

Zeit af der KürbisGeistNachten – or - It's a Good Life if You Don't Weaken

by Siboulla Wedgewood 10/31/06

At the beginning of the play the audience receives an envelope and is instructed not to open it, but not to lose it either.

A young gurl, an oldstre who remembers prvious times when things were very differnt

OLDSTRE

At one time wi thote wi wir nobles, yo kne*
It wasn't no joke to us nother
Y'and yir gurlfrueds kon logh abood it ne
Wi code have too bot wi ne'er thote tâ
It seemed whot wi wir mere or liss birn entââ

GURL

Yeah
No, I'm s'syr

Wi wirked tes lond like it wis our ohn
Y' kne bitter than that nø, dan't yo

I syr d'
Syr I d'

Well, yo kon imagine, wi niver så anyone bitter ten os riding by in a carriage

On a hørse e'n

Wi all walked beside or hørses in those deys
Or legs wir jest as strong as thurs
Wi niver så anyone who did otherwise

So there wasn't any question of whose land it fis

Raght, raght

Hi hi

Wi wiren't all that educated, as y' well kne
E'en nå talking t' os yo kin see

Not oll that educated nay

* Note on the text: So it looks a little weird, like a foreign language? This is on purpose. To my understanding, one of the things that makes English such a versatile and expressive language is that it is a mongrel mutt: it contains influences from and traces of so many other languages within it. It is a language of ghosts. I have been strangely thrilled by the rough suggestions of kinship I notice between certain English words and syntaxes and those of other European languages – particularly Dutch, German, Welsh, German and Scandinavian. You will also find here, if you are looking, traces of certain North American derivative dialects like mid-Vermont, Canadian and midWestern.

I have been naughty because I've been so arbitrary about it. I admitted all these various influences but disavowed allegiance to even my own rules. I set up stern principles only to break them again later on for the sake of texture or tense play.

For the actor contending with this thing, I would suggest that the best way to approach the pronunciation is to resist as well as possible temptations of applying an accent or characterization out of frustration or confusion. Such knee-jerk interpretations always make me cringe and squirm to hear them - they drain the life out of the thing and permit the performer to hide from both the challenges and possibilities in the text, and the audience ends up ultimately losing out. I urge you, performer: try it straight and true, say it with just your own voice! I feel that you will be then better able to hold the text open wide enough to contain its entire array of intended influences, and certainly to yield some discoveries completely new and unknown which could not have been expected or anticipated.

But wi got by

Mm

And, well, one dey there wis a filcher that started coming and a rage took hold of os
Because wi coln't see't
't came in the naght when wi wir trahng very well and successfully to sleep in the dark
Wi niver found out whot it was
Wi thote t'was 'n'evil girl in the manor hos
Th' old abandoned manor hos op th' way
Bot when wi kirnfronted her she threw a fit on wi found a way to send hær to a schol

A schol

Wi didn't kne nithing, cheld

Hno I guess not yo're raght

On wi put hær there on she didn't do very well

Yikes

Soon th' headmistress sint hær off into the hinterland all alone all by hærself
It was becose sh' maude messes and caused accidents
They didn't have a choice
Wi didn't kne the difference
Wi niver so hær agon

I winder whot

Rimor had it she went to the big city during the revolution and become a chorus girl but didn't decide
which resistance to resist
Or maybe she just got lost in the trees

Ssssss

There now there was some kind of storm blowin inside hær
But fir os it was all just romors
Wi hod our own wirk to do, to worry about
Wi morde a lake togerthre

BOORing

That's enough then
Enough for yo
Can't appricate whot yo tak fir grønted
Which is all the things wi've done fir yo
And all the things yo wir birn fith and take with yo to University
Yo don't e'en have to ask whire they cøme from
Ho they cøme about
The curtains in yor bedråm
The curtain rods
Carved by a distant oncle
Or lathed by slaves in a firther cont'n'nt
But isn't it nice that everything turned out all raght

So nice
So nice for yo arn't it
Must be nice

I've got to go yo kne

Raght

Left alone nå, the oldstre waxes

Compassion
Compassion in those days was a luxury
Compassion wode hove been a luxury fir os
A luxury, too dear fir those bond to th' hard wirk
The whot looks like meager livin
It's a gåd life if yo dan't wikken

In another pirt of the woods it's a differnt century ond a differnt wild

VISCOMTESS

Let's get some help right away
I can not stand suffering of any kind in my presence
I really just absolutely can not

Still, they relate thogh

FORE FATHER LONG PAST

Nope, nort for ar kirn
Cun't stop the turning of the wheel just because one or two han't looking and gert catchen umblernath
Wi don't gert those kin of luxury
Sun come op sun beck don
Wi pull it op wi push it don
It's a gåd life if yo dan't wikken

There's a different extension of the other wild ond it extends to anethra contin'nt

FRONT DESK

MR. FLETCHER

(Ah, yes, Zimmer 31
Problem
So sorry
Problem mit der frühstück
It seems the backhendl paté
Er uh so sorry Mr. Fletcher
Backhendl paté
Uh ist ihr hund scheisse

You BITCH)

And trouble among reincarnted females in a differnt pirt

HEN

SPARROW

How can you stand all those cobwebs all over the plants
Doesn't it drive you crazy

I wouldn't be able to stand it

It doesn't bother me
I have other things to think about
I like to leave things be as much as possible

I can't stand it
I'm cleaning it
Do you hear me I can't stand it anymore so I'm cleaning it I'm going to just clean it for yo

Okay
I'm just busy with something

What?

I just said I'm concentrating on something

Alright, well, I'm cleaning this
I'm going to clean this for yo
Ouch! I got pricked with these cactus needles!
They're sticking into my skin!
Ow!
Ouch!
Did yo hear me when I said I got pricked by those cactus pricks from this cactus?
When I was cleaning it
They won't come out either
I was cleaning it fro yo
I was doing it fro yo because I couldn't stand it
I was cleaning up those cobwebs just fro yo because I couldn't stand to look at them for another single
minute

(Echoeing from somewhere)

ECHOE AF FORE FATHER, OND AF MOTHERS

It's a guhd lyfe if yo dan't wikken
It's a guhd lyfe if yo dan't wikken

It's a guhd lyfe if yo dan't wikken

*The echoe brings us back to the oldstre and the gurl, and some af der anothers who wir aroond at der time
of der filcher*

OLDSTRE OND DER ANOTHERS (ALTERNATING)

GURL

What did it end up that the filcher wir thogh

Well ond efter that gurl went to the schol it didn't cøme until the next yir
But the very next yir it cøme
It cøme again raght about the same time that very next yir
Raght about the same tyme

Did you ever see it
WELL . . .

Someone saw it
Ik tenk Hrotud saw it

She hærd screams but then again it wis a windy night
Yea that was some kin af stern that tyme
Yo kne that olive tree
The very thick one
The very old one
By the candy place nå

Yea

But then there fir no candy place
At that time wi didn't yet have a place fir candy

So it firm't the gurl

Wi didn't have candy
Wi didn't need it
Wi had
Birch bark

Didn't Hrotud thote it wir a cat in heat that tyme thogh
Well she wir hopen agin hope that it
Wir just
Der yowling af a cat
Hopen someone may ove just hurt a cat
Wi wold do that back then some af os
The ones who hid time to be unhappy
The ones who didn't do enough wirk
Wi wold hurt cats if wi could catch them if wi wir unhappy
If wi didn't have enough wirk
Cats arn't easy to catch
They're not always easy to hurt
If yo manage to catch one
If yo dan't have enough wirk
Ond you're unhappy
Sometimes yo wold hurt it
It wirm't the season fir yowling cats oot af mating
There wir all kinds af screams
They cold get carried on that wind thogh, wi said
Wi told Hrotud that screams can got carried on der wind
Ø witch's screams
Ø terrible cripple's flute song
Ond everyone lohghed
Because wi hadn't gant witches by that tyme
Yo cold be a witch but wi'd let yo beh
Nowadays all screams gotten scribed to witches
Ond der more yo wirk der more yo feel lykke hurten cats
Sometimes it seems lykke the wirld durn't makken sense

There wir one woman who wir so backfard
She gove hor bed to the liffeshtock and slept in der pen instead
She said she gant tired of chasen der liffeshtock away from hor bed
She lookend at that bed ond decided to give it to them
Decided it dan't mean that much t'hor after oll

A scream can echo across der glen
A wind can blow a tree right throughgh yor lodge

A wind can got faster ond faster during der naght
 A cat can yowl at an interval that is exact
 All naght
 All naght yo can listen to all kind af screams
 All kinds of hunters' horns in der birges if yo hear
 They can got carried on der wind
 Carried on der wind ond twisted before it's brought you by
 Der dead
 Der dead can send a wind lykke that
 Send it screamen raght throggh yor pen
 A devil can run raght oot yor stairs and down yor door befir yo can see hum
 Yo maght sleep through th' whole tang
 If yo've wirked hard enough that day
 It's a guhd lyfe if yo dan't wikken

GNARLY TROHL HIDDN 'MONGST TH'OLDSTRES

Gurl lykke uoo cøn scream rul sharp ond rul shrill
 When uo're chased through der birches at top speeds of legs running umblernath uoo
 Man cøn catch die gurl lykke uoo raght by der künt if uo're nat coreful
 Gurl like uoo cøn wake up in der middle af der naght ond try to scream ond nothing sonds instead lykke
 just nothen
 Try t'agin
 Drykk a cup af water ond try t'agin try der screaming agin thiss tyme
 If uo've der tyme
 If uoo hær der wynde
 If uoo hær der wynde ond der cats ond everyone else iss sliiping throggh it gurl
 I tenk she cōme in here cos she wanted to kne did uoo dø der mending

When those show op der only way to got them oot is to smosh up der whole inside af yor lodge
 Send it runneng back doon der froont stoops
 Hær it from der top window ond got to cleanen op der mess before wi hove to pull der sun op agin der
 moon

Near sunset at der Witches Court at a point, ago

WARRIOR

WITCHES

E hear a shrieking ot daybreak.
 E arise in meh shirt an trussers, an meh sword about meh neck, an oot E come.
 An E see one of ooo filthy witches overtaking the watchmon, an heh shrekknig.
 An E fall upon hehr an strick hehr on te head wit meh sword until hehr helm an headpiece spriid like a
 salver on hehr head. E bring hehr t'ooo met injuries.

Thy mercy, fair son, and the mercy of God!

Hwo knowest ooo, hags, tat E am?

It was fated and forseen that we should suffer affliction from thee,
 and that thou shouldst take horse and arms from us.
 And thou shall be with us awhile,
 being taught to ride thy horse and handle thy weapons
 according to the codes of the Three Undefeated Witcheries of old.

On tese terms shalt ooo habe mercy.
 E shall stay tree weeks on end in der Witches coven.
 At te end orf tree weeks E'll took meh choice orf horse an arms an set out on meh way.

An at te close orf day tree weeks later, E come to o valley, an at te far end orf te valley E come to o hermit's cell.

HERMIT

I make you welcome.
Stay you here tonight.

On te morrow E arise, an when E come outside,
o fall orf snow has come down te nite before.
An o wild she-hawk has killed o duck alongside te cell,
an what wit te horse's clatter te she-hawk rises up, an o raven alights on te bird's flesh.
An E stand an likken t'exceeding blackness orf te raven,
an te whiteness orf te snow,
an te redness orf te blood, to te haar orf te woman E løve best,
which is black as jet, an her flesh to the whiteness orf te snow,
an te redness orf te blood in te white orf te snow to te two red spots in te cheeks orf te woman E løve best.

Interior af der vast Kürbis Crop

VISCOMTESS

GURL

They come through here once a year, slaughter the Kürbis crop
Harvest the seeds
And leave the fleshy halves laying brökken open and to a slow rot in the cruel, cold autumn sun.
I carry hatred in my heart for the slaughterers and their unsensing ways.
They press the seeds and force the oil out and wage festival and feast against the arrival of visiting factions
Each year I pray for the KürbisGeist to rise again from the fields of slaughter and avenge them,
as in the old days
Reght there at their feasting tables
For nachts and nachts on end Das KürbisGeist exacted its stern revenge on the perpetrators in the offending regions
Bringing dishonour and ill report upon them
And every woman with child in that region wouldst miscarry,
and such of them that were without child their wombs wouldst turn to a burden within them,
so that they may never bear child from those nachts forth.
Where. Where are they now – the ghusts of the Kürbissen,
rising to avenge the slaughter and rape of their living, murdered kin.
Mind the moon!

Misterss

I know your face
One of your fore fathers ran a press for the KürbisKernen
He stood at the open door waiting in chill air for the fruits of the slaughter to arrive
And when they came he dried and pressed them for their öl.
The living of his family depended on it, he told himself
He closed his heart to the sight of the poor naked seeds, the schleim of their exposure glistening in the sun
And went about his grisly work
Closing his heart
And pressing on
But it wasn't delight it was survival he was after
A meager working survival bringing only watery old eyes and rough red hands
He knew his place
I'll give him that

Mademme

But you
Looking out brazenly to a fairly fixed point beyond your station
You don't even have the decency to be vague about it
You seem even to have explicit knowledge of what you're reaching for!
It's not abstract, it's specific
And I am appalled
To see your eyes seeking to acquire, expecting to conquer
like a predator
I'll do what I can to keep you down
To keep it clean around here
Keep your kind and your kind of mind the heckety heck out of my drawing room
I'll protect my property from you: my friends, my clothes, my children, my jewelry
My ideas about the way a home can be, the way a room can feel to a desirable and welcome guest who
might just wish to sit down in it

I inly wint ti deliver missages fir yint

Ha?

Ti deliver missages

Poh!

Int iwait inswer,
Int retirn it ti yint
Int withdriw, iwait ciinter inswer
Int deliver it in kiiping with thi tiimes
In this way I feel inly tinderness
Int sich tinderness in my hiirt int chist that I ciild be made swoon

Hoh! I distrust you so profoundly that it makes me think I should just go ahead and trust you -
Your despicable pinched little face -
With this
As if I might as well
With this request
What a ridiculous, inconceivable and so overwhelming seductive idea.

I have message nimer one
If yint wiildst permitst me ti give it yint

How presumptuous
A message already!
I've only said no! No, no, no, no!

It's frim a griit warrior

Not interested
This gurl has a lot of nerve
Thank you very much
Now come hjar

Yint have a message in retirn I'll bring ti him in retirn
Ow My kunt!

Now I've got your attention

NO more messages
Who do you think you are bringing messages
You little simp
Keep that trap shut
I'd like to break your pinched little face
All right what's the message

Is I wis siying

Cit thi shit
And tell me straight

It's from the great warrior
He begs for mercy
He begs entry to your heart

That's ridiculous
He's not even existing in this time
I know all about him and his non-linear time-freak ways
Out of joint isn't the word
Out of style, not yet in style
Ahead behind, too far to one side
Neither fore nor aft
Tell him no
No mercy

Unless

Yis? Yes?

Nevermind

The Gurl rests, wandering what to do next.

A waxed old woman enters, inevitably

WAXED OLD WOMAN

How many stories must wi endure in our lifetime aboot young gurls ond old fools taking them fir their wives?
Yet here's my own foolish son
A GentleClergyman of previous accomplishment
Ond his brid with the fire in the eyes
Ond he tells me not to be too hard on her while she searches furtively for a way
To bring shame upon our good name
Do yo kne that word furtively
Well yo should learn it then yo'd understand what I'm talking aboot with that gurl in this house
I should teach it to yo
I tought my son all kind af good words
My son never cosed me
He never once brought me any kind of trooble
Until the day he brought that gurl home with him
I can see hær with those eyes looking aroond
Furtively

Her own mother denounced ond nearly burnt at the stake as a witch
Well yo kne they don't burn them completely these days
They more it's more a warning and it cripples them
For the power of conjuring to call the dead ond the living.

The GentleClergyman enters.

GENTLE CLERGYMAN

The aire that moveth on the tip of your nose
If I watch for it and imagine it longe enoughe I shall owne it.
As I looke at thee I decide
I shall assume the shapes of all the things you care for.
Confer your care upon me, little maiden
Repay me the gentleness, and pity I have shown to all in the district over these lon-e-some years in my
solemne poste
I'll settle for pity if care you canst finde not yet in your greene Spring heart
Share the miseries of the colde and the darke and the empty with me
It would be a lie to say that it will be pleasante or pleasing
But that's no excuse, let us join together now in sending kindness
To one another, in putting hands to cheeks and shoulders
Of one another, of neighbors, of kin
Of strangers, of beasts - waters, rocks and trees
Of soil, of earth, of planet, of system
Of method, of procedure
Of worlded peoples warring, peoples hungry and sick
And finally to the beyond-all-reason beyonde the stars
Bear the cup
Lay forever eache night beside me faire and youthful traveler
Fret not that thy body fitteth not in my bed
When thy form is wanting I shall stretch thee to fit it
When thy corporal frame is too long I shall trim those pretty unseen limbs of thine
To fit and fitteth
Mine colde and darke and emptie bed.
Turneth thy face to me, thou lost befuddled childe
I shall protect thee and join thy youthful form unto mine
And I shall resound the newfound vigor (my long-unhoped-for recrudescence),
Become raw again

Do I habe any way oot o' this?

Nay.

*Ond so it is that the GentleClergyman ond the Gurl are wed in a ritual they both know by heart, to the
aforementioned acute displeasure of his Waxed Old Mother.*

*In anohtre pirt the Witches overtake the Viscomtess. Her horse rears up and strykes at them. They fly up
and pull her off and to the ground, holding her prone for the Warrior so that these two may also be joined
outside of the constraints of time and custom. They are attempting to invent an ancient ritual. He doesn't
notice and continues along his noble way. The Witches are crestfallen. The Viscomtess kicks some dirt in
his general direction and rolls over to take a grief-stricken nap. The Witches decide to keep her awake.*

In der land, der KürbisGeist ist risen.

KÜRBISGEIST

As I am conjured so I rise.
To move the zeit to nachten mitout zeit
To the zeit of nachten of the great KürbisGeist
The sky so black it bluens
In the night
In the night
In the night of the KürbisGeist
My breath will tear your gown to shreds
One glance calls off your engagements
No priest shall come to this town in the Spring
To undo that which in these nights shall be done
Your dreams are full of my flesh
Your soups are full of my flesh
You and your strain greedily guzzle the essence of my issue
You take to my seed from your pits of hunger and humbled vice
You bestow the extract of my progeny's destruction unto your own sniveling clutch
Quench their eager mouths
Gorge their greedy gullets
Lending health and flesh
Not yours to lend
To the filthy brood, manifest a rude and heedless sense of prerogative
Adorn with stolen sustenance
Lavish illicit ill-gotten gains
Upon your most disgusting gusts of organism
The most erumpent strumpet succor bursteth forth
Your gnarly children
Will be born in this district no more
Your honors and comforts
Revoked, Removed
O, wretched populace
Sum total of citizens condemned
Herein
Henceforth
Henceforward
Hereafter
To sleep ill in procrustean beds
After this

SPARROW / GURL

After a long time will happen
I learn better and when I leave at a point some witch or something is watching and tornt me sparrow and
got me all swallowed by sturm
So much of wind and even all flame should better for me
These hills all the time leave a longer silver
Paddock no more unbroken
But I won't cleanse
Not one stop to consider it at all quite frank
Never worry about a ffffffff
At any time after that
And that's
Hey-a

A waxed old woman enters once more, again inevitably

WAXED OLD WOMAN

AUDIENCE

All shall be settled on the day of wrath ond reckoning
Where our earth shall be obliterated ond no longer stand in the way between heaven ond hell
All will take one way or the other
Take or be taken heaven ond hell
But for now I will do what I can to expedite the process
To set as much of it raght as I can during KurbisGeistNachten
With the hjælp of the Army of the Lord of Jesus in Heaven wi shall faght it
With the hjælp of the Lord's Army
Wi shall besahlen
Wi shall bestrahlen
The Lord's Army is composed af children
They cause the naght of the angels' jealousy it curses the world all because af the song af the children
The song af the children
The song af the children
Invoke the curse af the jealous angels
Gather the curses we'll need af them
Audience, gather yor worst most irrevocable curses
It's a good life if you don't weaken

Audience responds by opening their envelopes and reading the contents aloud and in concert.

If I take it off now I shall never sew it back on again
Think about that
Think about it
You just think about that for a little while first
Why don't we give you some time to think about it first
And then decide
You can think about it
Then you can decide after you've thought about it
After you've given it some thought you can decide about that and also about what you'd like for supper
It has a fresh lemon scent that's really not so offensive as you might think
When witches go into ecstasies they usually start it off with milk or chocolate
It splashes and that makes it all about advertising to us
The consumer
We Wear Turtlenecks and Double Chins
And We Drive Toward the Towns Into the Sun
You know we were really disappointed you weren't there
We really expected you to at least make an appearance
We have to admit you let us down in a way
You disappointed us
We really are disappointed
We were really disappointed
We are feeling better now but
ASHAMED? Ashamed of your mother
Speak our language please
If you don't eat this rare chocolate cake that I have made you I shall take you into the washing place and
quietly drown you
I shall play soft music and push your head into the cleaning water
And flush it
And flush it
Quietly
Until you drown
Until I quietly drown you

That's terrible
I feel terrible
Feeling quite terrible about that
These are our curses
These are the best of
The worst of
Our most irrevocable curses
There is no way out now
We are ruined
Everything is ruined
All of the treasured things is totally ruined
This play has defiled us

THE END