

ANTARCTICA

MARY FINSTERER



ANTARCTICA

World premiere
5 June 2022, Amsterdam

CREDITS

muziek/music
Mary Finsterer

libretto
Tom Wright

regie/direction
Imara Savage

dirigent/conductor
Jack Symonds

decor & kostuums/set & costume design
Elizabeth Gadsby

video-ontwerp/video art
Mike Daly

licht/light
Alexander Berlage

zang/vocals
The Daughter Jane Sheldon
The Theologian Jessica O'Donoghue
The Natural Philosopher Anna Fraser
The Cartographer Michael Petruccelli
The Captain Simon Lobelson

acteur/actor
The Daughter Hanne Fransen

Asko|Schönberg
fluit/flute Ingrid Geerlings
hobo/oboe Evert Weidner
klarinet/clarinet David Kweksilber
hoorn/horn Serguei Dovgaliouk
trompet/trumpet Arthur Kerklaan
trombone Yiannis Bontis
piano Pauline Post
slagwerk/percussion Joey Marijs
harp Astrid Haring
viool/violin Joseph Puglia, Bas Treub
altviool/viola Liesbeth Steffens
cello Sebastiaan van Halsema
contrabas/double bass Len Bielars

voice overs proloog en epiloog/prologue and epilogue voice overs
Girl/Daughter Eve Kreutz
Interviewer 1 Tom Wright
Interviewer 2 & 4 Wil Anton
Man/ Interviewer 3 Harry Jay

elektro-akoestische creatie/electro-acoustic creation
Alistair McLean

geluidsontwerp/sound design
Arne Bock

audio-programmering/audio programming
Elliott Hughes

assistent dirigent & tour manager/assistant conductor & tour manager
Huw Belling

productieleiding/production manager
Cliffie Rosenberg

stage manager
Leia Louisa

boventiteling/surtitles
Jurjen Stekelenburg

coproductie/coproduction
Asko|Schönberg, Sydney Chamber Opera, Holland Festival

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[Podcast-inleiding \(Dutch\)](#)
[Video interview Mary Finsterer](#)

TOELICHTING VAN DE MAKER

Begraven onder een ijslaag van drie kilometer diep ligt een subglaciale wereld, een oeroud rijk dat zich uitstrekt over meer dan 14 miljoen km². Het continent Antarctica, een berglandschap met uitgestrekte meren en complexe ravijnen en rivierenstelsels, blijft een raadsel dat de mensheid al honderden jaren lang verbijstert en inspireert. Het brengt een onmetelijke weidsheid van gedachten op gang en roept iets op dat de taal te boven gaat. Opmerkelijk is dat er op dit zuidelijkste continent geen taal bestaat.

Het grenzeloze karakter van dit onderwerp vereist dat een onuitputtelijke kwaliteit wordt weerspiegeld in een veelheid van talen. Met die inspiratie hebben mijn librettist, Tom Wright, en ik de woorden en muziek voor de opera geschreven. In onze visie zetten we de verbeelding op een poëtische en speelse manier aan het werk, daarmee ontstaat een vlechtwerk van metafoor, verbeelde gebeurtenissen en mysteries.

Door in mijn eigen geologie als componist te duiken, door innovaties uit de 20e eeuw, zoals elektronica en seriële compositietechnieken, te combineren met meer recente invloeden uit de middeleeuwen en de muzikale praktijk van de renaissance; door wetenschappelijke algoritmen en opnames in de muzikale lagen te verwerken, en door historische, metaforische en poëtische verwijzingen aan te brengen via woordschilderingen en harmonische taal, wil ik via de muziek een echo creëren die het epische karakter van het continent Antarctica weerspiegelt als een geheimzinnige plek van fabel en mijmeringen.

– Mary Finsterer

TOELICHTING VAN DE REGISSEUR

“IJs is een opname- en een opslagmedium. Het verzamelt en bewaart gegevens gedurende millennia. In tegenstelling tot onze harde schijven en terabyte-blokken, die snel veranderen en verouderen, is ijs millennia lang consistent in zijn technologie. Als je eenmaal weet hoe je het archief moet lezen, is het bijna zo ver terug te lezen – zo ver naar beneden – als het ijs gaat. Als je ijs in deze zin als een ‘medium’ beschouwt, zou je het ook als een bovennatuurlijk ‘medium’ kunnen beschouwen: een aanwezigheid die communicatie mogelijk maakt met de doden en begravenen, dwars door kloven van diepe tijd, waardoor je verre boodschappen uit het Pleistoceen zou kunnen horen.

– Robert Macfarlane, *Underland: A Deep Time Journey*

De vraag voor dit creatieve team is hoe Antarctica het best kan worden weergegeven als een uitgestrekt landschap en als een plaats van spirituele transformatie en ontwaken – een reis van de ziel.

De muziek van Mary Finsterer is een unieke samensmelting van structurele principes en muziekinstrumenten uit de oude

muziek met hedendaagse orkestratie en elektronische bewerkingen van geluiden uit Antarctica en de omgeving: oceanen, sonar, de beweging van microscopisch kleine dieren. Het ontwerp speelt hierop in door personages uit die tijd in een hypermodern kader van data en technologie te plaatsen. Als het Tijdperk van de Grote Ontdekkingen zich bezighield met het categoriseren van de wereld zoals het menselijk oog die waarnam, wat kan het posthumanisme van de 21e eeuw, dat zich bezighoudt met wat de kunstmatige ‘ogen en oren’ van de technologie, ons vertellen over de veranderende planeet?

AV-ontwerper Mike Daly heeft een ervaring gecodeerd in TouchDesigner, een visuele programmeertaal voor het bouwen van real-time interactieve systemen. Geluidsalgoritmen selecteren en animeren willekeurig fragmenten van ruwe tekst uit gegevens die betrekking hebben op Antarctica, waaronder coördinaten, geografische oriëntatiepunten, onderzoekstations, sterrenconstellaties, flora- en faunasoorten en oude etymologieën. De AV beperkt zich echter niet tot gegevens, maar fungeert ook als filmische component en als reusachtige lichtbron.

Het podium is een plaats van herinnering. Twee nevelkamers onderbreken het (projectie)vlak met informatie dat op de videowand wordt gepresenteerd. De taal van het werk is een gesprek tussen deze twee modi. Het lichtontwerp vestigt onze aandacht op het lichaam dat tevoorschijn komt en oplost in de mist en zich uitbreidt in de video waarin het is opgenomen.

Antarctica van Mary Finsterer en Tom Wright verkent grotere metafysische en spirituele thema's, en de aard van droom en geheugen in een soort van 'diepe tijd'. Inspelend op de filmische gevoeligheden van de muziek en het libretto, de scherpe montages, het langzame tempo, de lange takes, de niet-lineaire verkenning van de tijd en de droomachtige visuele beelden, heeft het creatieve team zich visueel laten inspireren door de poëtische films van Tarkovsky en de schilderijen van Brueghel en Vermeer. Tarkovsky en Finsterer/Wright hebben hier veel gemeen in het geloof in de spirituele aard van kunst, en de renaissancekunst als uitdrukking van dat geloof. De elementen in deze wereld, ijs, mist, licht, schaduw, zijn evenzeer personages als de personages zelf. Sterker nog, de twee zijn soms niet van elkaar te onderscheiden.

Je kunt niet aan Antarctica denken zonder je bezig te houden met de altijd aanwezige ramp als gevolg van klimaatverandering. Het is de ontbinding van de plaats. Als ijs momenten en leven vastlegt, als het dingen uit het verleden bevat en bewaart, als wetenschappers ijs kunnen lezen om te begrijpen wat er in het verleden is gebeurd, dan is ijs (fysiek) geheugen (mentaal). Wij hebben getracht deze fysieke en mentale ruimten samen te voegen. Het oplossen van het ijs is gelijk aan het oplossen van het geheugen. Wat zijn wij zonder collectief geheugen? Een mens zonder overmoed begrijpt dat wij niet boven of anders dan de natuur staan, maar er een heel klein deel van zijn.

Het is opwindend om de première van deze nieuwe opera hier in Amsterdam met het publiek te delen, waar een Australische cast en creatief team, een jonge Nederlandse acteur en de musici van Asko|Schönberg hem voor het eerst tot leven zullen brengen.

– Imara Savage

CREATOR'S NOTE

Buried deep beneath three kilometres of ice is a subglacial world, an ancient realm that stretches more than 14 million km². A frontier of mountains, expansive lakes and complex canyons and rivers systems, the continent of Antarctica remains an enigma that has continued to mystify and inspire humanity for hundreds of years. It awakens a vastness of thought; stirring something beyond language. And yet it is interesting that on this southern-most continent, no language exists.

The boundless nature of this topic demands an inexhaustible quality be mirrored through a multiplicity of languages. It is with this inspiration that my librettist, Tom Wright, and I, created the words and music for the opera. Our vision is to offer a place for the imagination to engage in a poetic and child-like way, exploring an interweaving of metaphor, imagined events and mysteries.

By delving into my own geology as a composer, coalescing 20th Century innovations including electronics and serial composition techniques with more recent influences stemming from the Middle Ages and renaissance musical practice; by embedding into the musical layers scientific algorithms and recordings, and infusing historical, metaphorical and poetic references through word-painting and harmonic language, my aim is to create through the music, an echo that reflects the epic nature of the continent Antarctica as an arcane place of fable and reverie.

– Mary Finsterer

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Ice is a recording medium and a storage medium. It collects and keeps data for millennia. Unlike our hard disks and terabyte blocks, which are quickly updated and outdated, ice has been consistent in its technology over millennia. Once you know how to read its archive, it is legible almost as far back - as far down - as the ice goes. To imagine ice as a 'medium' in this sense might also be to imagine it as a 'medium'; in the supernatural sense: a presence permitting communication with the dead and buried, across gulfs of deep time, through which one might hear distant messages from the Pleistocene.
– Robert Macfarlane, *Underland: A Deep Time Journey*

The question for this creative team is how to best represent Antarctica as both a vast landscape and as a place of spiritual transformation and awakening – a journey of the soul.

Mary Finsterer's music is a unique fusion of structural principles and musical devices from early music paired with contemporary orchestration and electronic treatments of sounds taken from Antarctica and its surrounds: oceans, sonar, the movement of microscopic animals. The design responds to this by placing period characters inside a hyper-modern frame of data and technology. If the Age of Discovery concerned itself with categorising the world as the human

eye experienced it, what can 21st century posthumanism (concerning itself with what the artificial 'eyes and ears' of technology) tell us about the changing planet?

The AV designer Mike Daly has coded an experience in TouchDesigner, a visual programming language for building real-time interactive systems. Noise algorithms randomly select and animate fragments of raw text from data relating to Antarctica, including coordinates, geographic landmarks, research stations, star constellations, flora & fauna species and ancient etymologies. However, the AV is not solely limited to data but operates also as a filmic component and as a giant source of light.

The staging space is a place of memory. Two mist chambers intersect the field of information presented on the video wall. The language of the work is a conversation between these two modes. The lighting design draws our attention to the body as it emerges and dissolves in mist and expands into the video in which it is submerged.

Mary Finsterer and Tom Wright's *Antarctica* largely explores metaphysical and spiritual themes, and the nature of dream and memory in a kind of 'deep time'. Responding to the music and libretto's filmic sensibilities, the sharp edits, slow pacing, long takes, non-linear exploration of time and dreamlike visual imagery, the creative team have been inspired visually by the poetic films of Tarkovsky and the paintings of Brueghel and Vermeer. Tarkovsky and Finsterer/Wright share much in common here in the belief of the spiritual nature of art, and Renaissance art as an expression of that belief. Elements in this world, ice, mist, light, shadow are as much characters as the characters themselves. Indeed, the two are at times inseparable from each other.

One cannot think of Antarctica without engaging with the ever present disaster of climate change. It is the dissolving of place. If ice captures moments and life, if it contains and preserves things from the past, if scientists can read ice to understand what's happened in the past, then ice (physical) is memory (mental). We have endeavoured to merge these physical and mental spaces. The dissolving of the ice is equal to the dissolving of memory. What are we without a collective memory? A person without hubris understands that we are not above or different to nature but a very small part of it.

It is thrilling to be sharing the premiere of a new opera with you here in Amsterdam, when an Australian cast and creative team, young Dutch actor and the musicians of AskolSchönberg will bring it to life for the first time.

– Imara Savage

LIBRETTO

by Tom Wright as set by Mary Finsterer, current 6.5.22

PROLOGUE

Girl (The Daughter)

She was singing
She was singing
She

A Man

Are there others? Where are they?

OVERTURE

Chorus

Map
Tablet
Painting
Boat
Pole

Map

Tablet
Painting
Boat
Pole
Picture
Question
Altar
Pole

Natural Philosopher

What is
And what might be
What is
And how it works
What is
And the truth

Theologian

The world
And what it is for

Clean slate

Cartographer

Knowledge
And how it ends
Knowledge
and what it is for
Knowledge
completing the map

The world

And the dreams of our Lord

The world

And serenity

Our map

ACT I

MAPPA MUNDI

Natural Philosopher

I've never seen anything like it.

Cartographer

My blood fizzled
My breath went tight-

Natural Philosopher

And where did you find this?

Cartographer

Deep in an archive, in a
monastery.
Mappa Mundi!

All

How can this be?
Mappa Mundi

Natural Philosopher

The lettering is strange

Theologian

Is it Arabic
Or Persian?

Cartographer

See here, this is Jerusalem
And here the oceans
Spill as vast rivers flowing
from Eden

Natural Philosopher

Look at all the oceans of the
world!

Cartographer

This is *Ultima Thule*, the end
of the earth.
All this I've seen before.

Theologian

The end of the earth
Vast rivers flowing from Eden

Natural Philosopher

The end of the world

Cartographer

But this –
I've never seen this!

In any other map,
mountains of cloud blow their
winds from fattened cheeks,
sea monsters revel,
a bleak emptiness stretched.

But see, islands,
I think these are places of ice.

This is no act of imagination.

This is a record, an encounter.

Some mariner,
at some point,
has ventured deep south.

Deeper than ever.
And there is a land there.
Another continent...

Chorus

One last act.

Cartographer

A finishing.

Chorus

A new land,
Untouched

What is there?
What beasts?
what flora?

Cartographer

Perhaps where creation is
ordered afresh

Cartographer

With new flora
Or fauna?

Novam terram

Cartographer

But see here?
This small mark?
It seems,
On empty land?

Natural Philosopher

What does it mean?

Chorus

On empty land!
What does it say?

Cartographer

It says, '*Ilk yatalik*'

Chorus

What does this mean?

Cartographer

"The Original Animal"
Primigenius!

Chorus

Prima Creatura!

PRIMA CREATURA

Natural Philosopher

Prima Creatura
The very first
From which all proceeds,
The secrets of life.
Prima Creatura,
The first to breathe.

Theologian

Prima Creatura
Place of pure silence
Wash away my tears
Inscribe my soul
Prima Creatura,
The journey of yearning.

Cartographer

Prima Creatura
Discovery

The source of truth

The secrets

Of life and the mystery of my
journey
Lies in a quest
To trace unfinished lines
No shadow left on earth

Theologian

Tabula Rasa
Story of the spirit's journey
Story of the soul
Soak my sins and my tears

Natural Philosopher

My journey lies in a quest to
Discover the secrets of a
creature
Unmoved by time.

Prima Creatura

Cartographer

To complete the map is my
life's work
Great truths of the world
Will be mine when the map
is done
To trace unfinished lines

Natural Philosopher

Written in blood
Locked in bones the secrets
of life

Theologian

In union, oneness,
Inscribe my soul
Authenticum

Angels in the making

Prima Creatura

Cartographer
Every corner known
Great truths of the world
Will unfold

Theologian
First One,
Lamb of God
Saviour

Angels

ACT II

THE QUEST (Instrumental)

THE JOURNEY

Captain
This endeavour
It is not driven by good
There is a malodour about it

Daughter
But our passengers
They are not dangerous
They are not monsters

Captain
Not to look at
Not on their skin
not in themselves
But in their quest
Monstrous!
No good will come of this

Daughter
Father!
Why are they quiet?
Father, are they sad?
And where will we take them,
Father?

Father, where we go,
is it not dangerous?
And what is there, Father?

Captain
Please forgive me!
If only there was another
way!

Daughter
Father, they are sad!

Captain
Worse than sad
They are proud

Daughter
And why so quiet?

Captain
Obsessed by ambition
Blinded with pride

Daughter
And where will we take them,
Father?

Captain
'Just sail south' they say

Daughter
And is it not dangerous,
Father?

Captain
It is perilous, my child.

Daughter
So why do we take this jour-
ney?

Captain
If only there was another
way!
I fear no good will come of
this!

Daughter
Oh Father, why did you
agree?

Captain
Child, we must eat!
Please forgive me!

Daughter
What awaits us?
Oh Father, what is there?

Captain (spoken)
No good will come of this!
How far south say I
'More south than ever before'
they say

'South until there is no more'

I know their type –
Their pride and pomp
Is far from eyes
But as great
As any emperor or prince.

They are not sad
They grow sick from the
waves
They are bewitched
By moans of the sails
And the bowstrings of the
hull
No good will come of this!

THE SHIP (CHORUS)

Here be dragons

Southway
Deep southway
Lean and swell.
Heave on!
We are going
Where no wooden being
Has ever been.
Heave on!
Wooden me.
Sleep and dream.
Swell and lean
Fleet of keel.
Ohhh sure!
Heave on sea.
Lean and swell.
Ohh sure
Deep southway!
Heave on sea
Fleet of keel!
Hold me!
Deep south way
Ohh sure!

Sky
Sleep and dream

THE PHILOSOPHER'S DREAM

Natural Philosopher
Who are you?
Where did you come from??
You
You are not real
I imagine you

The Ship
Do you know where you are
going?

Natural Philosopher
No, that is the point.
You are not real
You are a fantasy.

The Ship
Why are you going?

Natural Philosopher
I am not seeking
I am merely going in hope
When I was small
There was a door under the
stairs
In shadow, locked.

The Ship
And you were not allowed to
open it?

Natural Philosopher
No, not even that,
It wasn't even spoken of.
It was as if the door was not
there;
As if I could only see it.
But I could hear little things
on the other side.

Whisperings
And I would knock and gently
call
Hello
Hello
What are you in there?
Just murmurs
Just whispers
But I grew older
And learned to ignore the
door
Until one night
A wind blew up
all through the house
I was awakened
A low moaning
From downstairs
So down I went
The low sound
Was wind blowing in keyhole
Of the forgotten door

As if something had been lost
As if coming to awareness

And I placed my mouth on
the keyhole
And blew,
And I blew gently

The Ship
Why?

Natural Philosopher
I do not know
But as I blew
The keylock clicked
The doorframe
Unstuck
A sound
Like tearing a bandage
From an ancient wound
And the door
That ignored door
Swung slowly open...
Swung slowly open...
Tardius aperta

THE LIST OF LATIN NAMES

Eukaryota
Eucampia antarctica

Heterokonta
Hemiaulaceae

<i>Bacillariophyta</i>	Cartographer You speak as you creak	Hard deep in the night I crept down the stairs The door Dumb But in the silence...	The earth is folding the seabed wrinkling Floating Sinking Far below The universe of minerals At war with itself...
<i>Eukaryota animalia</i> <i>Ihlea racovitzai</i>	The Ship And hear Through ears of wood. Man What seek You?	'No I am not here' it said	
<i>Urchodata</i> <i>Thalicea</i> <i>Salpida</i>			
<i>Animalia</i> <i>Balaenoptera intermedia</i>	Cartographer If you can hear through thick cabin walls I will tell you of the door in my house Has ever been closed. I am small In the house of my father Our family have lived here for centuries I walk these hallways I know these stones I draw their lines In my mind	And I kicked it in Splintered timber And what was there you might ask. There was A coldness...	THE THEOLOGIAN'S DREAM Theologian <i>O Euchari in leta via O Euchari, in leta via ambulasti ubi cum Filio Dei mansisti, illum tangendo et miracula eius que fecit videndo.</i>
<i>Animalia</i> <i>Chordata</i> <i>Mammalia</i> <i>Balaenoptera</i> <i>Artiodactyla</i>		THE CREATION OF THE CONTINENT	
<i>Animalia</i> <i>Chordata</i> <i>Mammalia</i> <i>Primates</i> <i>Haplorhini</i>		Lines of fault Lines of folding	The Ship Ohh Sure
<i>Homininae.</i>	The cracks on the paving stones	Fault lines at fault	Chorus <i>Tu eum perfecte amasti cum sodales tui exterriti erant, pro eo quod homines erant, nec possibilitatem habebant bona perfecte intueri.</i>
<i>Homo</i> <i>Simiiformes Hominidae.</i>	The stairways creak The library shelves are teak Mahogany, rosewood, tiny glass panes In the mullion bubbles trapping time All this I know All this I have Laid out in my mind	Lines of fault Fold, fold lines Lines of folding	
<i>Haplorhini</i> <i>Mammalia</i> <i>Chordata</i> <i>Homininae</i>		The ocean floor Folded and creased A bed freshly made A blanket turned Sheet taut	Theologian I feel your presence I sometimes feel Out here, on the sea That I am not here As if my body had gone far away As if I am still at home -
<i>Hominini.</i> <i>Homo stultus</i> <i>Antarcticus</i>	But here Underneath the staircase A small door it has no handle No keyhole, It can never be opened My little feet push it To my mother I say 'Mother, what is behind that small door?' To my sister I say 'what is behind that little door?' 'Nothing' they say 'there is nothing Turn your mind Pay no heed'	Fault lines. Lines of fault. Fold lines Folded and creased. Unseen continents slide, skim on softness Rub Ground Glide on slime Heavy ocean Liquid metal beneath They move apart And let the magma through They collide And crumble into mountains They roll their shoulders Out of the sea They squat They hunch They lump They tear themselves They cry in the deep They move At fault Folding	There was a door
<i>Antarctica.</i>			
THE CARTOGRAPHER'S DREAM			The Ship Door Door
The Ship Ohhh Sure Ohhh Sure Ocean Shore			Theologian A door In our house When I was small A locked door
Cartographer Who is there? Who speaks?			The Ship Locked Door
The Ship Ohhh Sure	Years and years		Theologian And with this door I always felt.. I... I felt I knew what was in there, Somehow; and many years I went back...
Cartographer I cannot see you -	Every room Every cupboard every corner Of my home I knew But the door remained Unopened		
The Ship Am All Around You	What was being denied It swelled in my skull		I found the door - It was wide open

ETERNAL CITY

Theologian

Vanitate

Nihil

Urbs aeterna

Caelesti civitate

Sanctificetur nomen Tuum

Vain glory

Empty

Eternal City

adveniat regnum Tuum

fiat voluntas Tua

sicut in coelo

et in terra

What lies at the end of the earth?

Quod est ad finem?

What fills the last space?

All rivers of the soul, spirit flow

And water gardens there

Towers of gold

Of Diamonds

From which light shines

Vanitate

Nihil

Urbs aeterna

Caelesti civitate

Sanctificetur nomen Tuum

What fills the last space?

Quod spatium implet novissimis

What is there at the end?

Streets of prayer

Rods of song

Contemplation, nearness

Towers of gold, of light

Propinquum,

Vanitate

Nihil

Urbs aeterna

Caelesti civitate

Sanctificetur nomen Tuum

NEARING CIRCUMPOLAR

The Ship

Ohhhh

Sure

Chorus

Deep southway

Heave on sea

Lean and swell

Your breath in my sails

Do not drag me down

We are going where

No wooden being

Has ever been.

Sleep and dream.

Hold me deep sea.

Wooden me

Southbound heave

Do not drag me down

Heave on.

Your skin is cold.

Your thoughts in my belly.

Wrench back.

Hold me.

Twist out.

Stretch back.

Creak spine.

Ohh sure.

Lean and swell.

Heave on sea

Hold me.

Ohh sure.

Sleep and dream.

Lean and swell.

Hold me.

THE SALP AND THE KRILL

Salp

Oor

Oor and gloob

Oor and gloob and oor

Pool

Pool and Spoor and Lure

Gruel

Gruel and Cruel and Duel

More

More

More

Me and me and me

Aboolp

Gaboolp

Kagaboolp

Bookagaboolp

Alp

Abalp

Gabalp

Kagabalp

Sookagabalp

Salp salp

Me and me and me and me

Krill

Iskeel

Ikseel

Chitter chatter click and tick

Ikseel

Bicker clicker bicker click

Iskeel

Me and me and me and me

Salp

Oor and glob

And gruel and cruel

And duel and pool and lure

More and more and more

Duel and cruel and

Gruel and duel and pool and

spoor

And lure and oor and glob

and oor and more, more

Krill

Iskeel

Ikseel

Chitter chatter click and tick

Ikseel

Bicker clicker bicker click

Salp

Oor and glob

And gruel and cruel

And duel and pool and lure

More and more and more

Duel and cruel and

Gruel and duel and pool and

spoor

And lure and oor and glob

and oor and more, more

Krill

Iskeel

Ikseel

Chitter chatter click and tick

Ikseel

Bicker clicker bicker click

Iskeel

Me and me and me and me

Me and me, more and more

THE GALAXY BENEATH ME

The Daughter

Solitude

True solitude

The night

Black

Horizons melt sky and sea

Somewhere...

Solitude

Milky Way

Smeared over all

Oh shatter of stars

Crashing in vastness

Far from the lights of home

Oh see -

There is no soul awake to see

The shimmer of the night sky

Hanging in the water

The multitude of lights

Swimming

Tumble of starlight down

among us

To sleep in our darkness

Solitude

Underfoot

Underdeck

A million tiny creatures

Underspace

A galaxy

beneath me

THE ICE AND THE SHIP'S LAMENT

The Ship

Ohhhh

Sure

Fleet of keel

Heave on wooden me

Sleep and dream.

Swell and lean.

South way, deep southway

As ever been

No wooden being

Where going are we?

Sea heave.

Ohh sure.

THERE NEVER WAS A SOUTHERN LAND

Captain

I have followed your chart

Religiously

We have followed the course

You laid down

But for nothing

Nothing

Is where this chart says

It should be

Nothing

These islands here

Were nowhere to be seen

And according to your chart

We should be seeing land

See?

We are here

This vast shoreline it should

be

There

But when we cast our eyes
What do we see?
What do we see?

Daughter
I see ice

Captain
Yes ice

Daughter
Ice at first
The size of statues
The size of churches
Then all around us

Captain
There is no ice
On this chart

Theologian
This may be
A test

Natural Philosopher
Can you explain
Why there is no concurrence
Between map
And the world?

Cartographer
It is true
That is to say
It is false
There is no chart
This is no map
There never was a map
I never found it

I drew it myself

Captain
So
We are here
As the ice grows thick
at the end of the earth
with no knowledge
No plan
And no course

Cartographer
You would never have come
None of you
No idea can be uncovered
Without risk!

Captain
Enough!
We turn about

Cartographer
No soul would follow
When I said we must find new
lands it is act of faith can't

you see
But if I invent
A new map
The dream seemed real
It seduced you
Your inner voices

Captain
This vessel is mine
We turn back!
False pretences end today
This place is no place for
human beings

Cartographer
Can't you see?
We stay the course
We have come too far
We see it through!
It is an act of faith!
We can't go back
Can't you see?
The point is not the map
The point is belief!
We turn about

Captain
This stretch of waste
This air
These terrifying nights
This is no place for human
beings

All
Strange and beautiful/
But this is not a place for
human beings/
We must go on! We stay the
course! We must find new
lands,
Can't you see?/
Hearken, Ohh sure, wooden
you!
Can you explain why there is
no concurrence between the
map and the world??
We must turn about now, in
our bones we know!

Daughter
No!
Ohh sure!
Heave on!

Chorus
Lean and swell
Heave on sea
Southway
Wrench back
Twist out
Stretch back
Creak spine
Wrench back
Twist out

Stretch back
Creak spine

THE SPLINTERING CHORUS

Ice
Crystallos
Gelum

Ice
Crystallos
Gelum
Glaciers

Anguish

Bind, connect

Freeze, blind, press, squeeze
Ice

Crystallos
Gellus

Blind, freeze
Anguish

HEAR THIS

Captain
I curse you
I curse you all
You, with your certainty
Your fantasies
Your vainglory

I curse you
For ever
I curse you all
You who made my ship
A hive of lies
You, with your schemes, your
dreams, your pride
Hear this

Hear this
Hear this
Let it curl through time
From a man
Who simply tried to plough
the sea and stay alive
Who had no choice, who now
dies

I curse you
I, a mindless servant
Curse you
You, with your beliefs that
torture
Your maps to nowhere
Are your maps to hell!

Damnation to you all
I curse you
Damnation
For ever
For all time
You and your grandiose
dreams
I curse you
For all time

See where you brought us
I curse you
For all time

All those among us
And those who are still to
come!

ACT III

INTO THE DARK

Daughter
Which way?

Natural Philosopher
Radius everywhere circumfer-
ence nowhere

Daughter
So which way?

Natural Philosopher
This way

Daughter
They are following. They are
with us.

EVERYWHERE, NOWHERE

Natural Philosopher
Beauty
As in marble
Japonica
and pearl
The innocence of brides,
benignity of age;
majesty of Justice
Spotlessness
Panic to the soul
Horrors ghastly
Terror pulsating.
Gliding ghostliness, silence of
death
Clouds of wonderment and
dread,
Secret of the spell;
Strange glory
From that pallor of the dead,
we borrow the shroud. We
wrap them.
A snowy mantle round
phantoms;

All ghosts rising in a milk-fog-
king of terrors on his pallid
horse.
rollings of a milky sea;
rustling frosts of mountains;
shiftings of the windrowed
snows;
this invisible world seems
formed in love,

the invisible, formed in fright.
By its indefiniteness it shad-
ows forth
the voids of the universe,
and stabs us from behind
annihilation,
absence of colour;
and at the same time
the concrete of colours;
all other hues are deceits,
laid on from without;
so Nature paints like a harlot,
whose allurements cover
nothing
nothing but the char-
nel-house within;
and when we consider that
the mystical cosmetic
which produces every one of
her hues,
the great principle of light,
for ever remains colourless in
itself,
the universe lies before us
a leper

SOMEWHERE WHICH IS NOT FOR US

Daughter and Theologian
Somewhere which is not for
us
Somewhere we should not be
This empty heaven
Our disease
And the door between the
two...

Nowhere which is not for us
Nowhere where we should
not be
This teeming world
Our disease
And the door between the
two...

The Theologian stops.

Daughter
Come, we must go on.

It is death to be still

Theologian
This is as far as I go
I thought
I was a fool
I thought
There was an end
There is no end

There is no end

One
Simply
Stops.

THE UNDERWATERFALL

Chorus
Tumble under tears
In unending dark

At the end of the dark
Unseen
Ocean
Sea of salt
Flow

Waterfall
Source of tears
Like a heart and lungs
Pumping

Large waterfall
Reaching out to all the
oceans
Renewing life
Nourishment

Wrath, Renewal
Unlimited tide
Connecting to life
Fear

EPILOGUE

THE TURNING AWAY

Daughter
But I can only say what I saw.
Of course it may have been
delusions, I'm not saying that,
maybe my mind was playing
tricks on me I don't know, I
was alone, I was –

Interviewer
But you saw
Or you believe you saw
A
What did you call it?
A creature? Or person?

Daughter
Yes
But this is so hard to say
This place
All things begin there
I was going forward in my life
But going back
To something from before

Another Interviewer
But how is that possible?

Third Interviewer
How did you
Of all of them survive?

Fourth Interviewer
And you say you are from
long ago?

Daughter
Yes. I am sorry I confuse you.
But the places where all this
All this
Stuff
Fall away.
I was there
I have seen the answer

First Interviewer
And what does the answer
look like?

Daughter
It doesn't look anything
like this.

It wasn't this.
It was...
The opposite.

END