

# Oroboro

## The Possible Lives of Jarvis Meatshed

by K. Brian Neel

© 2015 all rights reserved  
king(at)kbrianneel(dot)com

### INTRODUCTION

*(After the curtain speech, the house manager pulls out a piece of paper...)*

The, uh, playwright handed this to me backstage and asked me to read it to you, so um:

"Life is a cycle. A spiral, a circle. We see it in the smallest snail shell and in the great Milky Way galaxy. We see it in our lives -- birth to childhood to adulthood to marriage, parenthood, the beginning of a new birth, childhood, etcetera onward. Yet we look for ends in everything: end of the day, the week, the year; ends to our stories. Mostly we want that. Why is this such a demanding urge? Such a necessity for our minds to grip?"

Thank you. Enjoy the show.

*(House manager leaves. House lights go down, followed by the stage lights.)*

Lights up.)

### URGE

#### AUDIENCE

*(A man in the audience speaks.)*

You ever have that urge sitting in the audience to stand up and take the stage? I get it all the time. And now I'm actually doing it. Here I am giving into the urge, in front of a bunch of people, put on the spot. Awkward. I guess when that happens, one should take life by the horns and dive into the seized moment, right? Hi. Hey. How're ya doing? You're kind of unreal to me. Nothing personal, but you're just sitting there.

If I were inside your head right now I'd most likely be questioning whether I should get up too. Join the party, right. Woo, woo! I mean, he's doing it, why shouldn't I? I mean, it looks like he's having fun. He's in paradise. You gotta say to yourself:

#### PURGRATORY PARADISE

If this were paradise, would I just stay seated, watching? No. I would jump up and yell "look at me! I'm in paradise!" I'd look around, examine everything, take it all in. Revel in the joy and smiles. Be the center of that energy,

look into everyone's eyes and share that. We'd share it together, right? No, don't talk. This is beyond language. Nirvana is speechless. (pause as looking into her/his eyes) Of course, if this were purgatory, I don't know if I'd want to look into your eyes. I wouldn't want to call attention to myself, or to you for that matter. If this were purgatory, and you all were in purgatory with me. I'd shut the fuck up and keep to myself. I don't want to look at your suffering, god know's I have enough of my own. We're not sharing that. We don't need to accentuate our pain, alright? There's safety in anonymity. Don't look at me. Stop it. Don't look at me. Look at her. If you want to share your suffering, you two go right ahead. You share that shit, leave me out of it. That's a nightmare, if you ask me. Horror show stuff -- look into the eyes of suffering! A starring contest in hell. Well, let me know who wins. Unless you know something I don't. Unless you're on to something you're not telling me. I mean, come to think of it: would I suffer less alone in the crowd? You're right, probably not. Hell and suffering is hell and suffering, right? So why not share that. Why not be noticed. Be the best I can be in purgatory. Say, "look at me" I'm the best sufferer! No, you me. Not you. Not you. You think you're a better sufferer than me? Fuck you. You're just seated there. I stood up. That proves I'm better at purgatory than you are. Or at paradise. Either way.

Because in paradise, would I just stay seated, watching? No. I would jump up and say "look at me!" I'm in paradise! I'd look around, examine everything, take it all in. Revel in the joy and smiles. Be the center of that energy, look into everyone's eyes and share that. We'd share it together, right? No, don't talk. This is beyond language. Nirvana is speechless. (pause as looking into her/his eyes)

#### COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

*(Leans into her/his ear and whispers:)*

I love you. Pass it on.

*(He watches it being passed along from audience member to audience member, down a row. When it reaches the end, he's sitting in the next chair to hear the whisper.)*

*(Leans into her/his ear and whispers:)*

Why? Pass it back.

*(It goes back down the line. When it reaches the end, he's back at the starting chair.)*

Because you are beautiful. Pass it back.

*(It goes back up the line. He's at the end again.)*

I'm beautiful because you love you. Pass it back.

*(Back again.)*

I'm beautiful because you love you. Pass it back.

*(Back again, but he stops it mid-way, selecting an individual to move forward with.)*

Oh my god, this is really amazing, so sudden, right. I mean, you don't know

me at all. Underneath all this for all you know I could be just a bag physical mechanisms – pipes and valves and compressors and fan belts and gears. We should really go on a date, get to know each other...

## PERFECT DATE

### FIRST

I pick you up at your twelve-acre estate. I pick you up at your beach-front chateau. Your upper middle class brownstone? Your condo? Rental house? Studio apartment? I pick you up in front of your dilapidated shack under the overpass.

You're wearing a flowing pink taffeta ball gown. A preppy tweed splice sheath. An Antigua minidress. A pvc catsuit. A pleated skirt and a lemon yellow blouse. I'm wearing grey sharkskin three piece. Slacks and a blazer, sport coat, blazer, sport coat. Lederhosen, suede suspenders. Jeans. Black jeans and an oxford, turtle-, mock-, tee... cowboy shirt.

We bus, we walk, we drive to a movie. A Hong Kong girls with guns bloodshed action. A biopic documentary on the plight of Yugoslavian porn nuns. An evening of shorts featuring the best of North Korean travel advertisements. We go to a museum. The aquarium. We go to a concert, the retropunk band ClabberGirl covering Patti Smith covers at the GreaseHole in Ballard with opening band Piss Factory. We drive. Downtown. Waterfront. We drive to the bluff and look out over the city lights and up at the stars.

I pick you up in front of your dilapidated shack under the overpass and we drive...

### DRIVING

*(He sits on the chair and driving. He adjusts the radio and hums Bowie's Kooks.*

He starts to realize he's been passing the same spot over and over again. First time it's like déjà vu. He shakes it off. Second time it's like "that's weird," but he drives on. Third time it really needles at him -- he tries to get details on the sight out the window. Fourth time he slows down and rolls down the window, really examining it. Fifth time he pulls over and gets out and approaches the damn thing.

He pokes it, squeezes it, raises its arms, makes faces at it. It seems to be mirroring him. Then he discovers a little door in its chest and opens it -- it is a door in his own chest. He feels inside for a bit, finding all the winding gears and mechanisms. The initial shock of it all is also somehow normal. He pulls his hand out and gently closes the chest door.)

### RESTAURANT

I pick you up in front of your dilapidated shack under the overpass and we drive to a restaurant. French. Asian fusion. Haute, nouvelle, vegan. Greek. Greek. Greek. Greek restaurant. You sit. I get your chair. You sit. I sit. Waiter two waters, menus. We'll have for appetizer Spanakotiroboukies and Dolmadakia. For main course you'll have the Mousakas me kreas and I'll have the Arni Kleftiko. Extra taramasalata. We chat about your long term engagement

to a Mexican wrestler; Your inability to keep down a relationship past two months; Your love of classic Russian literature and gardening. I mention the fungal abscess on my left foot; my premature epigastric hernia; my volunteer work at a youth hospital and hosting recovering shelter animals. I tell you about...

## SELF HELP

...this friend who is unhappy. He's had a lot of trouble in his life: Recently his girlfriend dumped him. Twice. His mother passed away a couple years ago, his father is alcoholic. Now this guy has been in therapy for years. He knows all about the narrative of his unhappiness, you know what I mean? I mean, his feelings are all demystified. But it hasn't changed the state of his happiness. He is still unhappy. So this guy goes to another guy and says, "Hey, you're a happy guy." Which is true, the other guy is generally happy. And he says "You're not an idiot, you know a lot about yourself." And this happy guy does know about himself -- he's educated, he's read a lot of self-help books and Jung and stuff. So sad guy asks this happy guy to help him out. Help him be happy. Give him some advise. Now at first happy guy can't think of an answer. But then he remembers that the sad guy has done some awesome stuff. He's had some really good times, you know. So happy guy tells him, "You have to remember this awesome stuff and not dwell on the shit." And sad guy says, "That's bullshit! How am I supposed to do that?" But then sad guy remembers this friend who is unhappy...

*(Repeat SELF HELP text 2 times, building and evolving to )*

... But then he remembers that the sad guy has done some awesome stuff. He's had some really good times, you know.

## SAUCE

He went on a date with a really hot woman from the audience with a fantastic personality who comes from family wealth; an above-average woman with a strong sense of self and an obsession with transient chakra energies; a fine woman with steady employment who hears Rod Stewart flirting with her through the radio.

We sit across from each other at the Greek restaurant.

I stare at the tzatziki sauce hanging off your lower lip. I make a face interfering the situation. I point at it. I lean forward and wipe it with my thumb. I lean forward and lick it off. You slap me. My epigastric hernia bursts and small intestines spill out across the table! Mixing with the Dolmadakia and Mousakas! I scoop guts and Greek food and mechanical gears and springs back into my esophagus. You make a kind of tourniquet out of tied-together napkins and wrap it around me like a gut sling. I thank you. You say, "No problem." (pause.) Waiter, the check. Waiter, more wine. Waiter, a suture.