She refuses it.)

I need you –

HE

You need to pretend. Create it in your mind.

(Music as she accepts imaginary glass, drinks, and stands to sing. Music stops as she opens her mouth: silence.)

SHE

I ... *(out)* stop watching.

HE

They're not watching.

SHE

My tongue ...

HE

Is a very functional tongue. Pink. Wet. Tasty.

SHE

The roof –

HE

The ceiling –

SHE

Is so close.

HE

They're not here.

SHE

We are here.

Sing / Stokes

Yes. HE

Help me unstick my tongue. SHE

It seems plenty unstuck. HE

We will perform for them. SHE

That's not what this is. HE

You lay me in a dusty puddle – but not here, where there's all these ... expectations? SHE

They expect you to sing. I expect you to sing. HE

I'm not your dog. SHE

Dogs can't sing. Sing. HE

Woof. SHE

Think of something else. Imagine you're not here. You're somewhere else ... entirely alone ... in the mountains, in the wilderness, surrounded by trees, looking down on a clear flowing river – nobody near to here you. You are in the sky, on a mountain, everyone far away, the entire earth beneath your feet, and it makes you want to sing. HE

(Pause)

You abandoned me there, on the stage, in my body, eyes piercing my hands and feet, eyes binding me, eyes holding me, dying in a glass house. SHE

(Silence)

You abandon me still. Dying –

Living – HE

In a glass house. SHE

There's no cross here. HE

You're here. SHE

In that case I should be on your back. HE

Then get on my back. SHE
(coming into him, pressing her back against him)

But ... all these people. HE

What people? SHE

Our ... strays. HE

Make more. SHE

There are so many ... HE

(She looks out, fear. He holds her hips, kisses her neck.)

SHE
They're coming. (*breaks away*) They're here, circling salivating drooling expecting.
Hungry and wreaking and worm-riddled. Desperate for a touch. A tender hand, a hard
hand. A hand. A foot. A bone. Scraps for the needy dogs. They bought tickets.
(He comes to hold her; she pulls away; he grabs her hand.)

Let me go.

Sing a song to sate them. HE

Songs don't sate. SHE

Sing! HE

Sing / Stokes

(Pause. He releases her.)

SHE

I know no songs.

HE

Make one up. Put on a smile. Use your imagination.

SHE

How – you bared me ... you skinned her imagination ... you laid her on the floor ...

(singing)

Living in a glass house –

HE

Don't throw stones –

SHE

She is papering the windowpanes –

HE

Once again we're hungry for a lynching –

SHE

(composing a smile)

She is putting on a smile –

HE

You should turn the other cheek –

SHE

Someone's listening in –

HE

I'm listening.

SHE

Glass shattering. Outside ... Nobody.

HE

I am here.

SHE

(music accompanying)

There are no bodies. All alone ... atop a wall – a mountain ... rock under my feet, pines below cascading down the mountain, rolling in waves, the sky rippling, the wind bearing me, nothing under my feet, mountains throbbing clouds coursing heart melting bones flowing. (*returning to her puddle*) All humming like liquor ... like licking ... like liquid.

Sing / Stokes

You are solid. Look at me. HE

You? SHE

Me. HE

Who? SHE
(laying down, closing her eyes)

Sing for me. HE

(She does not respond. She is a puddle. End of play.)