



ORLANDO (1928)

by Virginia Woolf

A single feather quivered in the air and fell into the middle of it. Then, some strange ecstasy came over her. Some wild notion she had of following the birds to the rim of the world and flinging herself on the spongy turf and there drinking forgetfulness, while the rooks' hoarse laughter sounded over her. She quickened her pace; she ran; she tripped; the tough heather roots flung her to the ground. Her ankle was broken. She could not rise. But there she lay content. The scent of the bog myrtle and the meadow-sweet was in her nostrils. The rooks' hoarse laughter was in her ears. 'I have found my mate,' she murmured. 'It is the moor. I am nature's bride,' she whispered, giving herself in rapture to the cold embraces of the grass as she lay folded in her cloak in the hollow by the pool. 'Here will I lie. (A feather fell upon her brow.) I have found a greener laurel than the bay. My forehead will be cool always. These are wild birds' feathers--the owl's, the nightjar's. I shall dream wild dreams. My hands shall wear no wedding ring,' she continued, slipping it from her finger. 'The roots shall twine about them. Ah!' she sighed, pressing her head luxuriously on its spongy pillow, 'I have sought happiness through many ages and not found it; fame and missed it; love and not known it; life--and behold, death is better. I have known many men and many women,' she continued; 'none have I understood. It is better that I should lie at peace here with only the sky above me--as the gipsy told me years ago. That was in Turkey.' And she looked straight up into the marvelous golden foam into which the clouds had churned themselves, and saw next moment a track in it, and camels passing in single file through the rocky desert among clouds of red dust; and then, when the camels had passed, there were only mountains, very high and full of clefts and with pinnacles of rock, and she fancied she heard goat bells

ringing in their passes, and in their folds were fields of irises and gentian. So the sky changed and her eyes slowly lowered themselves down and down till they came to the rain-darkened earth and saw the great hump of the South Downs, flowing in one wave along the coast; and where the land parted, there was the sea, the sea with ships passing; and she fancied she heard a gun far out at sea, and thought at first, 'That's the Armada,' and then thought 'No, it's Nelson', and then remembered how those wars were over and the ships were busy merchant ships; and the sails on the winding river were those of pleasure boats. She saw, too, cattle sprinkled on the dark fields, sheep and cows, and she saw the lights coming here and there in farm-house windows, and lanterns moving among the cattle as the shepherd went his rounds and the cowman; and then the lights went out and the stars rose and tangled themselves about the sky. Indeed, she was falling asleep with the wet feathers on her face and her ear pressed to the ground when she heard, deep within, some hammer on an anvil, or was it a heart beating? Tick-tock, tick-tock, so it hammered, so it beat, the anvil, or the heart in the middle of the earth; until, as she listened, she thought it changed to the trot of a horse's hoofs; one, two, three, four, she counted; then she heard a stumble; then, as it came nearer and nearer, she could hear the crack of a twig and the suck of the wet bog in its hoofs. The horse was almost on her. She sat upright. Towering dark against the yellow-slashed sky of dawn, with the plovers rising and falling about him, she saw a man on horseback. He started. The horse stopped.

'Madam,' the man cried, leaping to the ground, 'you're hurt!'

'I'm dead, sir!' she replied.

MONOCHROMING [YELLOW]

Silent choosing of a letter whose now bolding presence at the head of a word spells that word as "yellow". Alternate this cipher by reader. Thus, vertigoing at monochrome.

THICKET

A group by cornerswooning. As lined couplets pass the text at felt proximities.

SKIN ON SKIN [WANTING NOTHING & DESIRING EVERYTHING]

While partnered, the mutual, comfortable touching of skins is had (e.g.) holding hands, touching wrists, a desireless finger in the navel). Thus, practice alternating between wanting nothing and desiring everything from touch and text alike.

TRIANGLES

Suppleclump bodies in threes. Architecting the legs at triangles. Downcast diaphragm, speaklow, eyes to eyes while listening.

SONG

Song for two voices: resolve adjacently via columns. (L and R, to each her own)

PUNCTUREFOLD [RECLINING]

Elbow and floor. Voice only words poising at the column's lefty perimeter. Retire otherwise into the skim of silent reading. Oscillating and untogetherly.

WHITE NOISE

Two roles: reader and listener, in perpendicular relation. L finds a seated position with the R's head laying in lap. L places hands on the vocal chords of the R. Head still in lap, R reads aloud the text. Repeat and Repeat. Oxycotton noising from the wings. Alternating roles is asked, but not insisted.

TWICING

Clad text with its double at the distance of a line. That is, while reading, speak twice each line. In groups, one reader each her paragraph.

IF I DIE ON THE ROAD

If on the road I die. Reading out loud and untogetherly.

STROBE

Text withdrawls (coyly). Reading out loud and together. With contesting dilation and quiverpupils.

BACK TO BACK

Sitting back against back (not necessarily solitude) and reading in one's head; in the strange thick of reading by one's self. Please, please, leave as you please.

SLOW READING CLUB (SRC) IS A SEMI-FICTIONAL READING GROUP INITIATED BY BRYANA FRITZ & HENRY ANDERSEN IN 2017. THE GROUP DEALS IN CONSTRUCTED SITUATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE READING. SRC LOOKS AT, PROBES, AND INTERRUPTS 'READERSHIP' AS A WAY TO STIMULATE THE CONTACT ZONES BETWEEN READER AND TEXT, TEXT AND TEXT, READER AND READER. THE APPARENT BOUNDNESS OF THIS READER OWES ITSELF TO MULTIPLE UNDERSTANDINGS OF CULPABILITY; A SPACE FOR TEXTS TO WRAP LIMBS IN AN ARCHITECTURE THAT PERMITS IT. ENCROACHING LIMBS.

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