

So: now I come to speak. At last. I will tell you all I know. I was deceived to think I could not do this. I have the powers; I take them here. I have the right. I have the means. My words may be poor, but they will have to do.

What words do I have? Where do they come from? How is it that I speak?

There will be a time for me to think of these things, but right now I have to tell you all that I may of me—of me from when I lay on my father's knees and held up my hand, touching his face, which he had bended down over me. That look in his eyes....My father.

Well, I have done what I could. And I believe, by now, I have done all that I could. That's the reason there's this difference in me now, that I may speak my thoughts as I wish. Still, it's hard. I see that face of his. What would he wish me to do?

That face. What does it say? There may be some will tell me I cannot remember from being so little, and they may be right. Some of these may be false remembrances, things my father would say to me, and say again, time upon time, as was his way, so that I think I remember them. I must do all I may to find from them what is truly mine, now that I have made up my mind to speak to you like this.

There are so many of these things. It's as if I held a glass in my hand and could see them all, there in the glass, the things I remember, remembrances all tumbled one upon another, some before they should be, some late, all out of time—the sun over the cold green mountain, a scholar with a hard look in his eyes, my father shaking as he rose to give a speech, my brother with flowers in his hand and he would not say what for, a lost sandal, a music lesson—and it's up to me to be patient and lay them down the right way.

There are things, as well, I do not see, things that come to me as speech, and some as music. A call.

'O, please come now! Now!'

Is this my father? No.

'O, how long must I be down here without you?'

I see the young me, up the cold green mountain, down on the grass, one hand on—what is it?—some little herb. And still that call. She cannot let me be.

'O, come now! Right away! You should be here with me!'

I lay still. It's as if I was held by what was in my hand, by what my hand was touching. It's as if I had been locked there, locked to the mountain, with my eyes quite still, on my hand and the herb in the grass. And all the powers in hell could not have made me go from there.

But I, such a little nothing as I was, I could make me go—did make me go.

'O, now! Do you—?'

She—this young me—I see look up, but not at these words. My arm rises to keep my eyes from the sun. I see it. This is indeed as it was. I remember. An arm rises to the sun, a head from what thoughts it had, two knees from the grass. There was that call, but it seemed to come from a long way away, whilst in my head was another call, no words this time—the call of my thoughts. What should I do? Which path should I take? This way, that way?

'O, please, you cannot go away by yourself!'

I look at me now as I was then. This is like being one of my own observers, but with no powers over what is observed. It all must go as it does. All I may do is see what this little I will do. I look in the glass to do so: I raised my head. My hand let go the herb. I have gone, down the mountain. I have gone. What was I then? Two? Two up the mountain, two as this little I goes down the mountain with a good grace, as she answers the call that had come?

Let time be turned from here. Let these little treads I make down the mountain go up again, restore that right hand to the herb it held, that head to the patient perusal it made. Let little I be there again in the grass, and from here go on and on to before all this, to where she—I—had come from. This is it. Let me go right away, now, whilst it is still not late, to before all this—to before the mountain and the unbraced out-doors and the little me in it all, with my hand touching the herb and my head in the



heavens, to before the time these eyes of mine look up, as I see them look up now, to before that last call to come in.

'O, that's right! Come here. Down to me. See what I have for you.'

Do not fear: that's what I would say to this little me now. The time will come when you do not have to go down there, when you do not have to do what she will ask, when you may please yourself.

This is it, now, that time. It's come. So let's go on to before, all the way to the end of my memory, to what was for me Day One. Let's come to that day she bore me, the day I draw breath.

It's like this. It is morning. The sun is pale; it's a cold morning.

There she is, on the bed. She does not look at the window, to the sun, but away, to the door, as if in expectation that some one would come in. I see all this, for some reason, as if from by the window.

There's another one there. Right. My father. The pale morning sun stole from the window over the bed and over the bed clothes, and now it falls in my memory on them: she on the bed, my father, and no doubt another they would have had there to be a help.

He—my father—could never keep still. He comes and goes from one end of the chamber to the other—one way, then the other, his eyes down. And she, she does not look at him but still at the door, never but at the door. They do not speak. There is no more than this: his treads on the stone, up and down. But let all this go, for how could I remember this day? How could I remember a time when I was not?

I have to think more before I go on like this. False memory may speak, I find, as well as true. I have to know the difference. And I have to see to it that I do not make things up. It's hard. Indeed, it may well seem hard for all of us, to know what it is that we truly know—and what it is that we know to be true. Another difference, it may be. There is more in my mind than I know. I must look hard at what comes to me, cast away the grass and keep the flowers.

I know I have it in me to say things that are not so and have never been so, but that I wish had been so. There are, as well, things in my head that I cannot remember and never will remember. They are not in my memory; they are in me.

But now and again words come to me as if it rained words in my head—words given me by some other, as if I had no hand in what I say, as if all I may do is give speech, let the words come and come, and go on and on, and whilst they go on I cannot say what I would truly wish to say. I may do nothing, held still by my own words—if they are my own. My words go on, but I cannot speak.

I have to make it so that my face cannot speak without my mind, that my words do not take form other than as I wish. I will do so. Mark my words.

So on with it. That mountain: it was a green sandal loosed from the heels of heaven.

I remember it well. My hand touching that herb. A shirt, held out of a window, shaking in the morning sun. The way the maid's head was raised as if to sing, but then she goes on with the sewing. And over all the cold green mountain.

Each morning the sun would come up over the mountain, and we would pray, my father and I, and then with my brother as well, pray for a good day, and pray at the end of the day for a good night.

This was when she had gone. She left when I was little, but that's one of the things I'll come to. If things still come out of my jangled memory here and there before they should, that could be for woe, but then again it could be for joy—if not for the two, hand in hand. But I will do all I may to have things right from here on.

The day I have to find in my memory now is another day, and a day of joy this one was, the day when I was given my brother.

This is something I do indeed remember—and this is where that false memory comes from, of the one on the bed, and the pale morning sun, and the bed clothes, and the head turned away, and my father as he made his way up and down.

I would have been still little when she bore him, but more than I was in that other memory, of being up the mountain. As I remember, hard as this may be to believe, I was there, there on the bed, my little hand touching that face. She and I. (This is not something I like to remember at all. That means it must be true.)



And no, my father was not there. There must have been other treads of his that go on in my mind.

My father was not with us for some reason. It could be that he had to be with His Majesty that morning, for—and no doubt it would have been better to say this before—he was one of the king's right-hand men. He was at the king's call, day and night. He is now, he is still. Do this, do that.

But no, it's not quite like that. My father is the king's shoulder: that's how it is. The two of them know each other so well that my father does not have to think what the king will say. Indeed, he could almost speak for the king, and the day may come when he will have to, if the king's not better before long.

So it was with the king as was, at the time I now speak of, that my father was held in honour and had to go all over for him. Then we, my brother and I, would have to do without him whilst he was away. She, at such a time, was the one we had to go to.

But again I go on before I should. I'll come to all this, of my father, and the counsel he would give the king—the king as was and the king we have now. This will all come out at the right time. As for now, there we are, on the bed in the pale morning: she and me. That's what I remember. That's how it was.

No, that's still not right, cannot be. There was another. I have it. The maid. The maid's here with us as well, by the bed. How could I not remember that the maid was there? And then there he was: my brother. The maid took him up by the heels. I see this. To me he had a puffed-up look—'bonny', the maid would say. He sucked in one breath, and with that my love, little as I was. He did not weep, not at all, but let out something like a little moan, as if—so it seemed to me—he could say 'O'. And he turned his eyes to look at me.

So now there are two of us. That's good. It was good not to be by yourself with such a one as she was. We had each other now. My brother and I had each other.

The maid held him—my brother—close with one hand before she had to lay him down on the bed. There I could look and look at him. Then she took him away again, to redeliver him to us in a long shirt (the one they

would christen him in). Now he was right by me. I remember a little ankle, remember touching a little ankle. I remember touching his face with my tongue.

He was still. All was still. All is still.

And out of that still morning I seem to remember how the maid would sing to us. Was it then? Most of the time she would sing to us at night, as she took us to bed.

*There was a lady all in green,  
Nony the nony no no,  
Was locked away and was not seen,  
Nony the nony no no.  
Quoth she: 'I cannot find my tear,  
The tear that falls each morning here,  
The tear of grace, the tear of fear,  
The tear that falls upon the bier',  
Nony the nony no no.  
A young lord by the window stayed,  
Nony the nony no no,  
And bended to this speech she made,  
Nony the nony no no.  
He left that day to find the tear,  
The tear of grace, the tear of fear,  
The tear that falls each morning here,  
The tear that falls upon the bier,  
Nony the nony no no.  
He did not look down to the grass,  
Nony the nony no no,  
He did not see the rose of glass,  
Nony the nony no no.  
The rose of grace, the rose of fear,  
The rose that falls each morning here,  
The rose of glass that was the tear,  
The rose that falls upon the bier,  
Nony the nony no no.*