

Title: Memoirs from a Ruined Language  
Run time: 15 – 20 minutes  
Writer: Clint Hutzulak (tel: 388-5321, cel 889-1043)  
Director: Judith McDowell  
Designers: Noah and Elizabeth  
Cast: 3 actors (2 male, 1 female)  
Musicians: Douglas Schmidt, accordion

Props required: blue chalk  
hand saw  
hammer  
nails  
sturdy blocks or crates  
three 6' 2x4s  
large bowl of water  
drinking mug  
broom for cleaning sawdust  
blankets for 2 actors  
mop, rag or chalk brush for cleaning floor  
pre-show music

Music needed: Part 1, live music precedes Actor 1 onto stage  
Part 2, live music continues  
Part 3, live music ends abruptly with entrance of Actors 2 and 3  
Part 4, no music  
Part 5, no music  
Part 6, live music resumes  
Part 7, no music  
Part 8, live music fades into darkness

- Part 1 (Stream) Actor 1 enters, uses blue chalk to draw a stream or river, flowing from back of stage and ending at feet of audience, bisecting the stage. The stream should be not more than about four feet wide at centre stage.
- Part 2 (Bridge) When this action is completed, Actor 1 fetches a hand saw, hammer, nails, blocks, and lumber for constructing a bridge. Actor 1 sets up blocks as sawhorses and cuts one board down for cross pieces, and then proceeds to nail bridge together on-stage. When bridge is assembled, Actor 1 moves blocks into place, one each side of stream, and lays bridge securely in place over the stream. Actor 1 places bowl of water with cup in front of bridge.
- Actor 1 can tidy up stage, waiting for entrance of Actors 2 and 3. Actor 1 will continue activities without interruption by entrance of Actors 2 and 3, but whenever Actor 1 is finished tidying up, Actor 1 can stand by and observe.
- Part 3 (Entrance, naked) Actors 2 and 3 make approximately simultaneous entrances from opposite side entrances to theatre (one actor will actually enter from outdoors, the other from a hallway). The entrances are brutal and unexpected and shatter the meditative quiet of the preceding minutes. Both actors are drenched in sweat, out of breath, and naked. They should enter the stage area as if suddenly finding a refuge in the midst of some cataclysmic horror just off-stage.
- Part 4 (Clothing) Actors 2 and 3 are inward-focused, trying to quiet down and slow down, trying to reduce themselves in size, unaware of anything around them at first. Then they move slowly from the respective doorways to nearby piles of blankets, and clothe themselves.
- Part 5 (Approach) Actors 2 and 3 approach the stream, kneeling to drink from opposite sides. They pass the cup back and forth over the stream.
- Part 6 (Embrace) Actors 2 and 3 mount the bridge and meet in the middle to embrace. Perhaps they rest foreheads together, touch each other's faces tenderly, as if memorizing someone soon to be lost forever. They continue past each other and off opposite ends of the bridge, never looking back.
- Part 7 (Exit) Actors 2 and 3 exit opposite the doors they came in. The exits are somewhat hesitant at first, then both actors drop their blankets and go out quickly, as if they are suicides diving into black water.
- Part 8 (Clean up) Actor 1 removes bridge and blocks, returns with rag or brush to clean away the chalk stream. Lights down whenever appropriate, so long as we see Actor 1 scrubbing at floor. End.

Notes on the script:

OK, so you got a weird one. That said, I hope this can be played gracefully and thoughtfully without hurrying through it. Pace and focus are important.

It's like it comes from a different culture. Pre- or post-verbal. Drama in only the smallest movements. Simple movements magnified into ritual. Like Noh or Butoh, perhaps, or modern dance.

I'm leaving it up to you to decide whether Actors 2 and 3 are male and female, or both male. You'll have a different play either way. Since you have two performances, you could play it differently each night if you wish.

This play seems to me to be a concise history of humanity. A haiku. You enter naked from some unknowable darkness, violently, into a strange room. Find yourself, find another, find salvation in an embrace, and then move beyond that brief meeting to the unknown again. Voluntarily this time. With fear and something else — curiosity perhaps. A need to know further. Carrying with you something powerful taken from that embrace.