

**Raven Speak:**  
Movements in Story

By Lance A. Twitchell

Developed with assistance by  
Stephan Golux, Dramaturg & Maya Salganek, Producer  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Current Revisions by  
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Xh'unei - Lance A. Twitchell  
665 Wilcox Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
latwitchell@alaska.edu

**CHARACTERS**

(in order of appearance)

Raven

Shkalneek Gooxhú (Slave to the Narrative)

Edward, performing in DISCOVERY ALASKA:  
TAMING THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS as  
"Ranger Bob"

Cynthia performing in DISCOVERY ALASKA:  
TAMING THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS as  
"Klondike Kate"

Child

Elizabeth

Clara

The Unnamed

Andy

First Being

Heron

**PROLOGUE**

(RAVEN emerges on dimly lit stage. Everything is shadowed. RAVEN moves around, head twitching. Raven clacks beak, caws, and hops into shadow with wings fluttering.)

(SKALNEEK GOOXHÚ enters)

**SHKALNEEK GOOXHÚ**

I am hardly alone. Here. I am Shkalneek Gooxhú. But you can call me "Slave to the Narrative." We are all part of the narrative. Every one of us. Just when we think we control it, something will come along and show us: we are but tiny creatures in the tidal flood.

(RAVEN clacks beak)

This is not mine. No. The reverse is truth. I only do some of the work. Speak some of the words. Raven changes the world, returning from a lifetime of absence. Back to protect the people. Back to triumphantly-

(RAVEN clacks beak, caws)  
(flatly)

-oh. Áwé. Time for beginnings.

(SHKALNEEK GOOXHÚ exits, humming a trail song and using a rattle to lure RAVEN away. RAVEN hops away, curious)

**BEGIN**

(BOB and KATE march onto the stage of DISCOVERY ALASKA: TAMING THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS, a folly show. BOB is dressed as a Park Ranger and KATE a late nineteenth-century prostitute. There is a large, round, black stone on the stage. Ragtime music.)

**BOB**

Ladies and gentlemen, sourdoughs and Tenderfoots, boys and girls of adventure! Welcome to Discovery Alaska: Taming the Last Great Wilderness!

**KATE**

That's right friends! Are you ready for a wild time? Well ... not that wild!

You see, the Alaska you know today was once a completely different place. Magic, and full of opportunity. Uninhabited, and waiting for the stampede.

Alaska, you see ... it was wild!

(CHILD in audience raises hand)

**BOB**

You said it, Klondike Kate!  
Alaska. The last frontier.  
Seward's folly. It was a place of great and unexplored wilderness.

That is, until Joe Juneau discovered gold in a small Southeast town. That was it.

The rush ... was on.

(Child waves hand, impatient)

**KATE**

It sure was, Ranger Bob. Men rushed from all corners of the world for a chance at striking it rich. And the girls ... well ... we rushed for the burly men.

(squeezes Bob's flexing biceps)

People brought everything they could up here: on boats, horses, packers. Heck, they brought tables & chairs, tents & stoves. One guy even brought a piano and hiked it up the mountain.

He could have called in a favor with me if he wanted to be entertained.

**BOB**

Alright! This is a family show, Kate.

(CHILD stands up, hand raised)

It was ALASKA! Wild and untouched. Waiting for the last great expansion of the United States of America.

**KATE**

(to CHILD)

Okay, honey. Do you need to use the pot or something? This ain't an improv you know.

**CHILD**

That's not right.

**KATE**

You need something, hon?

**CHILD**

You're messing up.

**KATE**

Okay, hon.  
Is something wrong with you?

**CHILD**

(frustrated)  
YOU'RE MESSING IT UP!

**BOB**

Come again?

**CHILD**

Grandma says you start at the beginning.

**KATE**

The beginn—

**CHILD**

It was in my dream. Truth. It's called truth.

(CHILD approaches the stage, which causes distortion)

**BOB**

(laughing)  
—Ah! I see where this is going!  
The beginning!

(RAVEN creeps onstage)

Well, in the beginning Alaska was the last untamed wilderness, untouched by man and—

(Singing and drumming in the distance, growing louder. A car approaches, beat to hell and held together with duct tape. Four people are inside. Car goes away. ELIZABETH, CLARA, UNNAMED, & ANDY enter. ELIZABETH wears a power suit. CLARA is elderly and wears a kamleika and a beaded headdress. UNNAMED wears a huge wooden Yup'ik mask with huge flat wooden hands

over his hands. ANDY wears an old U.S. Army jacket and a bandana covering his hair.)

**ELIZABETH**

Who says Rez Radio has no beat?

**CLARA**

We didn't have a radio.

**UNNAMED**

You think there's any food around here?

**ELIZABETH**

We are the radio, Clare-bear. The song caller. The dreamer!

**CLARA**

Well, that car sputters to the beat of a different drum.

**ELIZABETH**

It's a rhythm pony! An iron giant of story. Backdoor to the heart of loss. Something ...

**UNNAMED**

Pilot bread and butter?

**ANDY**

Enough, you guys! Enough!

That hooptee got us here, but now what? Weren't we supposed to be ...?

(ANDY and UNNAMED look suspiciously at BOB and KATE, who stand dumbfounded. ELIZABETH watches RAVEN. CLARA watches the CHILD)

**CLARA**

I thought we were all heading to a—

**ELIZABETH**

Shh!

**CLARA**

—potlatch. Something about the  
Great Loss ... something like that?

**ELIZABETH**

(points to UNNAMED)  
He doesn't want to talk about that  
yet.

**UNNAMED**

A candy bar, even. I got a  
hankering for anything &  
everything.

**ELIZABETH**

So now what?

(RAVEN caws. ELIZABETH clears her  
throat)

Maybe I should talk about this  
Raven.

**BOB**

(trying to keep it together)  
Huh? Come again? You guys are  
wrecking my show, here.

(Raven clacks beak)

**ELIZABETH**

It's Raven! His birth. Let's start  
with that. Born of black stone—

**KATE**

Can someone tell me what's—

(Raven clacks beak)

**ELIZABETH**

—It's Raven, that's what. His  
birth. This large black stone  
here.

**KATE**

Yeah. I was kind of wondering about that. It wasn't on the prop list—

**ELIZABETH**

—What most people forget ... is Raven was born out of the sorrow of woman. Who remembers this?

(Everyone is uncertain. The UNNAMED raises one of his large wooden hands; he lowers his hand and shakes his head "no."  
ELIZABETH Sighs loudly.)

There is a cancer in my memory that smells like bourbon and abuse. A hole where my heart once stood for vigilance, and it looks like a forgotten tomb. But I am jumping ahead of myself now.

I ... I can't start like this. Raven was born out of the sorrow of woman. Back there on that beach, before the World was even young.

(A darkened beach, large shadowy rocks, a slight phosphorescent glow off moving water. We hear waves. ELIZABETH stands near the shore. RAVEN watches.)

**ELIZABETH**

I can still see it, carved into my memory. Back at the beginning, before everything, there were the original creatures. One of them, a man, was all powerful.

(FIRST BEING throws light everywhere. Busy, he is consumed by thought.)

**ELIZABETH (cont'd)**

He was in control of everything. There was only him, his sister, and a few others. Everything was new and different. Everything was reluctant to change. Especially the all powerful one: the First Being.

(FIRST BEING watches something out on the sea, then rearranges everything. Working, thinking.)

Woman was forgotten. The sister. The universe had been around about as long as it takes a hummingbird to flick her wings. There was much to do.

And in this place there was lonesomeness. That was the original sorrow of Woman. That's how it was at first. She was longing for company, to be seen. All those days alone, you see. Isolating.

I know this, because she was me.

(Raven clacks beak. ELIZABETH tries to catch the attention of the FIRST BEING, but he takes no notice of her.)

One day my sorrows grew so strong it led to the birth of a child. That is how things were back then. Unexplainable. I thought of my loneliness so much that I became pregnant. My brother, the First Being, never knew.

I was overjoyed. Finally. There was someone just for me.

(ELIZABETH reaches behind a rock and lifts up a baby, wrapped in a blanket. She coos to it, and it laughs. FIRST BEING hears this and is startled from his distractions.)

**ELIZABETH (cont'd)**

But this threatened the all-powerful one. My brother was challenged.

(FIRST BEING sees the child and his face twists with fear and anger. The light he throws becomes brighter.)

He had a fear that my child would grow strong someday, would hunger for and take his power.

(FIRST BEING forcefully takes the child from her arms and walks offstage. The light he throws flashes bright then disappears. ELIZABETH collapses. RAVEN retreats to a corner.)

So he killed that child.

My sorrow continues to grow.

I have my babies, born from thoughts, and my brother continues to kill them. See? Can you imagine this? Such loneliness? Violence? Fear?

It was there, way out on that beach. I was always ... there. Crying. Alone.

(HERON approaches carefully.)

Except this time, someone heard. It was Heron.

**ELIZABETH (cont'd)**

He is here, watching the waves, in the distance.

**HERON**

What is wrong? Why are you crying?

**ELIZABETH**

I am so lonely. My brother has no time for me. And every time I think about how lonely I am I have a baby. And my brother ... he kills them. Every time. There is no end.

(HERON stares out at the sea, reaches out to touch her arm.)

**HERON**

There is always a way.

Find a stone on the beach, at that point where the sea meets the shore. Find a round, black stone. Heat it in a fire, and when it is just cool enough to touch, swallow it.

You will have a child that nothing can kill. You will always have that child.

(ELIZABETH embraces HERON, and then walks towards a round black stone. RAVEN follows.)

**ELIZABETH**

And this is the birth of Raven. We have gone back to the beginning. Born of woman's sorrow. This is a story about place and belonging.

(Back to the DISCOVERY ALASKA stage. BOB and KATE enter)

**BOB**

So ... yeah! ... About the GREATLAND!

(Enter RAVEN, looking pensive)

**KATE**

I think that one ... might have to wait.

**BOB**

Well, despite whatever just happened ... um ... the show must go on!

(Kate stands confused. CLARA slowly enters)

**CLARA**

Who understands the flavor of loss? My friend over there ...

(She motions towards RAVEN. BOB and KATE begin to argue.)

... maybe it is you? Maybe you can comfort me like you did back then.

My heart is a thousand miles away.

(RAVEN clacks beak)

A thousand miles from me; it left when I watched my home vanish in the horizon of a World War. A soft orange glow that reminded us – as *everything* reminds us – that we have no power in the world.

(RAVEN looks up, makes a sad, long caw)

So you are there, friend? I saw you perched above me when I spent my days at Killisnoo. Because of you, I was not alone. Because of you, I learned that black is not the color of death.

No.

In times like that, it is the  
color of everything.

(RAVEN steps closer, listening and  
rocking its head, birdlike. BOB  
begins to walk towards CLARA, but  
KATE stops him. KATE walks BOB  
offstage arguing, then she comes  
back and watches from a distance)

I composed a mourning song for  
those days, back when the Navy  
made certain my village burned to  
the ground so the Japanese could  
make no use of it ...

We had no chance to say goodbye.

Would you like to hear it?

(RAVEN clacks beak)

**CLARA**

But I have no music, friend. It  
was lost in an ocean of forget, it  
was dropped from the decks of a  
vessel that trapped us on our  
salty home.

Is that okay?

(RAVEN clacks beak. Soft music  
mixes with the soft sound of the  
tide and Southwest Alaska  
seabirds.)

Just like you, friend,  
it begins with a baby,  
a child also born of sorrow:  
but not of black stone.

Invincible,  
Wrack and trouble.

(A small house in the Aleutians: simple and full of old, minimal furniture and decorations. CLARA enters and begins packing a suitcase.)

**CLARA**

Twelve hours to collect  
entire lives, forced to board  
a machine of deadly iron—  
nothing of the world we know.

Perhaps immobile,  
Perhaps moving earth forever.

That baby ... That baby ... wait ...

It is the no name child,  
who wanders on the open sea,  
packed below the decks, unknown:  
born straight into a cold death.

Perhaps destiny,  
Perhaps manifest in their blindness.

Give me no part of it,  
leave me to ponder the bluffs  
that give way to the mighty sea:  
the home to which I cannot return.

Perhaps infinite,  
Perhaps stripping the sky of blue.

That baby ... That baby ... no ...

(KATE bites on her own hand. RAVEN  
hops near CLARA, nuzzles her with  
its beak. RAVEN's wings cover her  
face, leaving black handprints on  
her cheeks.)

Am I pandering too much:  
the illustration of something  
horrible?

Should I ... you know ... make a point  
of this?

(RAVEN clacks beak)

**CLARA (cont'd)**

They evacuated my village,  
we crammed into the lower decks  
of a Navy Vessel. 1942.

The ship arrived like a shadow,  
announced that we had twelve hours  
to pack our lives in one suitcase.  
We could return, they said, once  
the war was over.

(to RAVEN)  
You know what that was like?  
Fitting a whole life in one  
suitcase?

(RAVEN retreats)

We pulled away,  
they ordered us below deck.  
Some said they looked,  
back to our home  
saw it burning like a beacon  
on the horizon,  
our ashen memories of place.

We wandered across the ocean.  
The boat zig-zagging because they  
thought it might be bombed.  
We saw nothing below deck.  
Only cold. Only swaying.

We lurched across invisible  
waters, people would cry. Some  
became ill.

A young woman was pregnant.  
The stress pressed her into labor,  
rushed that child into the world.  
That baby.

There was no midwife on board. No  
nurse.

**CLARA (cont'd)**

Those Navy Officers.

They sent our Archbishop down  
there with specific orders:  
birth the child, bless the child,  
wrap the newborn in a white  
blanket, bring it up and  
toss it over the side of the ship.

That baby was born right into a  
cold death, and since then I have  
not found my way home.

(CLARA collapses in exhaustion.  
RAVEN catches her, keeps her from  
falling to the floor. KATE runs to  
help.)

(Back to the DISCOVERY ALASKA  
stage, only barren. There are no  
gold rush items on the stage any  
longer. Enter BOB & KATE,  
hurriedly.)

**BOB**

Okay. *Someone* has to get hold of  
this thing. This is a folly show  
for Pete's sake! This is *history*.  
What can we do about all this  
sorrow and crying around? That's  
not folly! One person talking for  
hours on end? That's not fun! What  
the *hell* kind of show is this  
becoming?

No. This is the story of "The  
Discovery of Alaska! Taming the  
Great Wilderness"!

**KATE**

My God, Ed. That baby ...

(Kate bites her own hand.)

**BOB**

C'mon, Cynthia. You are Klondike Kate! Remember? Kate? I mean, *Jesus*, the last great adventure? *The taming of the last wilderness!* That used to mean something to you.

**KATE**

No, Ed. It's more than that. At least, it is to me ...

That baby ...

(She cries lightly. Lights fade.)

**INNERLOGUE**

(Enter SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU)

**SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU**

We have breached the hull, my good friends. The vessel no longer sails straight and a woman sobs into Raven's embrace. This is Raven's bright light, shining black.

Maybe now that does not make sense. Maybe now we are waiting for something to turn the corner, to make the tide come in, to bring us a breath of life.

We can ask that of Raven.

My friends.

We can ask that of ourselves.

(Enter RAVEN)

**SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU (cont'd)**

Give us a song, please. Let us not forget, but let us grow anew like medicine in the Spring, after a harsh winter. Is that not how the world works?

(RAVEN tilts head, curious)

That after the harshest of conditions, life still begins anew?

Tell me that's how it is! Tell me that hope still blossoms from the seeds of sorrow.

(RAVEN looks up, spreads wings, clacks beak, caws loudly.)

(Offstage we hear drumming, lightly at first. Slow and steady. Exit SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU. RAVEN retreats to corner, spreads wings.)

**CONTINUE**

(Background lights make the stage a series of silhouettes. The relics of the gold rush have been replaced with objects from a city scene: a BRICK WALL with tag graffiti, a STRUCTURE built from large cardboard appliance boxes, a DUMPSTER with thick chains and padlocks. In the background, there is RAVEN – a shadow – beak poking upwards, wings still outstretched. EMERGES from a refrigerator box. He holds a handwritten sign that reads "STRANDED VETERAN. PLEASE HELP. GOD BLESS.")

**ANDY**

No one sees me, man. No one. Even  
back in the rez rider. No one.

I know what it means to be  
nothing. Just last weekend, I  
watched a man named Cool Eddie get  
kicked from here to Jesus' porch  
by three white kids. Thought they  
were cool. Thought it was funny.

No one saw him either. When it was  
over, we came to him. We picked up  
his teeth. He cried into the bosom  
of a strange woman who knows  
something about suffering.

People walked by. They pity us.  
They sympathize. I know that  
because I know they are  
privileged. "Poor things," they  
must be thinking.  
They have no idea.

(to RAVEN)

And what about you!? Huh!? Sitting  
there, perched like nothing too?  
Yeah, thanks!

(Enter CHILD, causing distortion.  
They stare at each other.)

I was a hero once. So I thought.  
My cousins were being drafted, so  
I signed up when they never called  
my name.

Nam. I thought I could figure that  
one out. They had me on the front  
lines, and I was good. Had a mark  
on men. Brought the hammer.

But there was this guy, Jimmy  
Taylor. Totally messed up. From  
the woods of western Washington,  
he was a patrolman for a logging  
company.

**ANDY (cont'd)**

He said they would beat the shit out of Indians around there who came around looking for fishing grounds on the company's land. The company didn't care how they did it, just complete the mission: keep people off the land.

We rolled into this town, looking for Vietcong. There was no way to tell the difference between them.

There was this child, about your age. Running to hide. That son a'bitch Taylor shot that kid right in the back.

That's when I checked out. From everything. To nothing. On my way out.

**CHILD**

Maybe there is a way to make medicine.

**ANDY**

To make what, kid?

**CHILD**

Medicine. My grandma says there is a medicine for everything.

**ANDY**

That so, kid? My heart has left me and I don't think there is a medicine for that. Cool Eddie looks for his teeth in the bottom of bottles of bourbon. Maybe that's it.

**CHILD**

Their medicine is not our medicine. Their sickness. It is not our sickness. Well, it wasn't. But it is now.

**ANDY**

Where you coming up with this?  
 Where is everyone? How come you  
 can't leave me alone like everyone  
 else? Everyone except those who  
 know loss on the hard streets?

Get going, kid. There's no place  
 for you here.

(Exit CHILD)

**ANDY**

No one sees me, man. No one. Even  
 back in the jungle. No one.

(ANDY crawls back into the  
 refrigerator box)

(UNNAMED is masked and makes a  
 solemn entrance. In the background  
 we can hear sirens in the  
 distance, the occasional passing  
 car, a dog barking. He walks to  
 the side of the stage, looks all  
 around. RAVEN, still a perched  
 silhouette, looks down at him.)

**UNNAMED**

This just won't do.  
 I mean, not even a snack.

No agutuq.  
 No fish heads.

Nothing.

MY BELLY IS A RAGING RIVER!

No moose head stew.  
 No bumguts.

No muktuk.

No cheeseburger, fries.

**UNNAMED (cont'd)**

Milkshake. Hmm. Milk.

Makes me poop anyways.

Everybody poops.

(chuckles)

Poop.

But every good story has a good meal, right? We can turn the tide like this. A good joke. A good meal.

We feed our emotions. And right now the light has gone out of the sky.

(RAVEN clacks beak, nodding head.)

Yes. This just won't do at all. We need transformation. Medicine.

(The UNNAMED looks up at RAVEN, trying to get attention. Trying to make himself laugh.)

Hey, remember that one time? When you stole the water from that one guy? He was your cousin, right?

I barely remember myself.

You wiped dog poop on his leg and said he made a big mess of himself?

(RAVEN does nothing)

No?

Those were the days, right?

Huh.

What do we need now? A good story?  
A good joke?

**UNNAMED (cont'd)**

Hey! This one time ... at culture camp ...

No. Nevermind. That one's dirty. Wait. I know ...

(He holds his hands in front of the mask and blows Eagle down across the stage. A loud low hum can be heard, drowning out the noise of the city. He begins to sing, a murmur at first and growing in volume. As he does, the low hum grows louder. He begins stomping his feet; the stage becomes a drum. His song peaks and then...)

(Enter ELIZABETH & CLARA with black handprints on their faces. Enter KATE. CLARA and ELIZABETH walk over to KATE. CLARA and ELIZABETH wipe their hands across the black paint on their faces and wipe it on KATE's face.)

(The UNNAMED continues his dance. The music shifts in intensity. As he nears the CLARA, ELIZABETH, and KATE, he puts his large wooden hands over their face and when he removes them, the black handprints are gone. His song is fast and steady, and RAVEN sways in the background - a silhouette.)

(Enter BOB, yarding the CHILD. BOB walks with authority. When the CHILD enters the stage it causes distortion.)

**BOB**

Stop! Knock this shit off!

(The song stops.)

**BOB (cont'd)**

This kid here is going to apologize for interrupting us.

Good news! The show can go on!

We can undo all of this and talk about history! *Taming the Great Wilderness!*

(BOB has frozen everyone; the background noises stop; the characters look at BOB. A long awkward, silence. A voice booms from the boxes.)

**ANDY**

Enough! Enough! Stop all this rattling outside my house. I was listening to the rhythm of the tide in the city!

ENOUGH!

(ANDY emerges from the refrigerator box.)

**KATE**

Whoa. Um ... hey.

(The CHILD takes a step towards KATE.)

**CHILD**

I saw you in my dreams. The other night.

**ANDY**

No one sees me, kid.

**CHILD**

But I do. It was the other night. In a place like this.

**ANDY**

That right?

**CHILD**

Yeah.

**ANDY**

You know what it means to be nothing, kid?

**CHILD**

It was my hair.

**KATE AND ELIZABETH**

(simultaneously)  
Your hair?

**CHILD**

Grandma didn't cut my hair.

**ANDY**

(sarcastically)  
Yeah, kid. Tragic.

**CHILD**

No. You don't understand.

If I don't cut my hair every three days ...

**KATE**

Yeah?

**CHILD**

If I don't cut my hair ... I have dreams and they come true.

**ANDY**

Wow, kid. That's heavy. You some kind of medicine man or something? A *shaman*?

**CHILD**

I dunno ... I just want the world better.

**BOB**

Well, walking onto someone's stage and messing with their job isn't making anything any better.

**ANDY**

(Stepping towards Bob)  
Keep it up, white boy.

**BOB**

That's enough of that. Hey, I'm just trying to get a hold of this thing. Telling history is what I do. It's what I know.

**ELIZABETH**

This here. This is our time. When we think of history, we think of great sadness. Great anger. There is too much to think about: a blanket of loss, hardship, and death.

When we line them up, it is enough to fill the world with grief.

Loss has become our Great Ceremony.

And you want to tell *me* about history? You want to forget this? We are not invisible.

We are humans. All of us.

(The UNNAMED removes his wooden hands.)

**BOB**

No one is saying you're not human. Sheesh! Think of Robert Marshall naming the Gates of the Arctic National Park and mingling with the natives there.

**ANDY**

This guy needs gates of the arctic in his mouth. Let me knock his teeth out.

(ANDY pushes BOB. BOB takes a swing at ANDY. KATE intervenes.)

**CHILD**

(sobbing quietly)  
This is not the story.

**CLARA**

You boys knock it off! Our child is trying to say something. Stop scaring him and stop trying to be so tough.

(CHILD walks over to the UNNAMED.)

**CHILD**

(To UNNAMED)  
I know who you are.

(The UNNAMED slides his mask up, resting on his head and revealing his face.)

**UNNAMED**

I am the corona.  
I am the residue of some great medicine.

**CHILD**

You are my dreams.

**UNNAMED**

I am so hungry.  
I want to laugh like I have never laughed before.

**CHILD**

You were born before.

**UNNAMED**

I am lost.

**CHILD**

You were born over and over at the beginning.

(ELIZABETH looks suddenly towards them)

On a darkened beach.

**UNNAMED**

No! I can't go back there!

**CHILD**

You were born again,  
lost in an ocean of forget,  
dropped from an iron giant into a  
cold, salty home.

(CLARA looks towards them)

**CLARA**

I always thought my village would  
be eclipsed by the white man's  
world around us.

**UNNAMED**

I can't hear this!

**ELIZABETH**

You're my baby.

You're my baby boy!

I bounced you on my knee,  
sang you songs about the great  
beginning, shaping worlds in your  
image.

(The UNNAMED removes his mask  
completely.)

**UNNAMED**

I'm so hungry.

**KATE**

Wait.

**ANDY**

What is going on here? We're  
spiraling down.

**CLARA**

I always thought that baby was  
born unto a cold death.

We never spoke of it.  
We never spoke of you.

You were the UNNAMED.  
You were the height and depth  
of our greatest loss.

**CLARA**

And now here you are.  
My child.

**UNNAMED**

I am empty.  
I am nothing.

**ANDY**

Amen, brother.

**CHILD**

You were born again and again.

You are the great beginning.

You are the great loss.

**ANDY**

There is an old man back home. No  
one likes him. They say he is  
crazy. He says we are living in  
the shadow of the Great Death.

He says that so many of our people  
died that we cannot have enough  
ceremony to keep up with things.  
The world is out of balance.

**KATE**

What is this Great Death?

**ELIZABETH**

Think of your ten favorite people  
in the world. Really see them.  
Now pick one. The rest are dead.

**ELIZABETH (cont'd)**

There was a time when our people  
died so fast that nothing could  
keep up with it.

At that time, we were losing  
everything. Land. Children.  
Language. Elders.

At that time, we were sliding into  
the sea. Entire villages died out.

**CLARA**

No one was ready for this. Not  
even the whites. We all still  
suffer. This death is a part of  
us. There is no shaking it off.

**BOB**

This is history?

**CHILD**

We are the story.  
He has come back.

**ELIZABETH**

What can we feed him? We didn't  
even bring anything here. I  
thought everything would be at the  
big potlatch.

**CLARA**

I want to make you everything you  
ever wanted. Everything you never  
had. My child. My empty baby.

**UNNAMED**

I am the Great Death.

I have stood at the foot of all  
loss.

I have seen diseases come through  
and eat children.

I have watched as all my mothers  
and my fathers fell apart.

**ANDY**

Hey!

**UNNAMED**

I have come back as alcohol.

I have been reborn as the worst in things.

**ANDY**

Knock this off!

**UNNAMED**

All the dead that walked this world. They knew that things were coming back around.

There was never enough ceremony for this. No one saw it coming. Not even the most powerful of the medicine people.

We were driven into the sea.

**UNNAMED (cont'd)**

We were driven into the darkness.

We became invisible on the backs of our Ancient Ones.

**ANDY**

NEVER!!

(A darkened beach, large shadowy rocks, a slight phosphorescent glow off moving water. We hear waves. KATE stands near the shore. RAVEN watches.)

**KATE**

(Crying out to the sea)  
I don't know what to make of this!

I never wanted to be a part of this! Any of it!

**KATE (cont'd)**

Killing babies? Losing track of  
what's real and where I am?

I was entertaining. Not killing.  
Not forgetting. It was fun.

And now I don't know where to go  
with this. Where did they come  
from?

(KATE removes her wig, shakes out  
her hair.)

This isn't any fun any more.

(Enter BOB.)

**BOB**

Kate! I don't know what's even  
going on any more. I don't think  
there is anyone left to tell the  
story to.

And I don't know if I know the  
story any more.

But I don't think that was it.  
Whatever that was.

**KATE**

I don't care, Ed.  
Do whatever you want.

I am done with the folly show.

I am done.

(Enter CHILD, causing distortion)

**BOB**

What are you doing, kid?

What have you done to us?

Why?

**CHILD**

This has always been happening.

**BOB**

Yeah. Riddles. Fine.

Bob Marshall didn't speak in riddles. Soapy Smith didn't speak in riddles. Jon Muir didn't speak in riddles.

(Enter UNNAMED)

**UNNAMED**

Now that I know who I am ... it doesn't help. I still hunger. I could eat the world four times over. I could scrape a dumpster for a biscuit.

(Enter ELIZABETH & CLARA, whispering to each other)

**UNNAMED (cont'd)**

I am everything that never was.

(To CLARA & ELIZABETH)

Mothers. Why does the sun not shine any longer?

**CLARA**

My son. It shines upon all of us, even through the thickest of clouds and darkest of night.

**ELIZABETH**

When I look at you and think about what you have been through, I can forgive anything and everything.

I know you have made it.

(RAVEN clacks beak. Enter ANDY, carrying a sign that reads "TIME TO FACE THE GREAT DEATH: PLEASE HELP.")

**UNNAMED**

I have become all of you. Because  
you all carry the Great Loss with  
you. It has become your dearest  
family member, surviving each  
generation. Growing stronger.

I am so hungry. Because I am  
nothing.

**ANDY**

It's time, brother.

I lived most of my life running  
from people. Hiding from  
everything I thought was a lie.  
Which was everything.

You are truth, brother.

We are going to look in your eyes.

**ELIZABETH**

I give back all of this anger.

I give it back if it means I can  
have you again.

**CLARA**

I give back all this sadness.

The beaches will burn no more in  
my memory. I will find my way home  
if it means I can have you again.

**KATE**

Make it work, please. Let me out  
of this thing.

**BOB**

Captain James Cook turned back  
once, from this great land.

**ANDY**

(To BOB)  
Shut it.

(To UNNAMED)  
Think about it, brother. Take a look right at it, and search for truth. You will find yourself there.

This Child, he stood up for us. He brought us here, back together, for the Great Potlatch. For the Great Ceremony that will help us stand again.

I know about loss, man. I am loss, too. I never gained anything in any of those wars. I never gained anything.

But this is the time. This is that moment we have been waiting for. You mothers are here. Your child is here. Your brother. Even them ...

(ANDY points to KATE and BOB)

... they need it and they don't even know it. The Great Death lives in us all. We can't just act like it's not there, eating away at everything.

Then we are left, starving and lost. Nothing for all time.

(CLARA and ELIZABETH chant loudly. The UNNAMED suddenly picks his song back up, his stomping a strong drum and his song filling the stage with power. He dances powerfully, tearfully. He is joined by CLARA & ELIZABETH, then ANDY, who coaxes the CHILD to join. Lastly KATE begins to dance. They all take heavy steps with

rigid body movements. KATE tries to make BOB join, but he stands with his arms crossed, grumpy. He glares at KATE as if she betrays him. The UNNAMED mocks him with a grumpy-face dance. All of this only makes him more angry and embarrassed. Finally, RAVEN comes downstage and dances with wide winged motions. BOB storms off, cursing to himself. Song ends. Lights all fade.)

**EPILOGUE**

(Completely darkness. Enter  
SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU.)

**SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU**

This is the story of Raven Speak.  
It is not my story. It is Raven's  
story.

(Enter RAVEN, barely visible)

**SHKALNEEK GÓOXHU**

It is not mine. I am only here to  
do the work. To speak the words.  
We are Raven's slaves. Raven  
changes worlds; endless  
transformations. This is not the  
end of the story. This is the  
beginning; the beginning of them  
all. It is told because—

(RAVEN clacks beak)

—oh, that's right. Hóoch' áwé!  
Time's end.

(EXIT YÉIL GOOXU AND RAVEN, softly  
singing a trail song.)

**END OF PLAY**