



happy life  
kathy ng  
(march 30, 2021 draft)

MAP

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BIRDY

OX

MOUSE

living

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CAT MERMAID

HERMIT

dead

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DICTIONARY

NSFW – not safe for work

HTL - horny/happy/hungry to live

RO – reincarnation option

EV - extremely vulnerable

DBC - dead bird curtains

RPG - role playing game

LMAO – laughing my azz off

ASMR – autonomous sensory meridian response

SG – scum ghost

DSCC - death scene cleaner contractor

HSL – human sperm lottery

RFS – really fucking small

1. soft core

*In the magenta horizon, a boy slices off his  
breasts  
blood and ruby cream flow from the farthest point of his chest towards the city,  
forming a stream,  
twisting like a tentacle,  
refusing to join the ocean.*

*Meanwhile  
a stuffed cat in a mermaid costume,  
sitting on sea jelly and skin-made stones,  
describes the apartment she was murdered in.*

CAT MERMAID

I live in a room held up by masking tape.

Even the door chains are wrapped in it.

I have taped so many,

Many, many things onto these walls.

Fairy lights,

Scraps of newspaper,

Gas bills, old batteries.

I capture pockets of air and tuck them under the kitchen tiles,

Just in case I ever need to come up for a breath, or meet God.

I live in a room held up by masking tape.

I live alone.

...

Last night, a fruit fly gave birth inside the bristles of my toothbrush, causing me to vomit  
orange and green dumplings into the sink.

I wash my hair in the sink.

I spit into the sink.

I clean my neck in the sink.

Last night, fairy lights I had taped above my bed fell into my gaping mouth.

I woke up to the feeling of being slapped by an angel.

I live alone.

...

I think the mini fridge only purrs when I'm at home.

I think she might be a ticking time-bomb.

She likes to remind me to save my quarters for the jade fish at the laundromat.

The clothes spin and spin like hair and seaweed inside the washing machine.

My reflection spins as well,

I watch it the glass,

Cherry lipstick smearing waxy circles round and round my face,

Like red marks on a quiz I am failing over and over again.  
The teacher rubs himself repeatedly on the edge of his desk—  
Zero points!!!! !! !!  
I pick up more orange and green dumplings on my way back to the apartment.  
With inky seagrass clinging to my gummy heels,  
Of course I walk slowly.  
I live alone.

...

The Great Octopus is going downtown tonight,  
He tells me to bring my debt in a suitcase,  
and meet him where the dead birds gather for bread.  
This morning, looking through the window grates,  
The mustard sky is grainy, like soup dust,  
And I feel...  
I feel unready.

## 2. open house #1

*A small studio apartment, scrubbed raw and shiny.  
Empty as hell as can be.*

*Outside, from the hallway,  
the sound of a shoulder being repeatedly thrust into the door.*

OX (from the hallway)  
Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Don't worry.

*The thrusting sounds continue.*

OX (from the hallway)  
Sorry. Sorry. Almost. Don't worry.

*The door bursts open.*

OX  
Yes, oh good. Just needed a little encouragement.

BIRDY  
Don't we all

OX  
Ha-ha. Yes okay.

*A real estate agent and his client stand at the entrance.*

OX

Apartment 16. Here we are.  
Please, come on in.

*BIRDY reaches toward her shoes.*

OX

Oh no need to take off your shoes!

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*  
Okay.

*She walks into the apartment.*

OX

We will clean the apartment again when—  
*(clears throat)*  
—if you move in.

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*  
Okay.

OX

Nice clean smell, yes? Smells like lemon, wouldn't you agree?

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*

OX

Please, don't be a guest. Please.  
Let me show you around. Don't worry.

*OX begins to give BIRDY a tour—*

OX

Here is the living space. Really nice space.  
The previous tenant used this space for the bedroom because there is uh technically no um no  
bedroom. But big space! Good enough for living. Thick walls.

*He smacks a piece of white wall.*

OX  
Solid sound, yes?

BIRDY  
*(smiles and nods)*

OX  
Nothing gets past these walls

*He gestures at a medium-sized window.*

OX  
And also, big big window, see? Nice window. Good vertical quality, yes?

BIRDY  
*(smiles and nods)*

OX  
Very nice outdoor light. The sun just beams in, no problem, all day. Very happy.  
Also, most importantly! Strong window grates.  
High quality, old-fashioned metal. Good security. Sleep through the night.  
Go look at the window. Look out. Please. Don't worry.

BIRDY  
*(smiles and nods)*

*BIRDY spots something on the windowsill.  
Something small, brown and compact.*

*Is it a turd?*

*OX sees it too*

OX  
Oh no.

*He snatches it up before she can get too close.  
Feathers falls off the offending object, blemishing the spotless floor.*

BIRDY *(curious)*  
What is it?

OX *(laughing nervously)*

Oh nothing! Just a dead bird! Oh no. Don't worry!

*Dangling the corpse by his fingers, OX scans the empty apartment.  
He realizes there is absolutely nowhere to discard it.*

OX

I just...put it back. Don't worry.

*OX puts the bird back down, almost drops it.*

OX

Don't worry. I fix this.

*He picks up some of the fallen feathers and hastily arranges them over the bird's  
corpse, trying to cover it up the best he can, especially the eyes.*

OX

*(clears throat)*

Let me show you the kitchen.

*Two steps and they reach the kitchen.*

OX

So, the kitchen. Still that nice clean smell, yes? Still smells like lemon, doesn't it?

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*

OX *(suddenly growing somber)*

Okay. So now. I must legally inform you.

*OX walks up to a narrow white door in the back.  
He grabs the rusted handle and gives it a little shake.*

OX

This is the spot where the most previous tenant hanged himself.

*BIRDY looks up.*

BIRDY

Oh. But there isn't a place to hang from?

*OX shakes the door handle again, more forcefully.*

BIRDY (*understanding*)

Oh.

OX

Yes. Now you understand. The door handle.

If you hang yourself in a sitting position, there is just enough elevation, see?

*OX lowers his hand and hovers it just above the floor. His hands are shaking*

BIRDY

Yes. I see.

*OX rights himself.*

OX

This how a lot of people do it these days.

Efficient. Smart use of space. Kind of...modern, in a way.

BIRDY

Modern.

OX

But still the clean-up is...woah.

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*

OX

You should've smelled this place. The day they discovered the body. I was here!

To price the property and...

That. Smell.

*OX remembers the smell. Woah.*

*He shakes it off, just about.*

OX

But that's all gone now, yes? We scrub it all away! We do a very good job of scrubbing! Yes we do, we are very proud of this, how much we are able to scrub away, before putting properties like these back on the market. Each and every apartment we sell always smells like lemon!

100% guarantee. No worries.

I believe the official name of the bleach we use is fresh-lemons-in-a-blooming-field.

*OX inhales deeply.*

OX

Ah. I smell it. The blooming field. Don't you?

BIRDY

*(smiles and nods)*

*BIRDY's eyes drift towards the direction of the dead bird.*

*OX (trying to grab her attention back)*

So yes! Now that's out of the way—

Let's go see the bathroom!

*OX pulls down on the door handle into the bathroom,  
which is about the length of a child-sized coffin.*

*They peer in.*

OX

Maybe a little bit cramped but—

*He points to each appliance.*

OX

Toilet. Sink. Bathtub. It's all here.

Full set. Not bad, yes?

BIRDY

Efficient.

OX

Exactly, yes!

Smart use of space. Okay.

Now, I must legally inform you.

Some years ago, certainly many years ago now—

This bathroom is where the corpse of an ex-ex tenant was dismembered and stored for a period of time. Her murderers boiled her severed body parts in a tall pot on that stove over there, to slow down decay and dull the smell of rotting flesh.

Her skull was sewn into the head of a Hello Kitty mermaid doll, which was left behind inside this toilet bowl right here.

...

So. Yes.

BIRDY (*nodding*)  
I see.

OX  
But double combo suicide-murder property means—  
SUPER CHEAP!

*OX flashes BIRDY a double thumbs up.*

BIRDY (*one nod*)  
Okay.

OX (*discouraged*)  
Ah yes, don't worry!  
Nothing to worry about! Take your time.  
Think about it and give me a call if—

BIRDY (*interrupting*)  
I'll take it.

OX (*surprised*)  
Really?

BIRDY (*smiling*)  
This is the start of my happy life.

### 3. seafood combination platter

*The same apartment, but dripping in an oily, magenta haze.  
Version: Dead.*

*CAT MERMAID chops a giant, blistered tentacle in the kitchen.  
The garnet tentacle throbs, squirms and spills over the countertop.*

CAT MERMAID (*to the tentacle*)  
Don't fidget.

*She hacks off a chunk of tentacle.  
A glob of blood, the color of coffee creamer, bursts from the cut end.  
The tentacle thrashes in protest.*

CAT MERMAID (*to the tentacle*)  
Hold still.

Cut cut cut.

HERMIT

*[A long, dehydrated, reptilian whine]*

*From the bathroom, HERMIT is splayed out across the floor, belly up.*

*Drowned fish.*

*He might be scratching his belly button so hard that it's making a wet, thumping noise.*

*The thin bandages wrapped around his chest are caked in dust and loose hairs.*

*Neon lime pus seeps through the cracks in the gauze.*

HERMIT

Can you pleeease do that somewhere else.

*CAT MERMAID hisses acid*

CAT MERMAID

There IS nowhere else

HERMIT *(angry muttering)*

Fucking tentacle. Fucking taking up so much fucccking space.

CAT MERMAID

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT THEN

HERMIT

You know I would NEVER DO THAT

*She hacks off a chunk of tentacle and hurls it at HERMIT.*

*It flies and smacks HERMIT right in the side of his head. Hard.*

HERMIT

*(whine)*

stooop

CAT MERMAID *(spitting)*

I was here first.

*She throws another chunk of tentacle at him.*

HERMIT

oW!!

CAT MERMAID  
*(laughs)*

*She throws another*

HERMIT  
stOOp!! !!!!

*She throws another*

HERMIT  
sTOOOOPP!!

CAT MERMAID  
Dodge!

*She throws another.  
It whacks him in the head*

CAT MERMAID  
Dodge it!

*She throws another*

CAT MERMAID  
Why AREN'T YOU DODGING

HERMIT  
I CAAN'T

*She goes back to the chopping.*

CAT MERMAID  
No, you can. But you won't.  
That's your whole fucking problem isn't THAT fuckKing it.

HERMIT *(small)*  
not true

CAT MERMAID  
Never wanting to take responsibility for your own pain

HERMIT (*small-small*)  
you don't know what I've been through

CAT MERMAID  
(*laughs*)  
Fucking hate this city.

*Cut cut cut*

HERMIT  
You ever think about it

CAT MERMAID  
No

HERMIT  
About leaving this place

CAT MERMAID  
No

HERMIT  
But you hate it here

CAT MERMAID  
No I fucking love it, look at me

HERMIT  
But there's not enough room

CAT MERMAID  
No shit.

HERMIT  
Then why

CAT MERMAID  
Not interested in trying again

*Cut cut cut*

HERMIT  
I'm gonna be the best soldier ant in my next life

CAT MERMAID  
You could be more

*This hits a nerve*

HERMIT  
No

CAT MERMAID  
You could be!

HERMIT  
I am NOT TALKING ABOUT THIS AGAIN

CAT MERMAID  
You could be GREAT

HERMIT  
No

CAT MERMAID  
You could be a **MILLION DOLLAR RACEHORSE**

HERMIT  
I DON'T WANNA BE A FUCKING RACEHORSE

*She brandishes her butcher knife at him,  
Bits of creamy caramel fly and flick off the blade*

CAT MERMAID  
You could be famous, muscular, lithe. Rich people could throw gold bricks at you from the stadium stands as you pummel headfirst into the finish line. Number 1. Victory. Glory. Commentators will call you "the one to bet on". You'll have a white boy jockey with chestnut hair who LOVES you, feeds you carrots with hands in leather gloves, and when he shoots you in the skull after you break your legs there will be a tear glistening in the corner of his fuckin' eye.  
(hiss)  
That.  
Could.  
Be.  
Your.  
Next.  
Life.  
(hissssss)

HERMIT

I'm GUNNA be a soldier ant, that's ALL I want to be, I don't wanna be anything more.

CAT MERMAID

But you never listen, that's your whole fucking problem, you never listen—

*(hiss)*

HERMIT

I did, didn't I?! I went ahead, and fucking did it, didn't I?!

CAT MERMAID

Did what.

HERMIT

I FUCKING SLICED MY BOOBS OFF LIKE YOU SAID

CAT MERMAID

Oh. right.

*(laughs)*

HERMIT

LOOK AT ME

CAT MERMAID

You look good.

HERMIT

Look at me.

CAT MERMAID

You look good, seriously.

HERMIT

For real?

CAT MERMAID

Look at me. Do I look like a stinking liar to you?

HERMIT

*(smiles)*

I look good.

*Instinctively, he reaches towards his chest—bad idea*

HERMIT

*(winces)*

FUCK. OW.

BITCH.

HOLY SHIT.

CAT MERMAID

*(laughs)*

Shit for brains.

HERMIT

You never warned me it would hurt this bad.

CAT MERMAID

I thought you'd be able to extrapolate.

HERMIT

Extrapolate what—

CAT MERMAID

—That when I offered to chop off your boobs on the condition that I don't have to sanitize my knife and also I don't have to try my best...I don't know.

I thought you'd be able to deduce that it's going to fucking hurt like hell afterwards.

Thought you wouldn't sign on unless you thought you could handle the pain.

HERMIT

*(sighs)*

Sometimes I feel like—I feel like you never took the time to get to know me like. At. All.

CAT MERMAID

Okay. Who are you, tell me, I'm all ears.

HERMIT

I'm nobody.

CAT MERMAID

*(laughs)*

I really do hate it here.

*HERMIT looks down at his oozy chest.*

HERMIT

Why do I still hate myself.

CAT MERMAID  
You make me sick.

*She vomits over her chopping arms. Orange and green.  
She continues to chop. Vomit trickles over the tentacle.*

HERMIT  
Sorry.

CAT MERMAID  
It's fine.

HERMIT  
I know you just want to help me.

*The tentacle dies. The mood shifts. Muscles relax.  
Everything dies into something more tender.*

HERMIT  
Can you change my bandages?

CAT MERMAID  
Yes. After I gorge.

HERMIT  
Thx.

CAT MERMAID  
Another day, another piece of the Great Octopus finds his way home.

*She sinks her fangs in. Caramel drips sticky-sticky over her lips.*

HERMIT  
She's moving in tomorrow, isn't she.

CAT MERMAID (chewing)  
Mhm. Yum.

HERMIT  
There's not enough room.

CAT MERMAID  
You're right. There isn't.

HERMIT  
Can you stop her

CAT MERMAID  
From moving in?

HERMIT  
Yea

CAT MERMAID  
Kind of

HERMIT  
For real?

CAT MERMAID  
You have no idea what I can do

HERMIT  
Can you stop her then?

CAT MERMAID  
Maybe. I'll have to see

HERMIT  
Why

CAT MERMAID  
She could prove useful at some point.

HERMIT  
How?

CAT MERMAID  
Shh. That shit's not safe for work.

HERMIT  
NSFW.

CAT MERMAID  
Exactly.

*CAT MERMAID crouches down beside HERMIT—examines his bandages.*

CAT MERMAID (*inhaling deeply*)  
Mmm. That smell. New pus. Old blood. Wombo Combo.

HERMIT  
Sorry.

CAT MERMAID  
Comes with an egg roll and pork fried rice.  
(*laughs, not so mean*)

*CAT MERMAID unravels HERMIT's old bandages.  
An avalanche of neon lime pus gush out the cliffs of his crying, crying chest*

HERMIT (*wincing in pain*)  
I hate women.

#### 4. chicken burger prayer

*A cluttered desk situated in a space outside the confines of the apartment,  
a deviation that should bring some small sense of relief.*

*A girl sits in a chair that is not worth describing.  
Ritualistically, she unwraps the pale lemon paper of a McChicken—  
Holding the sandwich in her hands, she bows her head.*

MOUSE  
Dear Mister Factory McChicken,  
Pressed into a patty the shade of singsong urine,  
I understand that in order for me to hold you,  
You were never allowed to see the sun.  
I understand that by eating you, I am participating in a system that counts on me to not give a  
shit about your pain due to my biological need to eat, I will eat all \$1.29 of you knowing you  
should not come so cheap...and yet, as I stuff my face, I'll be consumed by the euphoria of  
*shiiit, what a good fucking deal..*

*MOUSE takes a bite of McChicken.  
OH YUM.*

MOUSE (*chewing*)  
I hope in your next life you find some good-good dignity like  
A sea bird or a  
Shiba  
That runs a small convenience store.

*Another bite.*

Here's to you, lil' bro.

Ah-men.

## 5. move-in #1

*Back to the the apartment.*

*Version: Living*

*It's a sunny day.*

*BIRDY pulls in with an old, sandy suitcase rolling behind her,  
sets it down, and shifts the unmoving air with a floaty breath.*

BIRDY (*smiling*)

Frogs.

*Darkness.*

*Flash of white light, like from a camera, or a cloud.*

*It lingers for a moment before settling back into a normal amount of sunlight.*

BIRDY

(*gasps*)

*The floor is now blanketed with the corpses of many dead little birds.*

BIRDY

I don't know...

*She opens the suitcase.*

*It's empty.*

BIRDY

I don't know how to mix a cocktail.

*She picks up one of the dead birds and drops it into her suitcase. Thud.*

BIRDY

I don't know how to file taxes,

Or who to call to set up "the internet",

I don't know how to extract a brain tumor,

I don't know where to buy chairs,

I don't know the definition of the word "pulchritude",

I don't know what kind of porn I like,  
I don't know what I need to hang up a curtain,  
I don't know my favorite color,  
I don't know how to love my hands,  
I don't know the smell of my feet,  
I don't know who's in charge of me.

*One by one, she places the birds into the suitcase.  
Sometimes she does it mindfully,  
Honoring the body with her hands,  
Sometimes she does it clumsily,  
Sometimes she does it with uncontrollable rage,  
Whipping the bird through the air with unneeded strength.  
Sometimes she does it as if the action arouses her.*

BIRDY (as she plays)  
I don't know how to pleasure myself,  
I don't know what I stand for,  
I don't know how to drink responsibly,  
I don't know where to find new country songs,  
I don't know how to bind a book,  
I don't know how to bite hard,  
How to chew slow,  
How to swallow long,  
How to suck fast,  
I don't know how to get a job,  
How to flirt with my boss,  
How to write a resume,  
How to connect with the past,  
How to honor the dead.  
I don't know how to drive a car,  
Or find the right bus number,  
Or go anywhere at all.  
I don't know how to make pottery,  
How to send a letter,  
How to ferment vegetables.  
How to sew a dress,  
How to register to vote,  
How to meet friends,  
I don't know how to live.

*The speed of the game picks up a cruel pace.*

Howto live  
H O W T O L I V E  
Tolive—HOW??????  
How to how to how, though?  
Howtolive  
HTL  
Happytolive  
HTL  
Hurriedtolive  
HTL  
Hungrytolive  
HTL  
Hornytolive  
HTL  
Heavingtolive  
HTL  
Howlingtolive  
Happyhappyhappyhappytolive

*With the dead birds all stacked up in the suitcase, the game ends.  
Breathless, BIRDY coils downward as the shiny wood flooring rises to catch her.*

BIRDY (*confronting loss*)  
How to be alone.

## 6. transactions # 1

*The apartment.  
Version: Dead.*

*CAT MERMAID is draped like a gown across the kitchen stove.  
She talks into a curly-corded landline phone.*

CAT MERMAID  
(*hisssssssss*)

*Over the phone, OX's voice sounds cracked and warped.*

OX  
Glad to hear you're doing well, boss.

CAT MERMAID (*businessman mode*)  
Did you make the sale.

OX

Yes, boss, happy to report, landed the sale.

CAT MERMAID

Happy to hear it, Ox. You're consistent, if nothing else. Good job.

OX

Thank you, boss. It was a... uhm...

CAT MERMAID

Spit. It. Out.

OX

It was a surprisingly easy sale, boss.

CAT MERMAID

Well isn't that braggy

OX

Oh my god, sorry boss, I uh didn't mean it that way at all.

CAT MERMAID

How'd you mean it then

OX

The buyer, uh, never mind

CAT MERMAID

Spit it out

*(hiss)*

OX

The buyer seemed to be someone who is trying very hard to start over in life

CAT MERMAID

Ah.

OX

Yes. One of those.

CAT MERMAID *(like a purr)*

Eeee-Veeeee

OX

She is classified in my files as an Extremely-Vulnerable, yes

CAT MERMAID

Eeee-Veeeee. Pathetic

OX

EV's are more likely to rent out stigmatized properties than the average person, yes

CAT MERMAID

A pathetic demographic

OX

Yes

CAT MERMAID

And I'm sure you knew this about this particular buyer

OX

Yes, boss, I like to be prepared

CAT MERMAID

Mmm.

That's why I like you, Ox.

OX

Thank you, boss

CAT MERMAID

You're an old-fashioned worker, Ox, a dying breed.

OX

Yes, boss

CAT MERMAID

Classically castrated.

OX

Thank you, boss. That means, that means a lot to me

CAT MERMAID

If I wanted to eat your stinky, severed balls on a crystal plate, would you let me?

OX

Anything for you, boss

CAT MERMAID

If I told you I am a wounded mermaid with a tragic backstory, would you believe me?

OX

Of course, boss

CAT MERMAID

If I asked you to carry me downtown to the seashore on your beefy bovine backside, would you do it?

OX

I'd be honored, boss

CAT MERMAID

Hm.

OX

*(clears his throat, sniffles)*

CAT MERMAID

Are you crying, Ox?

OX

I'm just so touched, boss, is all, that you would trust me, of all people, a lowly employee, with such classified company intel

CAT MERMAID

I see a IOTTA potential in you, Ox, you're special to me

OX *(sobbing)*

You're special to me too, boss

CAT MERMAID

I got a little gift for you, Ox

OX *(sobbing)*

You're too good to me, boss

CAT MERMAID

Stick your tongue out, Ox

OX (*sobbing*)  
Okay, boss

CAT MERMAID  
Give your fat, wet cheeks a lick for me, Ox

OX (*sobbing*)  
(*licks his cheek*)  
Tastes like  
(*lick*)  
Tastes like beer, boss  
(*lick*)

CAT MERMAID  
That's my piss, Ox, fresh piss straight from the Pacific Ocean.

OX (*sobbing*)  
(*lick*)  
It's delicious, boss  
(*lick*)  
So refreshing

CAT MERMAID  
I made my piss to taste like beer, Ox, and last night, I squatted over your face while you were having your usual nightmares and I pissed.

OX  
Am I dreaming?

CAT MERMAID  
I pissed and pissed and pissed. I pissed so much that my piss is now starting to overflow and leak through your tear ducts, onto your cheek, and fizzle funky fresh onto your tired tongue, Ox, do you know why, Ox, do you know, how could you possibly know?

OX (*sobbing*)  
No, boss

CAT MERMAID  
Do you know what time it is?

OX (*sobbing*)  
5 pm, boss

CAT MERMAID

It's happy hour

OX (*sobbing*)

Oh god, happy hour, it's finally here, finally that time of day.

CAT MERMAID

It's time for a beer, my boy.

OX (*sobbing*)

Oh god

(*gulp*)

I don't

(*gulp*)

Deserve this

(*gulp*)

CAT MERMAID

You deserve happiness at happy hour, Ox, you only have one hour.

OX (*sobbing*)

Just

(*gulp*)

One

(*gulp*)

Hour

CAT MERMAID

Are you happy, Ox, at this hour?

OX (*sobbing*)

Yes, boss, yes, so happy, boss, I love you

CAT MERMAID

(*hisses*)

OX

(*retches*)

I feel nauseous.

CAT MERMAID

(*laughs*)

Hour's over.

*(laughs)*

Get back to work.

*She hangs up, amused with herself.*

*The bathroom door cracks open and HERMIT creeps out.*

*White foam is seeping out of his bandages.*

HERMIT

Why is there beer foam seeping out of my bandages.

CAT MERMAID

*(laughs)*

Company meeting

HERMIT

Oh.

CAT MERMAID

*(laughs)*

So stupid

HERMIT

Well...did you ask him?

CAT MERMAID

Ask him what

HERMIT

About the thing

CAT MERMAID

What thing

HERMIT

The THING

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

What THING?!

HERMIT

My RO's.

CAT MERMAID  
The fuck are RO's

HERMIT  
Dumb bitch, my Reincarnation Options!

CAT MERMAID  
Oooh.

HERMIT  
What, you fucking forgot?!

CAT MERMAID  
Fuck.  
*(laughs)*  
Sorry. I fucking forgot.

HERMIT  
Screw you.

CAT MERMAID  
I'm SORRY!  
*(laughs)*

HERMIT  
I thought you're trying to help me

CAT MERMAID  
I am.

HERMIT  
Obviously not cuz turns out you're fucking useless just like the rest of them

*CAT MERMAID slams down the receiver.*

CAT MERMAID  
Listen, you ungrateful little shit—

*(She grabs his chin)*

—I talk to that real estate agent through a naughty phone chatline. I have no fucking clue why he thinks I'm his boss but I'm pretty sure it's just a weird kink and I'm not sure how long it's gonna stick. He doesn't actually work for me. You know that, right? Did you even know that?

HERMIT  
I mean—

CAT MERMAID  
He's my toy. And you're nobody's dog.

HERMIT  
Is that supposed to hurt my cold dead heart.

CAT MERMAID  
Scum, rancid ghost.  
*(hiss)*

HERMIT  
So are you.  
*(hiss back)*

CAT MERMAID  
I want you to be a RACEHORSE.

HERMIT  
What's with you and racehorses.

CAT MERMAID  
That stadium feeling is—  
Nothing compares.

HERMIT  
Did you know. I used to love running around the track when I was kid. Especially at sunset.  
I'd bet on that feeling.

*She softens.*

CAT MERMAID  
You should.

*She scoops some foam off his bandages into her palms.*

CAT MERMAID  
Look.

*She blows on the foam, it fractures into a million secrets*

CAT MERMAID

We're like two carefree kiddies in a bubble bath, yea?

HERMIT

*(shakes his head)*

CAT MERMAID

Well obviously not cuz you look so fucking miserable. Smile.

HERMIT

*(shakes his head)*

CAT MERMAID

Like this, see?

*She scoops more foam off his bandages and tosses it into the air,  
She watches the bits of froth fall around her,  
She's a plastic figurine in a toy model stadium.  
She smiles.  
It is terrifyingly sincere,  
It's best in show, it steals the show.  
It steals Hermit's cold dead heart.*

CAT MERMAID

Now you do it.

HERMIT

*(smiles)*

CAT MERMAID

Not bad.

*The two ghosts hold their smile—  
Eyes locked  
They smile,  
Smile  
Smile  
Smile  
Smile  
Until their expressions look wrong,  
obscene and unbearable,  
Even so,  
They smile.*

7. stuff on her desk

*Outside the apartment. MOUSE names the miscellaneous stuff on her desk.*

MOUSE

1. McChicken wrappers. Yum.
2. Chunky hard drive filled with years and years of porn. My job.
3. A computer mouse that looks like an actual mouse. Fun.
4. An mouse pad with an image of an anime girl on it.  
Her boobies are packed with polyfill stuffing and work as a wrist rest. Super comfy.
5. A mini bullet vibrator. Pew pew pew.
6. Crushed can of Mountain Dew Baja Blast. I drink it for the sole reason of inserting that shade of teal into my body.
7. One bag of stale gummi worms, half-eaten.
8. Lotsa used paper towels, lotsa dried mucus. I've got a phlegmy throat.
9. A cute lil' USB lamp that looks like a steamed bao bun. Doesn't work anymore. But it's here.
10. A pile of old hi-polymer erasers, rubbed into forearm skin until till they start to shine, or as lil' bro would have called it, a riverbed of stones.

8. move in #2

*The apartment.*

*Version: Living*

*BIRDY pulls in the exact same way she did the first time.*

BIRDY *(smiling)*

Quirky band names.

*She opens her suitcase, which is filled to the brim with dead birds.*

BIRDY

Hello dead birds.

*She lifts them to slowly reveal that the tiny corpses have been knitted together into a large sheet.*

BIRDY

Pretty.

*At the bottom of the suitcase is a roll of masking tape.*

*BIRDY takes it out.*

BIRDY

Just what I need.

*With tape in one hand, and the sheet of birds in the other,  
She climbs up onto the window sill,  
And secures the tapestry of corpses with the tape.  
She tapes the feathers and the beaks and the eyes directly onto the wall.  
Feels dangerous in more ways than one.  
She hops down.  
Everything is fine.  
She admires her handy work.*

BIRDY (smiling)

Dead Bird Curtains.

HERMIT

DBC.

*BIRDY wheels around towards the bathroom door.*

BIRDY

(sharp exhale)

*HERMIT is hanging by the neck with a thick rope off the door handle,  
His butt is elevated just enough off the floor.  
He's dead, obviously, but he's breathing and blinking,  
and doesn't seem to be in too much pain.*

BIRDY

Are you in pain

HERMIT

Hi

BIRDY

This is how you died

HERMIT

Is there a computer in your suitcase?

BIRDY

So you like them?

HERMIT  
Like what.

BIRDY  
The Dead Bird Curtains.

HERMIT  
DBC

BIRDY  
Pretty, right?

HERMIT  
I like acronyms. And jargon.

BIRDY (*not sarcastic*)  
Fun!

HERMIT  
I see you're trying again

BIRDY  
Trying again?

HERMIT  
Yeah

BIRDY  
Trying what again?

HERMIT  
Moving in.

BIRDY  
I'm not sure I know what you mean.

HERMIT  
You already tried once before.

BIRDY  
But I'm moving in  
Today

HERMIT

Yeah but not for the first time

BIRDY

What does that mean

HERMIT

Can you check your suitcase, for a laptop, or something

BIRDY

What do you mean not the first time?

HERMIT

Do you know how to set up Wi-Fi?

BIRDY

No, I'm sorry, I don't know how to set up Wi-Fi.

HERMIT

Ugh. UGH.

BIRDY

Sorry um uh

HERMIT

I'm gunna be completely honest with you—

BIRDY

My brain feels a bit scattered at the moment

HERMIT

I'd trade your life to get my hands on a dating RPG right now

BIRDY

A RPG?

HERMIT

Role  
Playing  
Game

HERMIT

I mean, I'd trade mine, but I don't GOT ONE ANYMORE. LMAO.

BIRDY  
...LMAO?

HERMIT  
Laughing  
My  
Azz cheeks  
Off

BIRDY  
Azz...as in ass?

HERMIT  
Or some porn. Fuck. I'd KILL, like actual murder, for some porn. Or ASMR.

BIRDY  
ASMR?

HERMIT  
Autonomous  
Sensory  
Meridian  
Response.

BIRDY  
What?

HERMIT  
ASMR is when girls wearing pretty lip glosses suck on expensive microphones to make sounds that sound like she's deep eating your brain.

BIRDY  
Deep eating my brain?

HERMIT  
ya.

BIRDY  
But.  
(*breath*)  
But why would I want that?  
Why would anyone want that?

HERMIT

For dreamless sleep. Intimate feelings. Tingles. Dunno. I'm not you.

BIRDY

Tingles?

HERMIT

Yikes. Ur dense as hell.

BIRDY

Am I already moved in?

HERMIT

Does your phone have hotspot?

BIRDY

What kind of porn do you like

HERMIT

That's private

BIRDY

Right.

Sorry

HERMIT

Tentacle porn.

BIRDY

Oh.

HERMIT

It's my big sis's specialty.

BIRDY (*not sarcastic*)

That's really nice.

HERMIT

No, it's actually really fucked up.

BIRDY

Why?

HERMIT

What kind of porn do you like?

BIRDY

I don't know

HERMIT

That's crazy what do you mean you don't know

BIRDY

I've never thought about it

HERMIT

Do you masturbate?

BIRDY

I gave a lot of hand jobs

HERMIT

To who?

BIRDY

To my husband. Ex.

Ex-husband.

HERMIT

How?

BIRDY

I'd lay down. He'd sit on my chest.

In the dark, he looked like a mountain.

HERMIT

Ok

BIRDY

What's your favorite color?

HERMIT

Blue

BIRDY

Are you sure?

HERMIT

Yea

BIRDY

Have you thought about what kind of blue?

HERMIT

No

BIRDY

About what season of blue, or what shade?

HERMIT

No

BIRDY

Do you know if it's a blue that is closer to purple—

HERMIT

No

BIRDY

Or if it's a blue that is closer to green?!

HERMIT

Back off I don't know

BIRDY

I don't know. I just have this nagging feeling that blue might not your favorite color

HERMIT

*(sighs)*

This conversation sucks.

BIRDY

I'm sorry

HERMIT

What's your favorite fucking color than

BIRDY

I don't know. I don't know if I want to know

HERMIT

That's stupid – just pick a color

BIRDY (*as though the right words aren't rising to the surface*)

I'm afraid to know.

I'm afraid to want, to know.

You know?

HERMIT

No

BIRDY

Because claiming to know that,

This one color,

One specific shade, out of infinite possibilities,

Is my favorite.

That's crazy.

Feels out of my reach.

I don't know if I'm ready to know enough about myself to know my favorite color.

HERMIT

*(sighs)*

BIRDY

If you must know something definitive about me, I know for a fact that I enjoy the convenience of masking tape. Sticky but not too sticky to hurt, or last too long.

HERMIT

I'm not gonna call you weird, if that's what you're fishing for

BIRDY

Actually I'm

Boundlessly common

I think

HERMIT

*(sighs)*

BIRDY

Aren't you?

HERMIT

I'm actually not so interested in learning about you.

BIRDY  
That's okay

HERMIT  
Thx.

BIRDY  
Tell me something about you.

HERMIT  
I have a  
Gross  
Loose  
Brain

BIRDY  
But are you a ghost—

HERMIT  
I'll get to that.

BIRDY  
—sorry

HERMIT  
I'm an all alone hermit crab with split open sides and left-to-die abdomen

BIRDY  
Okay

HERMIT  
Can you—  
Oh fuck.

BIRDY  
What is it?

*Silence*

BIRDY  
(smiles)  
What is it?

HERMIT  
I'm trying to—

BIRDY  
Do you want me to—

HERMIT  
Help

BIRDY  
You want me to help you?

HERMIT  
(nods)

BIRDY  
Yes. I'll help you. Can I start by untying that noose around your neck?

HERMIT  
Why.

BIRDY  
Because it seems uncomfortable. Even though you're almost sitting,

HERMIT  
Hm.

*She crouches down next to him, reaches her hands towards his neck*

HERMIT  
I died right here.

BIRDY  
Yes.

HERMIT  
Wait.  
Will you

*BIRDY pauses*

HERMIT  
Will you take it though

BIRDY

The noose? Yes, I can hide if away if you'd like.

HERMIT

No, not the noose. Responsibility

BIRDY

Responsibility?

HERMIT

Yeah

BIRDY

What kind?

HERMIT

I died right here and I never left.

If you help me, you would be releasing me in some sort of way. I think.

There's a class system, for ghosts, it's basically the same exact system for when you're alive except the rules of the game are even more in the shadows, and the shadows are all faceless men in suits that have all eaten their own ears. I know this for a fact.

BIRDY

A fact?

HERMIT

Well. No. But my feelings for it are factual, because of who I was, obviously.

BIRDY

And who were you?

HERMIT

Does it matter, though? It's all bullshit, you get me?

Quote unquote acute-social-withdrawal-incel-whatever.

Quote unquote participant of disappointing postmodern suicide trends whatever and

Quote unquote blahblahblah your deliberate mutilation of your ghostly capsule further limits your paths towards a high value reincarnation blahblah without a proper guarantor blahblah

racehorse blahblah I don't fucking know. STOP LABELLING ME. I'M NOT WORTH IT. TRUST.

Anyway. Anyway. ANYWAY.

I'm a SG. That's my class, label, whatever.

BIRDY

SG?

HERMIT

Scum-Ghost. Waste of space. Lowest level of ghost.

BIRDY

Lowest level of ghost.

HERMIT

When I was alive, I was an EV. Like you.

BIRDY

EV?

*(laughs)*

Geez. All these acronyms. I can't keep up.

HERMIT

Extremely-Vulnerable.

BIRDY

And I'm an EV, apparently?

HERMIT

Yeah. Why do you think you're here. EV's are the scum ghosts of the living.

BIRDY *(slightly amused)*

Excuse me?

HERMIT

I know right? Death is not a fucking refresh button, that's for sure.

BIRDY

I've never thought of death as a refresh button.

HERMIT

Whatever. You're not better than me. Same class, remember?

BIRDY

Only according to you.

HERMIT

Well, I guess you're a little bit better than me because you're alive. So. And I'm pretty sure this is how it's going to work. If you untie me, I think it means, you're kind of funding me? Or more like, becoming my sponsor?

BIRDY  
Huh?

HERMIT

Like you know when you rent an apartment and the landlord's afraid you can't afford it, so they make you find a person, like a rich cousin or something, that's gonna vouch for you, and pay your rent, if you can't? Ah, right. A guarantor. That's the word I'm looking.

BIRDY

I think I'm following.

HERMIT (*getting excited*)

Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah someone like that. Someone's who's got your back. Like for real. You get it? If you untie me, I'm gonna level the fuck up cuz I got a WHOLE AZZ guarantor now. That's a promotion, baby, and things fucking change when people get promotions right? That's how the world works, right? More options, more power, more EVERYTHING. I know me. I'm not special. If I have more, I'm gonna want more. And I'm already a huge douche now, while having nothing, and dead like this, I'm already a really bad person. Come to think of it.....maybe you shouldn't help me. Maybe I don't want become more of a monster, even if it means I might be more happy. Yeah. You know what. Nvm. Don't help me.

BIRDY

I want to help you. I want to vouch for your happiness.

HERMIT

What if I become even more monster because of it. You're not ready to take on that kind of responsibility.

BIRDY

You don't know me.

HERMIT

I did not live a good life.  
I cyberbullied a lot of people.

BIRDY

That's okay.

HERMIT

Would you really be okay with having a ghost like me clinging to your shoulders?

BIRDY

I want to take that noose off your neck, because it seems tight,  
And because I want you to be able to sit on the floor comfortably. Let's start there.

HERMIT

I'm honestly not in that much pain anymore.

*BIRDY's hands move to the rope on the door handle*

BIRDY

I...

HERMIT

Are you really really sure about this.

BIRDY

I've always had ghosts clinging to my shoulders. I feel them now. Do you see them?

HERMIT

*(nods)*

BIRDY

I don't know what life is like without them. I have imagined what these ghosts look like,  
what color of rot are the fingernails that are digging into my skin.

HERMIT

Do you want me to tell you?

BIRDY

*(shakes her head)*

I think it would be a nice change of pace—  
to finally carry with me a ghost whose face I have seen.

*BIRDY slides the rope off the door handle. HERMIT softly plops onto the floor.*

HERMIT

*(small breath)*

BIRDY

You have the face of an old dog's paw.

*The noose hangs off HERMIT's neck like a leash.*

9. What does tentacle porn mean to you?

*Outside the apartment. MOUSE's desk.  
She works on her computer. Click click click*

MOUSE

The tentacles return, and keep returning, like hogs in heat, and start to play.  
From every crevice of the domesticated room, the tentacles emerge and keep reemerging.  
The tentacles are slimy, and look like they have been torn from a mother to arrive here,  
Shh, be quiet, people are sleeping next door, they seem to say.  
And if you must know,  
Every part of her body is a point of entry.  
The nipples are the mouth,  
The mouth is the bellybutton,  
The bellybutton is the vagina,  
The vagina is the anus,  
And the anus,  
The anus is the opening to the earth hole.  
The tentacles replicate, and replicate their replications,  
They become the arms suctioning her in the sheets,  
The fingers that cover her eyes,  
The legs that clamp her waist,  
The dick in her mouth,  
The dick in her tits,  
The dick in her vagina.  
The climax is, of course, always the same.  
One big giant tentacle shoves its way through her entire body,  
Penetrating the rectum and erupting from the mouth.  
The eyeballs eject themselves and spin out like planets rejecting their own gravity.  
The penetrated is forced to assimilate into the penetration,  
She no longer exists, only what is happening to her exists,

*Half-memory, half-ghost, a more youthful imprint of HERMIT walks up behind her.*

HERMIT

Wutchu up to

MOUSE

Oh hey. Missed you at dinner.

HERMIT

No you didn't

MOUSE

Sure. Whatever.

HERMIT

What is this

MOUSE

Tentacle porn

HERMIT

Looks a lot like...

MOUSE

Gang rape.

HERMIT

...Looks a lot like it shouldn't be legal

MOUSE

Legally the tentacle is not a penis, it's part of a larger creature, that's never seen.

HERMIT

But it's ejaculating, like right now, on your screen. It's clearly a stand-in for a dick.

MOUSE

You're absolutely right. Hm.

HERMIT

What

MOUSE

I think about this a lot.

HERMIT

Dick substitutes?

MOUSE

Kind of. But more like, what tentacle porn means to me.

HERMIT

That's mega twisted, sis. You're a humongous sicko.  
For real.

MOUSE

A lot of people carry around awful, awful fantasies, every day that they live.  
Fantasies to hurt, to rape, to murder. But fantasies aren't illegal.  
You can't be punished for having a sick, tortured mind if you never manifest it, right?

HERMIT

I mean—

MOUSE

Tentacle porn, at least when it's animated like this, made of nothing but pixels—  
People can indulge in their most twisted desires without actually hurting anyone.  
If you do it that way, you're barely implicated in those heinous urges because—

*She points at the computer screen*

That's not you. That's an octopus you don't even know.  
That's not your dick. That's a deep sea tentacle.  
You don't know that monster. You are not that monster.  
You see it now?

HERMIT (*staring*)

Huh. Yeah. It's easy to detach yourself...

MOUSE

Yea... I guess that's what tentacle porn means to me.  
Detachment as a technique to relieve yourself from the parts of you that you hate most,  
but also at the same time,  
acknowledging them.

HERMIT

...So is this like,  
ur job now

MOUSE

Mostly freelance for now. Lil' bit editing here. Lil' bit of animating there.  
(*smiles*)  
I'm savin' up, lil' bro.

HERMIT

For what?

MOUSE

For a refresh button.

10. transactions #2

*Apartment.*  
*Version: Dead*

*Naughty Phone Chatline, otherwise known as Company Meeting*

OX (*over the phone*)

Boss, legally I don't have to tell you this but on an emotional level  
I feel obligated to share this piece of difficult news with you

CAT MERMAID

What is it, Ox

OX

My job performance hasn't been optimal as of late, boss  
These last few days, these last few transactions

CAT MERMAID

Ah, I see, that's hugely disappointing.

OX

Please forgive me, boss!

CAT MERMAID

I appreciate your honesty, Ox, more than anything else

OX

Boss...

CAT MERMAID

What's been bothering you?

OX

These properties I sell have so much death in them, hanging in the air.  
No matter how much you scrub, it's all just a performance, an act, the stains never actually go  
away. And yesterday—

CAT MERMAID

Yesterday?

OX

A dear friend, and old friend, and a good worker, a good DSCC—

CAT MERMAID

Remind me again what a DSCC is—

OX

Death-Scene-Cleaner-Contractor, boss.

I found her dead in one of the apartments we're cleaning.

CAT MERMAID

Ah, I see.

OX

The the the bleach that she drank uh burned a hole through her stomach and stained the wood underneath her corpse.

CAT MERMAID

Mhm.

OX

It was an extra hard clean up, uh especially since she was uh dead, so she could not help out. And that one, that one was a faster worker than one.

CAT MERMAID

Hm. What a loss.

OX

And I'm dreading it, boss, I have never felt such dread, to try and sell the property she died in. It hurts me to show you such weakness, boss, it hurts me, I don't know  
(short sob)

I don't know if I can continue to devote to this work, boss, it's slowly becoming unbearable.

CAT MERMAID

Hey, Ox, now you listen to me—

OX (sobbing)

Boss

CAT MERMAID

You gotta pull your balls up by your boot straps, Ox

That sucks,

It sucks real hard that she died but cleaners—

like astronauts

—are disposable

OX  
She was,  
My Secret Santa last year.

CAT MERMAID  
Say it with me, Ox—

OX  
Okay, boss, okay, okay—

CAT MERMAID  
Cleaners

OX  
Cleaners

CAT MERMAID  
Like astronauts

OX  
Like astronauts

CAT MERMAID  
Are...

OX  
Disposable, boss.

CAT MERMAID  
That's my ox, that's my hardworking, obedient ox

*Mood shift.*

OX (*a baby*)  
mommy...

CAT MERMAID  
Yes, little boy, I am your mommy, your daughter, your wife.  
Your biology tutor in a bulging button up.

OX  
Do you have a thick bush?

CAT MERMAID  
Yea, it's dense, like a coniferous forest

OX  
Describe it more.

CAT MERMAID

She doesn't shave, she is scared of the razor heads.  
They remind her of little mouths.

OX

I have a little mouth.

CAT MERMAID

Like a goldfish in a plastic bag

OX

Hang me around your neck.

CAT MERMAID

When I was a little girl, I was at a festival.  
In the night, I had played a game and won a prize—  
A clear pouch with a plastic green string.  
Swimming inside was a fish so small you could see all of its bones.  
I wore the pouch around my neck all night, and it was woozy,  
To have that little life hanging to me like that,  
Having it beat on my chest like that as I walked,  
Thump thump thump—  
between my budding breasts.

OX

Thump thump thump—

OX

I want to be that little fish.

CAT MERMAID

Who doesn't.

OX

I'd die to be that little fish.

CAT MERMAID

And when we got home, we had hotpot for dinner.  
I hung the pouch on the hook of iron ceiling lamp,  
Suspended right above the screaming steam,  
A proper seat at the table.  
But after we had gorged, when I went to retrieve my prize and return it to my chest,  
I saw that the sweet fish baby was dead.

OX

(gasp)

CAT MERMAID

It had cooked right through,  
It's meat was the color of kindergarten glue.  
And so I stuck my girly fingers into the pouch and grabbed it,  
The most tiniest corpse in the universe, and put it in my little mouth.  
It tasted like nothing.  
What did I expect?

*Silence*

OX

This is.  
This is not a company meeting. Is it.  
You're not. You're not my boss.

CAT MERMAID

*(hisses)*

I'm a gorgeous mermaid.

OX

Oh god.  
I should, I have to go.

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

stay

OX

I made a mistake

CAT MERMAID

Stay

OX

I've already told you too much

CAT MERMAID

Stay

*(hiss)*

OX

I don't feel good.

CAT MERMAID  
I need your help.

OX  
I can't help you.

CAT MERMAID  
Listen, Ox, that boy, Ox, who hung himself in apartment 16?  
You were there recently, don't you remember?  
That boy is like that dangling little fish pounding between my tight tits,  
I am feeling like a little bit of a mommy to him but also he is nothing to me at all, I might eat  
him tomorrow, but today, I'm just a little curious, is all, about his Reincarnation Options.  
Can't you just tell me a little bit about it?

OX  
I can't—

CAT MERMAID  
Can't you tell me?

OX  
I really can't—

CAT MERMAID  
Remember when I made you cry tears of my piss and you licked my piss off your cheek and it  
tasted like beer?

OX  
Happy hour...

CAT MERMAID  
It was the happiest you've been in a long time, wasn't it?

OX  
It was.

CAT MERMAID *(like a baby)*  
Don't I deserve a little tip, Mr. Ox?

OX  
*(breath)*

CAT MERMAID

I've been so good to you. I could be even better to you in the coming days. Bet on it.

*Short silence then—*

*Mechanical typing sounds. OX clears his throat.*

OX

Soul 0.004444's Reincarnation Options are determined as follows:

- 1: A factory farm chicken in Brazil or the United States.
- 2: An aggressive species of mold growing over a tangerine that's been left on the slopes of a hillside cemetery in Hong Kong
- 3: A marine prokaryote living in an unmapped region of the ocean floor.

CAT MERMAID

A factory farm chicken. Mold. Or a, a prokaryote?

OX

Correct

CAT MERMAID

The fuck is a prokaryote?

OX

A primitive single-celled organism

CAT MERMAID

*(laughs)*

Yikes.

OX

I don't think they can feel pain.

CAT MERMAID

Does he get to choose which option?

OX

No, protocol states a randomized selection process.

CAT MERMAID

Can he be racehorse?

OX

Clearly no

CAT MERMAID

Can he be a soldier ant?

OX

No, he doesn't qualify for that either.

Soldier ants perform critical social roles in their respective communities.

CAT MERMAID

Yeah so?

OX

Soul 0.004444 exhibited acute social withdrawal behavior in his previous human life. Left to his own accord, he would surely put his whole colony at risk.

CAT MERMAID

Right, sure.

CAT MERMAID

What are his odds in the Human Sperm Lottery?

OX

Soul 0.004444 as an SG, scum ghost, is not eligible to enter the HSL.

CAT MERMAID

Damn.

For real?

Fuck.

OX

He doesn't have to reincarnate at all.

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

That's not an option.

OX

Why not?

CAT MERMAID

He has to try again

OX

Trying again is not a guaranteed ghostly right

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

What about his guarantor? He has a guarantor now.

The EV that rented out the apartment? She can vouch for him.

OX

Well—

CAT MERMAID

Does that open pathways?

OX

Soul 0.004444 does not qualify for any pathways that would benefit from having a guarantor.

Mold doesn't need to be vouched for, it's just mold.

CAT MERMAID

shit. **SHIT.**

OX

I'm sorry, I'm just—

CAT MERMAID

FUCK you're FUCKING USELESS.

OX

I'm an employee.

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

Who do you work for? Who's your REAL boss? Hm?

You work for that dirty fucking octopus, don't you? TELL ME.

OX

Octopus?

As in the sea creature?

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

Would you even know? Would you even CARE TO KNOW!?

*(hiss, hiss, hissssss)*

OX

Hold on—

*She smashes the receiver down.*

CAT MERMAID

Motherfucker.

*She vomits. Orange and green burst from her lips.*

*She holds it in, swallows it all back down.*

11. move in #3

*The apartment.*

*Version: Living*

*BIRDY pulls in, the same way she's done it the previous two times.*

BIRDY (smiling)

Steamed cake.

*She looks at the window, the Dead Bird Curtains.*

*It's still hanging up, but some of the masking tape is peeling.*

BIRDY

Needs a little more masking tape but, pretty.

*She walks towards the kitchen, and sees the door leading into the bathroom.*

BIRDY

(sharp exhale)

*She sees an empty noose hanging from the door handle*

*She wraps her fingers around the rope, allowing it's heft to rest on her palm,*

*Before letting it slip through her hand like a swishing cat tail.*

BIRDY

Hm.

*She turns around and sees tall, lidded pot sitting on the stove.*

BIRDY

Hello, pot.

*She takes off the metal lid and peers inside.*

BIRDY  
*(sharp exhale)*

*She puts the lid back on the pot.*

BIRDY  
*(long exhale)*  
That's a lot of bones.

*Her eyes returns to the bathroom door, it looks different.  
The old white wood almost adopting the appearance of frog skin.  
BIRDY puts her hand on the door handle, and braces herself.*

BIRDY  
*(deep breath)*

*She swings the door open.*

CAT MERMAID  
I not here to chit chat

*CAT MERMAID is perched on the toilet tank,  
Wearing a tie, sitting like an oversized business man.*

BIRDY  
ok

CAT MERMAID  
I'm here to talk business

BIRDY  
ok

CAT MERMAID  
Grab a seat

BIRDY  
Uh

CAT MERMAID  
Ma'AM, This is a BUSINESS meeting!

BIRDY  
I know

CAT MERMAID  
Take it seriously, please, come ON.

BIRDY  
It's just that

CAT MERMAID  
What.

BIRDY  
There's no...  
*(deep breath)*  
There's no chairs. I haven't had time to buy any yet,  
And I know that business meetings require chairs.  
I could go out and buy some right now if—

CAT MERMAID  
no need

BIRDY  
ok

CAT MERMAID  
use your suitcase

BIRDY  
ok

*BIRDY hastily pulls the suitcase up to the bathroom entrance.  
She sits on it, the empty suitcase instantly collapses under the weight.*

BIRDY  
*(small grunt)*

CAT MERMAID  
Comfy?

BIRDY  
*(nods)*

CAT MERMAID

Are you comfortable with renting out your womb?

BIRDY

(...)

CAT MERMAID

Are you comfortable with renting out your womb.

BIRDY

uh

I

excuse me?

CAT MERMAID

It would only be for nine months.

BIRDY

Ok?

CAT MERMAID

Ok deal?!

BIRDY

No!

I mean. What?

CAT MERMAID

Your periods came back recently, right?

BIRDY

(...)

CAT MERMAID

right?

BIRDY

(nods)

From eating a heavenly lamb stew.

CAT MERMAID

And the throwing up has stopped?

BIRDY  
(nods)

CAT MERMAID  
The meat stays in?

BIRDY  
The meat stays in.

CAT MERMAID  
Then what's the problem.

BIRDY  
(...)

CAT MERMAID  
So what's your deal.

BIRDY  
(...)

CAT MERMAID  
Listen—You know this kid. You've talked to him.

BIRDY  
I have?

CAT MERMAID  
Yea, the kid that hung himself on that door handle? You let him off the noose, you said you'd carry the responsibility.

BIRDY  
I did?

CAT MERMAID  
Yea, the second time you tried moving in.

BIRDY  
The *second* time I tried moving in?

CAT MERMAID  
Had to overstep, didn't you.

BIRDY

What do you mean?

CAT MERMAID

Had to go and give him all these crazy ideas that maybe he wants to try being a human again.

BIRDY (*exasperation*)

I'm sorry, I don't really remember .

CAT MERMAID

Before he was totally fine with not reincarnating as a human.

He had dreams of becoming a Soldier Ant.

He wanted to spend a short, purposeful life defending an isolated ant colony.

BIRDY

(...)

CAT MERMAID

He dreamed about getting injured in a noble battle against a parasitic wasp.

He imagined passing on hush-hush under the slim shade of a blade of noontime grass.

BIRDY

(...)

CAT MERMAID

But no, you couldn't let that be, right?

Wanted to help him without knowing what that actually meant, right?

Now he won't shut up about how he landed a "guarantor" and how she's "definitely" going to "fund" a million sperm tickets for him to enter the Human Sperm Lottery—

BIRDY

Human

Sperm

Lottery?

CAT MERMAID

I ask him what about your dreams of becoming an ant?

Life as a ocean floor amoeba doesn't sound that bad, right?

But he won't listen. That's his whole fucking problem. He never listens.

"I wanna try again"

He keeps saying it, he won't fucking stop saying it.

"I just really really wanna try again."

"What's wrong with wanting to try again." SHUT UP.

BIRDY

Why can't he try again?

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

He never stood a chance to begin with,

Was a garbage person that lived a garbage life, right?

A dignified reincarnation isn't a fundamental right,

Same thing as being a human,

Being born a human doesn't automatically mean you get to live a dignified life.

*(hiss)*

But still,

This whole stupid change of heart thing?

Part of it is my fault.

But mostly,

It's your fault.

You happy, now? Are you happy?

BIRDY

No, I'm not.

CAT MERMAID

So fix it. You have the real estate for it.

Let him rent out your womb. You don't have to be his mom or anything.

BIRDY

I can't

CAT MERMAID

Why not.

BIRDY

Well I'm

pregnant

CAT MERMAID

*(...)*

BIRDY

I'm pregnant

CAT MERMAID

You're pregnant?

BIRDY

It's early but—

*CAT MERMAID touches BIRDY's belly. BIRDY flinches but doesn't move away.*

BIRDY

You feel the whirring heartbeat? Reminds me of a minifridge.

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

You're not lying

BIRDY

I'm not

CAT MERMAID

DAMMIT are you FUCKING KIDDING ME

BIRDY

I'm sorry

*BIRDY buries her head in her hands, she feels very defeated.*

*CAT MERMAID vomits.*

*Quiet.*

BIRDY *(looking at the vomit)*

I don't have anything to clean that with.

CAT MERMAID

Don't.

Stop trying to fucking scrub us away.

BIRDY

ok.

CAT MERMAID

I died here. All over.

In pieces.

Very slowly.

I died right here. Right there. And over there.

BIRDY

I heard

CAT MERMAID  
He died right there.

BIRDY  
Yes.

CAT MERMAID  
*(vomits)*  
Fucking hate this city

BIRDY  
Me too.

*The space takes a breath.*

BIRDY  
Are you, are you the one that's stopping me from moving in?

CAT MERMAID  
*(shrugs)*

BIRDY  
According to you, I've already tried moving in two times. I can't seem to get past the first day. These time loops...

CAT MERMAID  
Ha. Time loops. Gimme a break.

BIRDY  
Please tell me what's going on. I just want to know.

CAT MERMAID  
It's me. It's you. It's a feeling. Who knows.

BIRDY  
A feeling?

CAT MERMAID  
Look. Lady. You're trespassing. And pregnant. Which means you're useless to me in the most heinous way. If it were up to me, I'd never see you again. And the thing is, it SHOULD be up to me. This apartment is my fucking domain! It's my palace! It's my coffin! The wood panels on this floor are as organic to my constitution as these fish scales on my skin. I don't fucking want you here. I don't want you to start living here. You're literally trying to move in and start shitting

and pissing inside the actual toilet bowl where my severed head used to be. I DON'T WANT YOU HERE. So when you show up, I reset the time to the day before. Hoping you'd take the hint and start looking for another shithole apartment. Anywhere but here. But you keep fucking showing up. I don't know what else tell you. It's me. It's you. It's a feeling. It's motherfucking time loops.

BIRDY

...Or maybe it's masking tape.

CAT MERMAID (*massaging her temples as if she's having a headache*)

No, it's not masking tape.

BIRDY

But you said it could be a feeling. And there's this particular feeling. That feeling when a piece of masking tape starts to fray around the edges, so you tape down the fraying edge with a new piece of masking tape, but then, that second piece starts to fray as well, so you tape down a third piece of masking tape over the other two pieces, and maybe even a fourth piece, because maybe that fourth piece would be enough to stop the fraying once and for all? But the fraying is endless? And there is never enough masking tape?

CAT MERMAID

(*hiss*)

You're trespassing.

(*hiss*)

And pregnant.

*The space takes another breath.*

BIRDY

A good friend once told me that if my husband hits me,  
I must leave him immediately.  
That this is the first step to a happy life.

CAT MERMAID

Your friend sounds like an idiot.

BIRDY

Her name was Jane, otherwise known as—  
The one who gave me the recipe for the heavenly lamb stew.  
And I am trying so hard to listen to her,  
But I have been living a lying life for so long that I am realizing I do not know  
What it means to take a step.  
How do you step out of an old life and step into a new life if it is all the same life?

Every moment I am praying for something to change,  
But my lying life clings to me,  
When I walk towards my new life, my belongings slowly fall out of this suitcase,  
Until I am left with nothing but this blastocyst—

*(she looks down at her belly)*

This little lump of cells burrowing itself into my uterine walls,  
Trying to make some sort of playground out of me,  
Well,  
He sort of—  
My sweaty mountain husband—  
He raped me in the front  
And in the back.  
And when I was in the hospital,  
From the pain  
I watched the winning sperm thrust itself into the egg,  
Like it was a national geographic documentary.

...

Life is bloody

CAT MERMAID

You have no idea

BIRDY

I keep trying to move in, I keep trying to start over, by moving into this apartment.  
But it seems I am only starting again and again and again in the same place,

...

I feel so much sadness for my unmoving life.

CAT MERMAID

Can you help him

BIRDY

What?

CAT MERMAID

You say you don't know anything but you know how to be alone.

BIRDY

I've been alone my whole life, I think

CAT MERMAID

And you're still here, trying to move your life, trying to slap it around.

BIRDY

It's not working.

CAT MERMAID

But you keep showing up. Even though you're all alone. You keep showing up.

BIRDY

It's nothing to be proud of.

CAT MERMAID

You don't have to be proud of it, but it's not nothing.

It's survival.

BIRDY

What is.

CAT MERMAID

Teach him how to live with himself.

You owe him that much.

BIRDY

Do I?

CAT MERMAID

I can

*(sigh)*

I can help you move in.

BIRDY

You can?

CAT MERMAID

This time, just once, I'll help you.

BIRDY

Thank you

CAT MERMAID

Don't waste it.

BIRDY  
This boy—

*She touches the door handle*

I'll do whatever I can.

CAT MERMAID  
Thank you

BIRDY  
It's nice to meet you.

CAT MERMAID  
Just don't—

*Pause*

BIRDY  
Yes?

CAT MERMAID  
Don't scrub me away?  
Don't scrub me away.

BIRDY  
(...)

CAT MERMAID  
Don't scrub me away.

BIRDY (*nodding vigorously*)  
Ok. Ok ok.

## 12. Fan Man Yee

*The apartment.  
Version: Dead*

*CAT MERMAID, alone.*

CAT MERMAID  
My real name is Fan Man Yee. This is a record of my life.

I was a sex worker who lived in Hong Kong up to the year 1999.  
I stole a wallet from a man called Chan Man Lok,  
He was a triad leader, drug dealer, and my pimp.  
I paid him back, even with his bullshit interest rates, I paid him back,  
I paid him back by working, working as though I did not care about living,  
Working as though a baby was not growing inside me,  
I worked.

*sighs*

I worked like a dog, maybe that's why I'm a cat now.

*She laughs, she hates it, she punches herself in the head, she focuses.*

Him and his henchman, Leung Shing Cho and Leung Wai Lun,  
Kidnapped me and held me in an apartment quite like this,  
Tortured me for a month in an apartment quite like this,  
I died in an apartment quite like this,  
In an apartment equipped with everything one might need to live.

*She opens the door and pulls in BIRDY's suitcase, and unzips it.  
The suitcase is now packed with all kinds of different shit.  
CAT MERMAID pulls out a lot of Hello Kitty posters,  
She starts to stick them on the walls, carelessly, with masking tape*

Before this apartment became the location of my extended murder,  
It was frequently used as a place for Chan and his gang members to meet.  
No one actually lived here.

*She unrolls one last poster onto the wall, with her back to us, we cannot see the poster.*

When they finally found me, authorities were confused to find the apartment decorated all over  
with Hello Kitty memorabilia. "No one knows why"

*She slaps on a piece of masking tape to reveal a hypersexualized poster of Hello Kitty in  
leather BDSM lingerie, a whip and globular cartoon tits.*

IT WAS A SEX THING.  
IT'S ALWAYS A SEX THING.  
It's never not a sex thing.  
Can we get this knowledge, into our collective skulls, please?!  
Sheesh. Let's move on.

*Next, she takes out several planks of wood, nails and a hammer and walks towards the windows. She yanks down the Dead Bird Curtains.*

Fucking stupid.

*She starts to hammer nails into the wooden planks across the windows.*

The first thing they did was plank up the windows.

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Schizo bitch

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Your son is

*Hammer*

Probably so ashamed

*Hammer*

To have you

*Hammer*

As a mother

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Frog skin slut

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

Pay us back

*Hammer*

*(hiss)*

I don't owe you anything.

*The hammer falls from her hand,  
Crack-fracture onto the floor.*

*From the hallway, she pulls in a tattered, semen-stained mattress.  
She tosses it into a corner, it falls onto the floor splat-thump.*

Whenever they got bored of beating me,  
Especially when I became too broken to react,  
They would sit on a mattress quite like this and play video games,  
When they got bored of the video games, they'd beat me some more.

*From the suitcase, she pulls out a small tv screen and old looking game console  
She throws them in front of the mattress.*

Some of their favorite playtime activities included melting plastic straws onto my thighs.

*She places a tall canister of plastic straws onto the kitchen counter.*

They liked to splash chili oil into my open wounds.

*She slides a jar of chili oil next to the straws.*

They forced me to eat their shit and drink their piss.

*She puts some rolls of toilet paper next to the toilet.*

They forced me to shit in a shoebox and eat it, all of it, my own shit and the cardboard.

*She sets down a shoebox down by the door.*

When I finally found enough dignity in myself to fuck off and die,  
They set my feet on fire and asked me to dance.

*She puts a small lighter in a cupboard.*

*A breath. She returns to the suitcase.*

*She pulls out a flimsy handsaw caked in dried blood.*

Chan Man Lok used a handsaw quite like this to detach my head from my neck,  
My limbs from my torso,  
Inside a bathtub quite like that.  
He sawed and and sawed for hours and hours and did not stop,  
Until I had quite essentially vanished into slabs of fraying meat.

*She walks towards the tall pot on the stove.*

Chan took my head and starting boiling it in this pot right here.

*She goes to the suitcase and retrieves a wooden spoon.*

Of course, when you're boiling things, you need to use a spoon to stir and keep things moving,  
or stuff is going to get stuck at the bottom.

*She inserts the spoon into the pot and gives the contents a stir—sloosh.*

While Chan was boiling my head, he ordered his henchmen to remove the meat from my  
bones, and stuff them into ziplock bags.

*From the suitcase, she pulls out many ziplock bags packed tightly with wet, raw meats. Chicken drumsticks, pig knuckles, chicken feet, roast beef, whole skinned frogs—*

Ziplock bags are, of course, essential household items.

*—and deposits them all at once into the minifridge.*

After they had neatly stowed away all the ziplock bags into a refrigerator quite like this, The men decided that they were hungry. So they took another pot and placed it beside the one that contained my head. In that second pot, they started cooking some ramen.

*She grabs an extra pot and a pack of ramen, and places them onto the stove.*

It's always handy to have some packs of brick ramen lying around the apartment.

*She opens the pack of a ramen and puts in the pot.*

And with the very same spoon they used to cook my head, they stirred the noodles.

*She takes the spoon from the tall pot, puts it in the ramen pot, and gives it a stir.*

Mmm. Yum. What a quick and convenient meal.

*CAT MERMAID brings one last item out of the suitcase—  
A soiled Hello Kitty mermaid doll with a blue-grey tail and a snapped neck.*

And finally, the Great Octopus marveled at his masterpiece—

*CAT MERMAID extracts a human skull from the tall pot. It feels like chalk in her hands.*

—And decided to frame it.

*She rams the skull up the doll through its opening in the neck,  
And seals it up with masking tape.*

Every apartment needs a little something something to really make it your own.

*She looks at the doll. She looks all around her.*

Look what I made.

I made a home.

END OF PART 1

13. open house #2

*Few months have passed.*

*The apartment. Not empty at all.*

*Version: Living.*

*Outside, from the hallway,*

*The sound of a shoulder being repeatedly thrust into the door.*

OX (*from the hallway*)

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Don't worry.

*The thrusting sounds continue.*

OX

Sorry. Sorry. Almost. Don't worry.

*The door bursts open.*

*OX and MOUSE stand at the entrance.*

OX

Apartment 16. Please. Come on in.

MOUSE

Thanks.

*They walk in.*

*OX looks around.*

OX

Oh...oh no. Oh um.

MOUSE

What's wrong.

OX

Why is this. Why is this apartment not clean.

*In a panic, OX references the file he has on hand.*

*He frantically flips through paper after paper.*

OX (*cold sweat*)

Something's wrong, don't worry, something's wrong, it's okay—

MOUSE

So...

Are we gonna do

A tour, or what.

...

Okay, welp.

I guess I'll show myself around.

OX

something's terribly wrong what's

what's wrong though, what could be—

I don't know do I know but would I care to know?

don't worry don't worry don't worry don't worry

*As OX scours his files,  
MOUSE examines the apartment.*

MOUSE

Shit.

This place is Really. Fucking. Small. RFS.

*She smacks the wall.*

Thin walls too.

*She looks at the posters.*

And wow. Yikes. Why so many Hello Kitty posters. Is it a sex thing? It's a sex thing.

OX (*trying to pull himself together*)

Those, those shouldn't be there.

MOUSE

Ugly window.

*MOUSE walks closer to the window.*

Hey um uh...

Mister Real Estate Agent?

OX

Yes, miss?

MOUSE

There's a pile of dead birds strung together on the floor right here.

*OX buckles over*

OX

*(shallow, anxious breaths)*

Oh no. Oh god. Oh no. nonono.

That that shouldn't be there either.

MOUSE

That's okay. Can we see the kitchen?

*MOUSE walks towards the kitchen. OX scampers to stop her.*

OX

Miss! Um, Miss?!

MOUSE

Yeah?

OX

I think I must've made some gross administrative error somewhere and this apartment hasn't yet been properly processed. Doesn't smell like lemon. Doesn't smell like lemon!

MOUSE

That's okay, it doesn't need to smell like lemon.

OX

It has to smell like lemon. I'm sorry, so sorry to ask but would you mind rescheduling—

*Flushing sound.*

*!!!*

*Both MOUSE and OX spin around.*

*The bathroom door opens, a rather pregnant BIRDY walks out.*

BIRDY

Excuse me, just.

Just what do you think you're doing?

*!!!!!!*

OX *(100% glitching)*

You...It's you?! But...

*(sifts through his files)*

I thought, but this this form says you're dead!

BIRDY

Says I'm what?!

OX

*(looks at his files again, looks up, looks down)*

Right here, says occupant classified as EV is now dead in accordance to the insured timeline...

*(points to a sheet of paper)*

Says you're dead, on this line, says you're dead, see? You see it?!

BIRDY

Well, I'm not dead. So, maybe there was a clerical error?

*MOUSE fails to suppress a giggle.*

*OX starts to back up as if BIRDY was some raging boar.*

OX

Oh no, don't worry, oh no.

Ha-ha,

yes, I see,

okay.

*And with that, OX makes a mad dash out of the apartment.*

*Quiet...*

BIRDY

...hi

MOUSE

hi...

BIRDY

Open house?

MOUSE

Yup.

MOUSE

I'm sorry if it didn't go as planned.

MOUSE

It's okay.

BIRDY

I'm Birdy.

MOUSE

Mouse.

*Another pause...*

BIRDY

I uh...hmm...

I don't know.

MOUSE

You don't know?

You don't know what?

BIRDY

I don't know how to tell if you're the kind of person who might enjoy purchasing coffees. From a business.

MOUSE

Huh?

*(tilts head)*

Like from a café?

BIRDY

Mhm. And I don't know how to tell...

If you're the kind of person who might enjoy sitting outside for a while afterwards.

To drink those coffees.

MOUSE

(...)

BIRDY

(...)

MOUSE

Why don't you try asking.

BIRDY

*(Smiles.*

*The kind of smile that evokes an involuntary sound of happiness from the gut)*

MOUSE

*(That exact, same kind of smile)*

14. coffee date #1

*MOUSE and BIRDY on a little coffee date, somewhere cute.  
They each have a little pastry, and a little cup of coffee.*

MOUSE

Matcha crêpe cake, sliced strawberries, topped with fresh whipped cream.

BIRDY

Black sesame and tahini cookie. Soft and chewy.

MOUSE

Cold brew. Black.

BIRDY

Hazelnut decaf. Half-and-half. Lots of sugar.

MOUSE

Nibble nibble nibble

BIRDY

Chirp chirp

Chirp chirp chirp

*They sip, take small bites, and whisper little things.*

15. night swim

*Apartment.*

*Version: Dead*

*CAT MERMAID is eating a bag of chips,  
Sitting on a giant, severed tentacle as it squirms and slowly dies underneath her.  
She sniffs.  
She sticks a pinky up a nostril,  
Drills it in deep like screwdriver.  
She sneezes.  
Sneezes again.  
Sneezes into the chip bag.  
Snot runs over lips.  
She eats another chip.  
It's covered in snot  
She wipes off her greasy, snotty fingers on the dead tentacle.*

*She starts rubbing her crotch on the tentacle.  
Slowly at first, but steadily picking up speed.  
She rubs without pleasure.*

CAT MERMAID

Who's the monster now.

*She rubs without pleasure.*

Who's the monster now.

*She rubs without pleasure*

Who's the monster now.

16. how to cook for one

*The apartment.  
Version: Not Living, Not Dead*

BIRDY

You seem upset

HERMIT

I'm not.

*HERMIT rubs an eraser up and down his arm, obsessively.  
The eraser looks like the ones from MOUSE's desk.*

BIRDY

What are you doing

HERMIT

Making stones

BIRDY

Okay well—

HERMIT

I'm making stones.

BIRDY

You ready for today's lesson?

HERMIT

No, I'm making stones.

*He pauses the rubbing for a second to point at BIRDY's pregnant belly*

HERMIT

I hate it

*He resumes the rubbing*

BIRDY

I'm sorry

HERMIT

I should be in there

BIRDY

That's...wrong and  
we're not talking about that right now.

HERMIT

Whatever

BIRDY

Today's lesson is how to cook for one.

HERMIT

Booooo

*He throws the eraser at BIRDY. She ignores it.*

HERMIT

Can you throw that back to me.

BIRDY

*(clears throat)*

A big secret to cooking for one is understanding portion sizes.

*BIRDY takes an extra-long cucumber out of the mini fridge*

BIRDY

Just because you're eating one portion doesn't necessarily mean you would eat one cucumber.

HERMIT  
Why not.

BIRDY  
Well the cucumber could be really large, like this one, and that would simply be too much for one serving.

HERMIT  
Why not.

BIRDY  
This is good trick I like to use. If I'm slicing up a cucumber for let's say a salad, I try to envision how much I'd like to eat if I was eating the cucumber whole, just by itself—

HERMIT  
Why not.

BIRDY  
Why not. Precisely. Let's use this specific cucumber as an example. Say you wanted to slice some of it up to accompany a bowl of rice, How much of it would you cut off to make just enough for one person?

HERMIT (*feigning interest*)  
ehrmhhh. can i examine it up close?

BIRDY  
Of course

*BIRDY hands HERMIT the cucumber. HERMIT starts giving it a blowjob.*

HERMIT  
(*rapid head jerk, rapid head jerk, choking sound*)

BIRDY  
Stop that

*She snatches the cucumber back*

HERMIT (⊗)  
bUT I liKE to De3pTHROAT COCK-cUM-ber

*HERMIT crawls between BIRDY's legs to retrieve his eraser.*

BIRDY  
Stop!

*HERMIT resumes the eraser rubbing.*

HERMIT  
Just leave me alone.

BIRDY  
*(sighs)*  
The correct answer is 1/3 of the cucumber.

HERMIT  
Weak, that's so weak. You got a shallow throat or something?  
*(fake gasp)*  
Is that why your husband left you?

BIRDY  
1/3 of a large cucumber is a good portion to serve one person,  
Additionally, applying this method is a good way to avoid leftovers.

*She returns the cucumber to the fridge*

Leftovers are undesirable because they are depressing, and unpleasant to look at.  
Also, serving leftovers to a greasy husband returning home for work for dinner is dangerous  
because it might cause him to think you've been lazy.

HERMIT *(pretending to be furious husband)*  
I ATE THIS SAME SHIT LAST NIGHT.

BIRDY *(struggling to focus)*  
Also, also—  
Having leftovers in the fridge means you don't necessarily have to cook that day,  
and if you don't have to cook, there's nothing to do to fill up all that time.  
You always have to find ways to fill up the time.  
*(sharp exhale)*  
So the answer is 1/3 of a cucumber.  
*(sharp exhale)*  
I guess most of these lessons aren't helpful if you don't plan on reincarnating as a housewife.  
...  
Is being a housewife  
Something you're considering?

HERMIT

Nope, nope nope.

I don't need these lessons. I don't need to learn how to live alone.

BIRDY

Your friend and I both think it would be helpful if—

HERMIT (*interrupting*)

But I don't plan to live alone. I plan to have a lotta of friends.

And be really hot and really loved and really really fucking happy all the time.

BIRDY

You can't plan on that

HERMIT

Yes I can

BIRDY

No you can't

HERMIT

SHUT UP, I CAN,

I TOTALLY CAN.

BIRDY

How.

HERMIT

When I try again, everything's gonna go super perfectly because I've already done it once and I'll know where I fucked up and I just won't do those same things again

BIRDY

You won't remember this life when you try again.

The memories of your old life are going to be erased—

HERMIT

What's the POINT OF THESE LESSONS THEN

BIRDY (*soft*)

I've been thinking of these lessons—

HERMIT

IF I'M NOT EVEN GONNA FUCKING REMEMBER WHAT'S THE FUCKING POINT

BIRDY (*soft-soft*)

I've been thinking of them as—

HERMIT

WHAT'S THE POINT?!?

BIRDY (*soft-soft-soft*)

—making little drawings onto your soul.

*Quiet*

HERMIT

That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

...

Souls aren't made of paper.

...

Idiot.

BIRDY

You're right. You don't have a real path towards reincarnation.

So all of these lessons, you're right, they're essentially pointless.

But everything is a little bit pointless, you know that.

We continue to live only because it fills the time.

We have these lessons because it's something to do.

HERMIT

You said you were going to take responsibility and you're not doing it.

*(points a finger right at her face)*

Scum ghost.

BIRDY

I'm not a ghost. I'm very much alive.

*HERMIT moves his finger to point at BIRDY's pregnant belly*

BIRDY

My baby is unrelated to this. I don't. Owe you anything of that nature.

HERMIT (*soft*)

Why do you even wanna keep something you got from getting raped.

BIRDY

That's none of your business.

HERMIT (*soft-soft*)

It's probably gonna grow up to be a fucking rapist.

BIRDY

That's not true

HERMIT (*soft-soft-soft*)

I'll never hurt anyone in my next life. I swear, not even cyber bully, I won't do it.

I won't even hurt myself, not even a little.

I'll learn to be less self-aware so I'll hate myself less.

BIRDY

That's good, Hermit, that's progress.

HERMIT

I deserve to try again

BIRDY

You do.

*Small pause*

HERMIT

Taking a nap. Don't wake me.

*HERMIT crawls over to the mattress, curls up with his stone.*

## 17. coffee date #2

*MOUSE and BIRDY on their second coffee date.*

*Feels different than the first time. Less real, maybe.*

BIRDY

Sometimes I fantasize about having sex with an octopus

MOUSE

Me too

*Purple fog*

BIRDY

I'm the wife of a fisherman who has been lost at sea and

Maybe the octopus slinks himself into my lonely bedroom one night, and maybe

His tentacles are lined with rows and rows of opals and maybe  
He asks me if I want to be swallowed.  
He offers me to swallow me.  
A swallowing so complete I will no longer be human, I will simply be swallowed.  
I nod, I saw yes, I would feel shy about it, but there would be no doubt in my heart.  
When my ex-husband used to fuck me, I would never make a sound.  
I did not want to do anything that would encourage or discourage him any which way.  
But with an octopus,  
I might make love like I am holding a quivering cube of tofu in my mouth and maybe  
I will make the sound of blowing water.

*Heavy, greasy haze*

MOUSE

For me, I am on top of a mountain made of thousand-year-old ink and  
I'm soaking in a marble tub that is a shade adjacent to taupe.  
Some yoghurt-y version of you is in there with me.  
We're feeding each other calamari that's dangling off our demon fingernails as  
agar-agar tentacles of an octopus laps and laps sweet cream and stars into  
the abalone lips of our  
sac  
cred  
cu  
unts.

*They kiss  
water-like  
creature-like*

## 18. making stones

*The apartment.  
Version: Dead.*

*HERMIT and CAT MERMAID sit across from each other on the floor,  
in between them is a small pile of old hi-polymer erasers.  
They each rub an eraser up and down their arms.*

*rub  
rub rub  
rub  
rub*

HERMIT

like that yea

just rub. be patient about it.

*rub rub*

*rub*

*rub rub*

CAT MERMAID

and what are we doing exactly

*rub*

*rub rub rub*

*rub*

*rub*

HERMIT

making stones

CAT MERMAID

and this is supposed to be

HERMIT

meditative

CAT MERMAID

right

*rub rub*

*rub*

*rub*

*rub*

CAT MERMAID

*(showing the eraser)*

how's this

HERMIT

nice. shiny.

CAT MERMAID

*(feeling the eraser)*

so smooth

HERMIT

i know

like little pond stones

CAT MERMAID

if rubbing erasers into skin smooths them out like this

into stones like this

does that mean

our skin is like a fleshy manifestation of

time passing

HERMIT

yea or like, water existing

*rub*

*rub rub*

*rubrub*

HERMIT

do you really never think about it

CAT MERMAID

no

HERMIT

why not

*rub rub*

*rub*

*rub rub*

CAT MERMAID

*(shrugs)*

HERMIT

do you think i'm dumb for wanting to try again

?

*rub rub*

CAT MERMAID

no

HERMIT  
k

*rub*  
*rub rubrubrub*

CAT MERMAID  
i can kill it  
you know

*rub*  
*rub*

HERMIT  
the baby?

CAT MERMAID  
at night  
when she's sleeping or whatever  
i can kill it

*rub*  
*rub*

and then you can climb in  
in its place

*rubrub*

the blanket will swell like a balloon.  
that will be the sign i look for to know that you are inside,  
safe and warm,  
purrrrring,  
already trying again.

*rub*

i can kill it.  
it won't hurt her, pretty sure.  
she'll barely know it happened

*rub rub*  
*rubrub*

HERMIT

i didn't know you could do that

CAT MERMAID

ghosts like me, that die kind of war-like?

we sometimes receive a consolation prize when we first enter the afterlife—

like a "gee that was an extra gross way to die, wanna have some fun?"

kind of like a discount coupon.

HERMIT

wuts the coupon do.

CAT MERMAID

it lets us cash in on one super extra evil deed

like kill a kid or

beach a whale

*rub*

*rub*

and i

i've been holding on to my coupon for

a long time now

*rubrub*

*rub rub*

*rub*

which means i can kill it

HERMIT

why do you want to help me so bad?

*rubrub*

*rub rub*

CAT MERMAID

i have a son. he was 3 when i died

HERMIT

is he dead

CAT MERMAID

no he's—

*rubrub*

old now.

he coaches a local soccer team

and he's not

not-happy

*rub rub rub*

i want that for u.

HERMIT

u kno, i never really thought of myself as someone who killed themselves because i never really thought of myself as an human and when you're not human it's not really technically suicide it's just a slow fading out, just turning down my opacity, u kno?

CAT MERMAID

i kno. i saw.

HERMIT

u were watching me?

CAT MERMAID

it's a small apartment.

*rubrub rub*

*rub*

*rub rub*

*rub*

*they stop rubbing*

HERMIT

hey look

look at all these stones we made

*pause, eye contact*

CAT MERMAID

so

you want me to do it?

19. tree branches

*Night time. MOUSE walks outside.*

*Lots of long, bony tree branches hang over her head.*

MOUSE

Our mom used to say ghosts live in the trees.

If she ever saw me reaching for a branch, she'd slap my hand away.

"you'll piss them off" she said

"they'll think you've made some business transaction with them and they'll follow you home until they get what they want"

"what do they want?" I asked her just once

she's slap me again

"shut up they'll hear you"

Our parents were slappers. Not spankers.

They were unpredictable,

Volatile,

Slappers.

I think I'll carry that feeling with me forever,

That hollow feeling of being slapped under a tree,

I think I'll carry it into my next life,

and the one and the one after that.

After he killed himself, I got into the habit of taking long walks into the night.

I wouldn't wear shoes, or a bra, because I wanted to feel exposed.

Naked,

Unprotected.

And the sky was so fucking dark it looked like it had died,

I remember all these branches?

Tree branches,

Multiplying themselves like a wildfire without flames—

And I just start grasping.

I am grasping at all the tree branches.

I'm tearing down the leaves,

Inserting my fingers in between the twigs,

And I shake them,

Shaking each branch like it's a goddamn human arm and saying things like—

Hello sir,

Are you cold sir,

Have you been told sir,  
How do you do sir?

*MOUSE shakes hands with the tree branches above her*

What do you want, sir  
What do you need?  
What do you want  
what do you want,  
what do you want,  
do i have it,  
can i give it  
do you want it  
will you take it?

*She stops*

I must've grasped every tree in the universe, I must've touched every single one.  
Even the ones I can't reach, I've looked in the eyes and asked for a transaction and I gotta tell  
you something—  
There's nothing in those trees,  
And there's no such thing as ghosts.

*She comes across the shell of a man sitting on a park bench.*

Oh hello Mister Real Estate Agent.

OX  
I quit my job today.

MOUSE  
How did it feel?

OX  
I handed in my resignation letter.  
With this hand.  
It started to prickle.  
And for the first time since I was a child,  
I worried about my heartbeat,  
I wanted to see how it was doing.

MOUSE  
And?

*OX taps his chest lightly*

OX

With the prickling hand,  
I reached down my throat,  
All the way down,  
Down the hatch.  
I felt like a cartoon character. Ha-ha.

MOUSE

And?

OX

Nothing. No heartbeat, no heart no thump thump thump no nothing.  
It's all blown up.

*Tap tap tap on the chest*

Very very hollow box.  
The air inside is gas and decades old.  
Sulfur and Carbon Dioxide, I think.  
Don't come near me, I'm toxic.

MOUSE

I'm not scared.

OX

I should check again.

*OX opens his mouth wiiiiiiiide, takes his arm and reaches it down deeeeeep  
down his throat,  
down into his chest.*

MOUSE

Feel anything?

*He shakes his head and removes his arm from his chest.  
He closes his eyes and begins to grieve deeply.*

OX

I think, it is unthinkable, but I think—  
I might've given too much to this real estate job.  
Did I become this real estate job,

Or did this real estate job become me?  
When did this absorption start to happen and  
Why did I not care to stop it?

*MOUSE sits down on the bench next to OX.*

What...happened?

MOUSE  
Is that why you quit? To finally stop it?

OX  
how did i

MOUSE  
its ok

*She swaddles him in her arms. He's a baby.*

OX  
how did i become this way?

MOUSE  
it's ok

OX  
can i turn back?

MOUSE  
it's ok

OX  
can i go forward?

MOUSE  
who knows, who knows.

*Keeping one arm around him, MOUSE holds her other hand out to OX.*

MOUSE  
here. take my hand. don't worry. take it.

*Tentatively, OX takes her hand. MOUSE starts to shake it. A handshake.*

OX (*nervous*)  
what deal did we just make?

MOUSE  
i don't know. do you want anything from me?

OX  
no i don't know want anything from you.

MOUSE  
okay.

*Pause.*

OX  
do you want anything from me?

MOUSE  
not one bit.

OX  
okay

*Quiet*

OX  
feels nice.

MOUSE  
i agree.

## 20. the great octopus homecoming

*Apartment*  
*Version: Living*

*BIRDY is alone, lying down on the mattress.*  
*Eyes closed.*

*Knock-knock.*

BIRDY  
(*deep breath*)

*Knock-knock-knock.  
She gets up to open the door.*

BIRDY  
Hello.

*It's MOUSE.*

MOUSE  
Hey there.

BIRDY  
There are tree branches in your hair

MOUSE  
I know

BIRDY  
Pretty

MOUSE  
Thanks. And thanks for, um, letting me come up

BIRDY  
Of course.

MOUSE  
I couldn't get a good look last time.

BIRDY  
Yes, that was a strange encounter. Are you ready to see it?

MOUSE  
Wait

BIRDY  
Yes?

*MOUSE wraps BIRDY into a hug, kisses her on the lip of her ear.*

BIRDY  
*(smiles)*  
Soft. Thank you.

MOUSE

Do you like me?

BIRDY

I like you a lot.

MOUSE

But you've said you're not gay.

BIRDY

Well. It is part of the fantasy of my happy life,  
To live as a happy lesbian with another soft woman, quite like you.  
We adopt lots of children from all around the world,  
It is a rough n' tumble family,  
We live in a painted house,  
In a field full of weeds.

MOUSE

Why weeds

BIRDY

We can cook them or braid them into crowns

MOUSE

But you're not gay.

BIRDY

*(shakes her head)*

I'm not anything. All I am right now is a little paper box full of new thoughts.  
New thoughts come all the time now.

MOUSE

I've been having new thoughts too, recently.  
Or at least, old thoughts that feel new.

BIRDY

I feel like they are signs your soul is folding into a new shape

MOUSE

And out of the blue, apples are delicious again.  
I used to think they were the most boring fruit but lately, for no real reason,  
I can't get enough of them.

BIRDY  
I have apples.

MOUSE  
For real?

*BIRDY takes an apple out of the mini-fridge, cuts it into three,  
and offers MOUSE a portion.*

BIRDY  
Here

MOUSE  
Thanks

BIRDY  
That's 1/3 of an apple

MOUSE  
*(takes a bite)*  
Crispy...  
*(takes another bite)*  
Woody...  
*(finishes her portion)*  
Not boring at all.

BIRDY  
*(smiles)*

MOUSE  
Thank you for that perfect portion of apple

BIRDY  
It's my special talent

MOUSE  
Are you  
...  
Living a happy life right now?

BIRDY  
No

MOUSE

Does that scare you?

BIRDY

No

MOUSE

What scares you?

BIRDY

Before.

MOUSE

What was it like?

BIRDY

Lots of lying.

MOUSE (*looking at BIRDY's belly*)

How is your baby

BIRDY

Gourd-like.

MOUSE

Lucky baby

BIRDY

*(closes her eyes)*

MOUSE

They are gonna have a fearless mama

BIRDY

*(nods)*

Yes

*(opens her eyes)*

You ready to see it now?

MOUSE

*(nods)*

I think so?

Yes.

BIRDY

*(points at the bathroom door)*

It happened there, on the handle.

*MOUSE walks towards it. Feels the handle*

MOUSE

Right here?

BIRDY

*(nods)*

*MOUSE turns around*

MOUSE *(gazing out)*

So this was what he was looking at last?

BIRDY

Yes

MOUSE

Fuck. dude.

That's an ugly fucking view

BIRDY

Yes

MOUSE

He um

Had these absolutely ginormous breasts that grew in around the time he was in middle school  
I think?

They hung off him like dumbbells, like shackles—

His spine curled itself inward as if asteroids were tearing through his chest all the fucking time.

Looked like it fucking hurt like hell.

And he lived with it, for so many years,

Honestly I don't know how he did it for that long,

I remember looking at him, at the time, all cracked dry and bent like that,  
and thinking this must be some twisted cosmic joke, you know?

Like he was gonna grow boobs at some point but

Geez

Jesus Christ

did they have to get so fucking big?

BIRDY

Was he a happy kid before all that happened?

MOUSE

Kind of. I think? Who knows. He was fast runner. Before the boobs. Boy, he was *speedy*.

Anyway.

Our parents kicked him out right after high school.

BIRDY

I see.

MOUSE

And when they did, he asked to move in with me. Guess what I said?

BIRDY

(...)

MOUSE

I said no...like it was already forgone conclusion. I said no.

Do you think I'm a bad person now? You must.

BIRDY

I don't.

MOUSE

I didn't know what the fuck to do with him back then. He scared me. Like. Now I know, more. You know? Now I know about all these things like top surgery and hormone therapy or maybe just some bare minimum motherfucking mental health support, you know?

(laughs)

You know?

BIRDY

You okay?

MOUSE

But neither of us knew, back then. Neither of us had the language for it.

We were both so shut away and closed off from all of that. Denied. Of all of that language.

And I didn't want to carry the weight of...Fuck.

Now I'm just making excuses all over again.

The same fucking excuses.

BIRDY

Sounds like you were just a kid too.

MOUSE

And that's why he ended up here?  
Cuz we were too young?

*MOUSE touches the door handle again.  
still, still air*

MOUSE

That's how he ended up right here?

*Purple fog and coils of dark green smoke start to rise through  
the gaps in the wood panel flooring.  
Stagnant air start to distort and mutate into syrupy hallucinations.*

MOUSE

Did I tell you I live a happy life?  
I worked really, really hard to have one and now, bam, all of sudden, I'm in it, living it.  
I'm saving up money,  
And I getting really, really close to having enough—  
I'm going start my own feminist porn animation company.  
It's stupid and wonderful and I'm so fucking excited.  
We're gonna make stuff that is soft and slow and NEON and MINE and—  
I don't know if I could have made it to this point if I let him move in with me.  
I regret being so selfish but sometimes I forget to feel it cuz I get so happy.

BIRDY

*(a gasp due to sharp pain)*

MOUSE

you ok?

BIRDY

*(another gasp)*

*BIRDY curls over.*

MOUSE

Birdy?!

*BIRDY sticks her fingers into her pants, slowly.  
When her hand comes back up, her fingers are dripping with blood.*

MOUSE

*(sharp exhale)*

That's a lot of blood

BIRDY *(staring at her hand)*

Yea.

*From way down below—*

A SCREAM

A REALM SHATTERING SCREAM

*The scaffolding of the living version of the apartment undoes itself and  
the WHOLE ENTIRE THING*

*Free*

*Fall*

CRASHES

COLLAPSES

*SMASH-BANG right on top of the dead version.*

*HERMIT is SCREAMING SCREAMING SCREAMING.*

*He's ripping out clumps and clumps of CAT MERMAID's hair.*

HERMIT

STOP!

CAT MERMAID

*(laughing laughing laughing)*

HERMIT

TAKE IT BACK

CAT MERMAID

*(laughing laughing laughing)*

HERMIT

I CHANGE MY MIND

CAT MERMAID

*(laughing laughing laughing)*

You gotta be fucking kidding me.

HERMIT

NO

CAT MERMAID

*(hiss)*

It's done.

HERMIT

oh god

oh no

oh god

oh no

oh god

oh no

oh god

oh no

oh god

MOUSE

lil' bro?

is that you?

lil' bro?!

LIL' BRO?!

*MOUSE crawls over to him, scurry-scurry like a crab,  
And claws him into a hug-like thing.*

HERMIT

Big sis?

MOUSE

Hi. oh god. hi.

HERMIT

I think I just did something really really really bad.

MOUSE

That's okay. It's okay.

HERMIT

I didn't mean it.

MOUSE

I know. I know it.

HERMIT *(crumbles)*

I just wanna go home.

MOUSE

Where is home for you, lil' bro, where is home?

HERMIT  
I don't know

MOUSE  
Okay

HERMIT  
Not here.

MOUSE  
Okay

HERMIT  
Not here. It's not here.

MOUSE  
Okay.

HERMIT  
take me home?

MOUSE  
Okay. I'll take you home.

HERMIT  
okay

MOUSE (*lying*)  
I know where.

HERMIT  
You know where

MOUSE (*lying*)  
I know exactly where.

HERMIT  
Can I come, big sis?  
Can I come?

*like a ball, they rock back and forth.*

*rocking*

*rock*

*rock*

*rock*

BIRDY  
you killed my baby?

CAT MERMAID  
eee-yup

BIRDY  
why

CAT MERMAID  
*(shrugs)*  
he wanted to try again

BIRDY  
couldn't he have  
*(breath)*  
couldn't he have waited a little bit?

CAT MERMAID  
*(shrugs)*  
I guess

BIRDY  
was there  
a deadline?

CAT MERMAID  
*(laugh laugh)*  
nope  
*(laugh laugh laugh)*  
he totally could've waited

*BIRDY vomits  
orange and green  
CAT MERMAID laughs and laughs and laughs.  
Laugh-vomit-laugh-vomit.  
Ding-dong!*

CAT MERMAID  
**He's HOOOOOME!**  
**The Great Octopus finally returns from his overseas business trip!**  
**WELCOME BAAAAAAAACK!**

And so the tentacles emerge,  
and return,  
and swell,  
and accumulate,  
pouring from the cabinets  
pouring from the walls  
pouring from the mini fridge  
pouring from the toilet bowl  
pouring from the bath  
from everywhere, flooding, like a tsunami, boiling over, more and more and more.  
Everyone and everything is about to be completely consumed and then—

*Flash of darkness. Flash of light.*

*A tentacle crawls into CAT MERMAID's mouth.  
She severs it with her teeth.*

*Darkness. Light.*

*MOUSE and HERMIT run for the door. They tug at the doorknob.  
It's locked. Tentacles slither up their ankles.*

*Darkness. Light.*

*BIRDY strokes a tentacle that's snuggled into her lap.*

BIRDY (to the tentacle)  
Are you here to take me to the sea?

*Darkness. Light.*

*CAT MERMAID is sawing through multiple tentacles at once.  
She has that handsaw.*

*Darkness. Light.*

*HERMIT is digging a hole through the wood floor with his bare hands.  
MOUSE struggles to untangle a tentacle around her neck.*

*Darkness.*

BIRDY  
Swallow me.

*Light.*

*CAT MERMAID alone.*

*Cut cut cut cut cut.*

*Brutally cleaved tentacles thrash and dance around her like freshly skinned eels*

*She is having  
the time of her life*

*CAT MERMAID (sea monster)*

*I win. I won.*

*(sea monster breath)*

*I'm going downtown.*

*in the dimming streetlight gleam, all the carnage looks a bit like a twinkling skyline.*

## 21. back on the market

*Apartment.*

*Version: Needs a clean.*

*Sticky, gooey, thick-ass blood splattered all across the walls and the floor.*

*Broken tentacles. Dead birds.*

*Bandages. Tree branches.*

*A hole. A Hello Kitty mermaid doll.*

*Outside, from the hallway,  
the sound of a shoulder being repeatedly thrust into the door.*

*OX (from the hallway)*

*Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Don't worry.*

*The door bursts open. OX enters.*

*He's wearing a surgical mask, plastic goggles, vinyl apron and rubber gloves.*

*He holds a large bottle of lemon bleach.*

*OX (looking around in dismay)*

*Ahk. What a mess.*

*Ring-ring. The landline phone is still on the stove—*

*Broken, but bound up by masking tape.*

*OX picks it up.*

OX

Hello? Boss?

Yes, yes, I am here at the property now, yes, don't worry.

Someone is interested in seeing it already? Tomorrow? Really?

That is such good news! Wow! Woohoo!

Yes, boss, I understand.

The property will be sparkling clean for the appointment tomorrow. It will smell like lemon.

Please don't worry. The work is no problem for me. I won't let you down.

And boss? Thank you for giving me back my job.

I have never been so happy, really.

Yes, boss. Don't worry. I'll take care of it.

*OX hangs up. He does a little back stretch.*

*Cracks his neck, cracks of knuckles.*

OX

Don't worry.

*With a big splash of bleach,  
OX gets down on his hands and knees,  
And starts to scrub.*

*scrub  
scrub scrub*

*scrub  
scrubscrubscrub*

*scrub  
scrub*

*scrub  
scrub*

*blooming field*

END OF PLAY