

“TOTALLY WIRED”

by

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“Totally Wired” was a Big Theatre production at Contact Theatre, Manchester, U.K. in the year 2000 and was published by Plays International magazine. The script was originally commissioned by West Yorkshire Playhouse.

“*TOTALLY WIRED*” by Kevin Fegan

CAST: 3F 2M

CHARACTERS

Spider – late 20’s

Liam – Spider’s boyfriend

Wayne - Spider’s Dad,

Fran - Wayne’s partner.

Julia - a Medium & Travel Agent

“TOTALLY WIRED” by Kevin Fegan.

MUSIC.

SPIDER IS HIGH UP ON A SINGLE ROPE. SHE IS PERFECTLY STILL AND
LOOKING OUT TO THE AUDIENCE.

LIAM IS NURSING HER CAT IN THEIR LIVING ROOM BELOW.

WAYNE APPEARS ON THE STREET OUTSIDE. HE IS PACING WITH A
BASEBALL BAT.

SPIDER They say that every single atom is made up mostly of space. Think about
it: that’s not just golf courses and car parks, that’s you and me, my cat, a
full can of special brew - whether it’s the little universe or the big
universe, it’s mostly space. It’s a wonder we ever communicate with each
other, if all there is between us is space.

And, as if that wasn’t enough, now they’ve invented cyberspace. We’ve
got computers to explore the inside of a grain of sand, computers to fly us
beyond the solar system; computers to make reality virtual, so you can be
there without even being there. All that cyberspace in a tin box full of
binary numbers. Ones and zeros. And what’s zero but a little round hole,
a nothing, a space?

So how come I haven’t got a computer, eh? Let alone a modem. Here
we are, at the end of the second millenium, on the threshold of the global
village, and I haven’t even got a 2-speed cd-rom; not one single RAM,
not a floppy disc in sight. How am I expected to become a rounded 21st.
century chick when I can’t even hitch a ride on the superhighway?

I did have an Amiga 1200 once, with a soundcard and sampler to rip off my favourite dancey beats; but I sold it to buy a year's supply of E's. Only, they never last a year, do they? Still, you gotta party, haven't you?

You know what I like most about ecstasy? You feel dead sexy when you're dancing. I could be all arse and pimples, but I feel like a cross between Nureyev and Monroe. That lovely, slow-motion sensation on the dance-floor, light and floaty, zero gravity like an astronaut.

MUSIC AS SPIDER SLIDES DOWN THE ROPE INTO HER LIVING ROOM
AND WAYNE ENTERS THEIR HOME.

WAYNE I'm not a bloody charity, Spider. I've told you time and time again, if you don't pay your rent, you're out on your arse.

SPIDER Don't tell us your troubles.

WAYNE It's not as if I ever wanted to be a landlord.

SPIDER We've got troubles of our own.

WAYNE Ten weeks it's been. Not a bloody penny. You've had letters, warnings -

SPIDER We're waiting for the Social -

WAYNE Some of us can't afford to wait for the bloody Social. It's my house and I want it back.

SPIDER It was you insisted I rent your poxy house in the first place.

WAYNE Exactly. I didn't say squat, did I?

SPIDER You've got another house.

WAYNE I live there.

SPIDER So you don't need this?

WAYNE I need two houses. In case they take one off me.

SPIDER Sell it.

WAYNE I can't sell it. That's the problem, isn't it?

SPIDER You shouldn't have two mortgages. It's illegal.

WAYNE I don't want two bloody mortgages; but I'm not paying private
rent, the price of it.

SPIDER But we have to.

WAYNE The rent on this place is fair. And you know it.

SPIDER Fair doesn't mean we can afford it.

WAYNE If you and your bloody zombie weren't so idle.

LIAM STANDS UP (STILL NURSING THE CAT), HIS BACK TO WAYNE.

WAYNE GRIPS HIS BASEBALL BAT.

WAYNE My solicitor has advised me -

SPIDER Solicitor?

WAYNE You're entitled to instruct your own solicitor -

SPIDER My solicitor?

Will you put that down?

Dad, this is me, Spider, hello? I'm supposed to be your daughter.

WAYNE That scruffy cunt you live with might get it into his head to have a go.

SPIDER Put it down. He's nursing the cat.

Liam, take the cat to the vet's. Please.

LIAM WALKS AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE PAST WAYNE’S NOSE AND EXITS WITH THE CAT.

WAYNE I don’t relish using violence, Spider; but when it comes down to it, I’ll fight for what’s mine. It’s not easy this, you know; I’ve had to psyche myself up.

SPIDER Psycho, more like.

WAYNE PUTS THE BAT DOWN.

WAYNE You’ve money for the old moggy then?

SPIDER It’s dying. You’ll get paid.

WAYNE Too late.

SPIDER After the Coucil Tax arrears.

WAYNE And the vet.

SPIDER You’re on the list.

WAYNE I should be top of that list.

SPIDER Sorry, but my cat and the threat of prison are top of the list.
Look, we’ve put you before the lecky bill.

WAYNE Have you ever thought about getting yourself a job?

SPIDER We’re working on it.

WAYNE “Working on it”, doing what?

SPIDER Organising parties.

WAYNE Your life’s one long party.

SPIDER So I might as well work at it.

WAYNE If you spent less time enjoying yourself, you might be able to hold
 down a proper job like the rest of us.

SPIDER We’re going to make some serious money soon. You have to build
 a reputation on the dance scene to be a promoter.

WAYNE Dancing? Is that what you call it? What is there to dance about?

SPIDER Nothing. That’s the point.

WAYNE I know what you get up to.

SPIDER What’s that supposed to mean?

WAYNE I don’t want druggies in my house. Daughter or not.

SPIDER That’s what this is about?

WAYNE Are you denying it?

SPIDER Grow up. Parents are such children when it comes to drugs.

WAYNE It’s time you came back down to earth. Feet on the ground. Not
 head in the clouds. You’ll thank me for this in years to come.

SPIDER Thank you, daddy, for making me homeless.

WAYNE You can’t live on charity all your life.

SPIDER (HEARD IT ALL BEFORE) And the world doesn’t owe me a
 living, I know. At least give me time to move our things.

WAYNE It’s all going in the yard. I don’t care if it rains. They can’t say in court
 I’ve not been considerate.

SPIDER Thanks for nothing.

WAYNE And don’t try and get back in, I’m changing the locks.

SPIDER We might just put your windows through.

WAYNE CONTINUES TO EVICT THEM.

SPIDER FINDS LIAM WHO HAS RETURNED WITHOUT THE CAT AND IS CLINGING TO THEIR BELONGINGS IN THE YARD.

LIAM The bastard can't just evict us without a court order.

SPIDER Where's the cat, Liam?

LIAM He's breaking the law.

SPIDER She still at the vet's?

LIAM Do you want me to go in there and twat your old man?

SPIDER What good's that going to do?

LIAM I've taken his shit for long enough.

SPIDER We're better off on the move anyroad, if we're setting up loads of parties.

LIAM On the move in what, exactly?

SPIDER We could buy your mate's lorry, live in that for a while.

LIAM Where are we going to find five hundred quid?

SPIDER We could sell some of this shit.

LIAM It's worth fuck-all.

SPIDER Then why are you hanging on to it?

LIAM REALISES WHAT HE IS DOING AND DROPS EVERYTHING.

SPIDER There's money everywhere, some of it's got to have our name on.

LIAM (PICKING UP A PILE OF DISCARDED POST) Any amount of junk mail's got your name on, Spider, look. (TOSSING BITS OF JUNK MAIL INTO THE AIR) Holiday of a lifetime? New car? Fitted kitchen? Luxury bathroom? Why wait? You don't have to win the lottery. Ring for

immediate personal loans - subject to status. See, all we need is a bit of status. Where do we get status from, Spider?

SPIDER I could take to living in a lorry.

LIAM We couldn't get credit for jack shit.

SPIDER I'm sure the cat wouldn't mind a lorry.

LIAM No, but I fucking might.

SPIDER I know one place there's bound to be a stash and I reckon I could write my name on it.

Come on, we're going to my dad's before he gets back.

LIAM LOOKS OVER TOWARDS WAYNE.

SPIDER Leave him to it, Liam; he can have it.

THEY LEAVE. MUSIC.

WAYNE CONTINUES TO CLEAR THEIR BELONGINGS UNTIL THE SET IS STRUCK. THE SET IS MINIMAL FOR THE REST OF THE PLAY. IRONICALLY, WAYNE HAS CREATED A “SPACE” FOR SPIDER TO FILL.

SPIDER AND LIAM ARRIVE AT FRAN AND WAYNE’S.

SPIDER (ENTERING WITHOUT KNOCKING) Keep her distracted.

Hello, Fran. Fran, you know Liam; Liam you’ve met Fran, my dad’s latest.

FRAN Don’t be facetious.

SPIDER (PUSHING PAST) Can I use the loo? I’m bursting. Ta.

FRAN You can’t stay here.

SPIDER DISAPPEARS INTO THE HOUSE. WE SEE HER SEARCHING.

LIAM Nice day for it?

FRAN Where’s Wayne?

LIAM Oh, he’s still busy evicting us, I expect.

FRAN It’s not my idea, you know?

LIAM Don’t fret yourself, Fran.

We’ll soon find somewhere else to starve. You won’t have to witness anything. That’s the decent way of doing things, isn’t it?

I know what you’re thinking: I could get a job. I had an interview once.

As a van driver, delivering malt loaf. I turns up for this interview

at this huge factory on a big industrial estate. I’m shown into this

massive committee room where there’s this fuck-off table with

four or five suits the other side and this tiny, little malt loaf placed

ceremoniously between us. They start asking me questions about

“hobbies” and all the time I’m clocking this malt loaf, thinking fuck,

this entire industry is here solely to produce this squidgy, little

sticky-bread and I start laughing. And I can't stop laughing. And these suits are very uncomfortable, thinking I must have lost it completely. And I said, "I'm sorry, I'll have to go; I just can't take malt loaf seriously". All that for a van driver? It's fucking surreal.

SPIDER FINDS CASH.

SPIDER Yes.

SHE STEALS THE CASH.

SPIDER Let's call it relocation expenses, shall we?

SHE ROOTS THROUGH FRAN'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS.

SPIDER Anything else here worth having? Love-letters from dad? I don't think so.

(FINDING A PARTICULAR LETTER) Emma? No one calls me Emma.

SHE OPENS A LETTER AND READS.

LIAM "Sins of the fathers", Fran, how many children like Spider have suffered at the hands of their loved ones?

FRAN Her name's not Spider, it's Emma; after her mother.

LIAM And mine's not Liam. So what?

When my old man got sent down for a long stretch, my mum took up with a new git. This brand new daddy suggested she change her name. To his, like. Mum suggested I change mine as well so people could tell we belonged together. One surname, like a proper family.

Then he starts on at me about my first name:

"There's too many "Lees" in the world," he says. "Why not change it to Liam?" You see, my dad's called Lee and he couldn't bring

himself to call me Lee ‘cause of it reminding him every time. So they change my surname and my first name and tell me to start again. 11 years old I am, at the time.

SPIDER (REAPPEARING, CONCEALING THE LETTERS) Tell me about mum?

FRAN I never met your mum.

SPIDER I know you never met her.

FRAN Your dad doesn’t like to talk about her.

SPIDER Has she been in touch?

FRAN How can she? She’s dead.

SPIDER You’re lying.

FRAN How dare you?

SPIDER What? Upset you? What about this woman?

FRAN What woman?

SPIDER This medium.

FRAN I don’t know what you’re talking about.

SPIDER This medium what’s been writing to us about my mum.

FRAN Has she been in touch with you?

JULIA (TYPING THE LETTER AT HER COMPUTER) My dear Emma, forgive me for being so familiar but I feel that I know you.

FRAN You’ve been through our things?

SPIDER My things.

FRAN It’s all nonsense. She’s obviously a crank.

JULIA I have a message for you from your mum. I never knew her but she is using me to reach you. I’d rather not say any more in writing, I think it’s best that I speak to you directly if you are willing to meet. Please believe me when I tell you that I have nothing to gain from this communication. I’m just an ordinary woman, working in the travel business . I will understand if you don’t reply, I am only ever the messenger in these circumstances.

FRAN Your dad said not to tell you. I was supposed to burn them.

SPIDER How long have you had them?

FRAN Not long, I swear.

SPIDER You two deserve each other.

FRAN Please don’t think badly of us. We’ll help you find somewhere else to live.

SPIDER (LEAVING) Too damn right, you will.

LIAM (FOLLOWING SPIDER) It’s all happening today.

LIAM CATCHES UP WITH SPIDER.

LIAM What the fuck’s going on?

SPIDER (WAVING A WAD OF CASH IN HIS FACE) We’re gonna buy a lorry.

LIAM You thieving tart. Off your own folks?

SPIDER They’ve robbed me.

LIAM Spider? (PAUSE) The cat’s dead.

MUSIC.

JULIA Voices call out to me. I didn’t ask to be a medium. Visions invade my screen. Sometimes, I’m waiting for data to come up on my monitor when

a message appears in cyberspace.

THE CAST WHISPER IN CHORUS: “LOOK TO THE AIR”.

At first, I ignored them in case someone was playing tricks on me. But the messages keep coming. Specific messages for people I know and, lately, for people I’ve never met before in my life.

This one is insistent. I hear her voice in my head and I start to type her message. I know this one isn’t going away until I’ve delivered.

When this voice calls through me, it’s like a rush of air at enormous pressure as though my body is going through the bends. I’m a deep sea diver passing through a decompression chamber. I can only handle so much air at a time. The change in pressure is hurting my ears.

(RECOVERING) It’s as though my computer is a window on another world.

WAYNE HAS RETURNED HOME.

WAYNE Why did you let them in?

FRAN Don't get on at me.

WAYNE You might have known they were looking for trouble.

FRAN She's family.

WAYNE You should have kept your eye on her.

FRAN I was more worried about him.

WAYNE He wouldn't dare.

FRAN She said, she needed to spend a penny.

WAYNE Yeah, not 500 quid.

FRAN I never thought she'd steal from us - I was distracted by the letters. It was embarrassing.

WAYNE She's busy robbing us blind and you're embarrassed.

FRAN It was like she knew where the letters were.

WAYNE I should have burned them myself.

FRAN I thought we should discuss it properly first.

WAYNE 500 quid - after everything I've done for her.

FRAN You see, you're not even willing to talk about it now.

WAYNE There's nothing to talk about.

SPIDER INTRODUCES LIAM TO THEIR NEW HOME.

LIAM Spider, it’s a shed on wheels.

SPIDER Yeah, but it’s my shed.

LIAM It’s so slow.

SPIDER It goes, doesn’t it? And it’s home so get used to it.

LIAM It’s a shell.

SPIDER It’s my very own bit of space.

LIAM Carrying it ‘round on your back like a bloody tortoise.

SPIDER You know what you can do if you don’t like it.

LIAM Don’t take it so personal.

SPIDER Like you’ve got anywhere else to live?

LIAM Must be in the blood.

SPIDER We can go where we want, organising parties, moving on before the dibble suss what we’re up to; it’s perfect.

LIAM It’s only ‘cause your old man’s a lorry-driver.

SPIDER That’s bollocks. Your old man’s a villain, does that make you one?

LIAM I dunno, we’ll have to wait and see, won’t we?

SPIDER CLIMBS INTO THE CAB OF HER LORRY. SHE REMEMBERS, AS A CHILD, HER DAD TAKING HER FOR RIDES IN HIS LORRY. WAYNE CLIMBS IN NEXT TO HER.

WAYNE Move over, Spider.

SHE PRETENDS TO DRIVE.

SPIDER I used to love riding with my dad in his lorry. Sometimes he’d take me on long-distance.

WAYNE Well, she’d learn more with me in a couple of days than she would at school.

SPIDER It’s great up here, dad. It’s like, it’s like a spaceship. Windscreen’s bigger than the window in our front room.

WAYNE It didn’t seem to bother her, getting up at four in the morning.

SPIDER Can I drive?

WAYNE Girls don’t drive lorries.

SPIDER Boys don’t neither.

WAYNE I’m your dad.

SPIDER Can I start it?

WAYNE No, but you can press the stop button when we park up.

SPIDER Can I do the brakes? Please, I love doing the brakes.

WAYNE You can help.

THE CAST MAKE THE NOISE OF THE AIR BEING RELEASED.

SPIDER Can I do the gears?

WAYNE No, you cannot. There’s 36 ton of steel at the back of this cab.

SPIDER Is that more than a tank? Everything’s dead titchy, we could smash through them cars, easy.

WAYNE Hey, it’s not a game.

SPIDER I want you to pick me up from school in your lorry so my mates can see me. Can you imagine? It would be so cool.

WAYNE You like your old dad being a lorry-driver then?

SPIDER Can we stop at a transport cafe?

WAYNE Sure. I’ve brought us a flask as well.

SPIDER Are we going to get weighed?

WAYNE Dunno. Depends how much weight you’ve put on since last time.

SPIDER I’m not heavy.

WAYNE She loves it on the weigh-bridge.

SPIDER We go all light and wobbly, like we don’t weigh nothing.

Can I sit on the engine, dad; it’s lovely and warm.

WAYNE ‘Course.

SPIDER SHUFFLES UP A LITTLE.

SPIDER Where’s your stereo?

WAYNE There isn’t one. You don’t need music, there’s plenty to look at.

SPIDER It’s like being at the pictures.

WAYNE You should be looking for roadsigns.

SPIDER Oh, yeah. What you doing?

WAYNE Driving. And thinking.

SPIDER ‘Bout what?

WAYNE About things.

SPIDER What sort of things?

WAYNE Where we’re going, where we’ve been - travelling things.

SPIDER You won’t leave me, will you?

WAYNE No, I won’t leave you.

SPIDER I wish I could stay up here.

WAYNE At night, we’d snuggle together in our sleeping bags.

THEY SLEEP. MUSIC.

SPIDER I’m dreaming about a police escort, announcing our arrival. My dad’s driving a huge low-loader and his cargo is really important. It takes up both sides of the road so all the traffic has to pull over to let us through. Flashing blue lights ahead and behind as we glide along. It’s as if we own the road.

WAYNE I’m dreaming about a crash. The hydraulics have failed, there is no air in my brakes, and the lorry is careering downhill towards a crossroads. The lights seem fixed on red. It’s a busy town centre and children are spilling out of school in the late afternoon. I can’t risk jack-knifing the lorry. There is a bridge ahead in the dip before the crossroads. I brace myself to ram the bridge. 36 tons of articulated steel presses down on my tiny cab. The windscreen smashes outwards. I am thrown into a sleeping position, curling up with the cab crushed around me, more awake than I have ever been. The bridge quakes on impact, hovering above me on the brink of collapse. I can hear firemen clearing rubble and cutting through steel. The weight bearing down on me is too heavy. I feel powerless to help myself.

LIAM CLIMBS INTO SPIDER’S CAB AND SLEEPS.

FRAN JOINS WAYNE. SHE WAKES HIM FROM A NIGHTMARE.

FRAN You’re having a nightmare.

WAYNE I ache all over. I feel like I’ve been sleeping in a ditch.

FRAN Let me give you a rub.

Wayne, what went wrong?

WAYNE Wrong with what?

FRAN You and Spider?

WAYNE She robbed from us, that’s what went wrong.

FRAN You should have given her those letters, you know?

WAYNE I might have loaned her the bleeding money, if only she’d asked.

FRAN What exactly happened to her mum?

WAYNE I should have burned them myself.

FRAN We shouldn’t have secrets from each other.

WAYNE It doesn’t concern you.

FRAN If you can’t tell me, at least tell Spider.

WAYNE She knows all she needs to know.

SPIDER WAKES LIAM.

SPIDER Liam, get up, look at the time.

LIAM One day, I swear, I’m going to book into an hotel.

SPIDER Too good for my lorry now, are you?

LIAM Just drive.

SPIDER Why can’t you drive?

LIAM And add to Britain’s biggest single killer? What do you take me for?

An irresponsible member of society?

SPIDER We’ve got work to do.

LIAM Yeah, yeah, I’m on the case.

SPIDER Have you sent the fliers out?

NO RESPONSE.

 Have you fly-posted?

NO RESPONSE.

 What about the site? Have you dressed the tents?

LIAM Spider, you’re getting on my tits.

SPIDER Well excuse me for doing your job.

LIAM Have a spliff, chill out, for fuck’s sake.

SPIDER It’s two o’clock in the afternoon.

LIAM All right, let’s have a line then.

SPIDER What exactly have you done towards this party?

LIAM I’m not slacking, I’ve been sorting supplies.

SPIDER I thought we weren’t getting into selling pills?

LIAM I’m not having us known as a bunch of sadbastards.

SPIDER We don’t have to sort it. Invite a few suppliers on the guest list.

LIAM Why should they take all the fucking profit?

SPIDER What about security?

LIAM No sweat, it’s a farm. You know what farmers are like. No fucker gets
past the combine harvester without their say-so.

 Do you want to share a tab for the journey?

SPIDER You’re necking too much.

LIAM Suit yourself.

SPIDER I don't want all these pills in my lorry.

LIAM There's fucking gratitude for you. It'll be different tonight when you're looking for a little buzz.

SPIDER I'm not getting sent down for your greed.

LIAM I'm not scared of doing time.

SPIDER Well I am. You'd better clean up your act or move out of my lorry.

LIAM Just drive, will you?

SHE GIVES UP FOR NOW AND DRIVES.

WHILE SPIDER DRIVES HER LORRY, THE REST OF THE CAST FORM A CHORUS AROUND HER, USING ROPES TO HOLD HER BACK. MUSIC.

SPIDER I love my lorry.

WAYNE I never thought she'd end up living in one.

LIAM I fucking hate it.
It's a prison cell on wheels.

SPIDER It's like living in the air.

FRAN She could be anywhere now.

LIAM I don't know how she ever makes it anywhere.

SPIDER I follow the signs.

FRAN We should go and find her.

WAYNE I never wanted to be a lorry-driver.

LIAM I wouldn't dare thief from my mum and dad.

WAYNE A lifetime of driving’s given me nowt but piles.

JULIA They say piles are brought on by guilt.

WAYNE Too much sugar in my blood, not enough salt in my water.

SPIDER Fuel in my tank, air in my tyres; don’t you just love it?

LIAM Oh yeah, diesel in my lungs, fumes in my hair; it’s great.

WAYNE She’s a thief.

FRAN That’s why he’s having these nightmares.

LIAM Living like fairground gypsies.

SPIDER Do you like the rides what go up and down best or round and round?

FRAN Come away from the window, Wayne.

WAYNE She could be living on another bloody planet for all I care.

LIAM We’re not really travellers, we’re a freakshow.

SPIDER I love things to go up and down and round and round.

LIAM At least we’re spaced out most of the time.

SPIDER If I went fast enough, I’d take off.

LIAM She’s like a big kid.

WAYNE The space generation.

JULIA This is the age of the child.

FRAN VISITS JULIA.

FRAN Julia?

JULIA Yes?

FRAN I'm sorry, it's not quite what I expected.

JULIA We aren't really a shop, I'm afraid; we only deal with phone bookings.

FRAN I'm not looking for a holiday.

JULIA Oh?

FRAN (INTRODUCING HERSELF) Fran, I live with Spider's dad, Wayne.

JULIA So now I know who you are, what do you want?

FRAN Has Spider been in touch?

SPIDER (ELSEWHERE, SPEAKING HER LETTER TO JULIA) I don't have no money, if that's what you're after; but if you want to meet, that's cool by me. You come over to mine so's I can suss if you're a nutter. This'd better not be a wind-up cos I love my mum, even though I d'in't really know her. P.S. I could use a good holiday if you've got any going spare.

FRAN So you know where she is?

JULIA It's not exactly a fixed abode. I know where they're heading for.

FRAN She's not on the streets?

JULIA She's living in a lorry.

FRAN With Liam?

JULIA I don't know - is that her fella?

FRAN Please tell me where they are?

JULIA Perhaps I should ask her first?

FRAN It’s not for my sake, her dad’s going out of his mind with worry.

JULIA They don’t get on, do they?

FRAN How many parents get on with their children? That doesn’t mean to say
there isn’t love between them.

JULIA How long have you known Spider?

FRAN A few years. When Spider left home, I moved in. Why do you ask?

JULIA She needs help.

FRAN I’m here, aren’t I?

JULIA You’re not the reason Spider left home, are you?

FRAN I resent that.

JULIA I’m sorry.

FRAN I met Wayne while he was still driving. He used to deliver fireplaces to the
warehouse where I worked. It became a regular delivery, I’d see him
maybe once or twice a week. I was a fork-lift truck driver, he used to ask
for me on Goods-In. He was good company, always a laugh and a joke.
He sorted me out with an open fireplace, installed it for me and
everything. Then one day, he turns up on the doorstep with a sheepskin
rug, a box of firelighters and a bottle of champagne. He could be very
romantic. And he looks great in wool. Well, my marriage was over. I
moved in with him.

JULIA No regrets?

FRAN (AVOIDING THE QUESTION) Why are you so protective over Spider?

JULIA Her mother’s chosen me as a friend.

FRAN You don’t really believe all that stuff?

JULIA I don’t have to believe it; it happens.

FRAN (TRYING TO MAKE A POINT) Do you have a family?

JULIA No. Do you?

FRAN Touche. I might as well not have kids, the number of times they can be
 bothered visiting me.

JULIA Here, take the address. Perhaps it’s best you talk to her first. I suggest you
 visit her alone.

FRAN LEAVES.

A FIELD. LIAM AND SPIDER ARRIVE AT THE SITE OF THEIR PARTY. DANCE MUSIC.

LIAM Wow, what a wicked site, man.

SPIDER You know what’s the other side of those hills?

LIAM This is one beautiful valley. Look at the river.

SPIDER Why have you brought me here?

LIAM And there’s a funky little forest at the far end.

SPIDER I know all about the funky little forest, Liam.

LIAM I told you everything is under control. This is going to be the best party ever.

SPIDER You know this is near my dad’s.

LIAM What of it? Should we call on the old cunt?

SPIDER You never said.

LIAM You never asked. Does it bother you?

SPIDER No.

LIAM It should.

SPIDER Why?

LIAM He might turn up.

SPIDER Oh yeah, being a regular party animal

LIAM I hope he fucking does.

SPIDER To see how successful we are?

LIAM I’ve still got a few things left, I’d like to say to him before he croaks.

SPIDER We got their money, didn’t we?

LIAM Not enough.

SPIDER You can be a right vengeful bastard, can't you?

LIAM You love it really.

SPIDER I do not.

LIAM Welcome to the weekend. Enjoy.

DANCE MUSIC. AT NIGHT DURING THE RAVE.

LIAM I'm on a right, royal bender this weekend.

All I can smell out here is cowshit so I go in the big top for a gurn at the girlies. Welcome to planet pussy. I'm on my third E and I'm starting to mong-out, big style. My fucking wisdom teeth are worn away with chewy. I'm scared shitless of getting lock-jaw so I spit it out, all over some blissed-up cunt in the corner of the tent who thanks me sincerely for my communication. I leg it pronto before he gets into all that touchy-feely shit. I'm as sensitive as the next twat; but I'd rather be luvdup with a pussy.

My senses are on overdrive. I'm feeling sexy as fuck. I love this drug. My libido has turned to lycra. Bare flesh like there's no tomorrow; the darlings, every one a model. This year's look, designed to give good suck. Bastard. My mind's on fire and not a hope in hell of a half-decent hard-on. Not a bollock in sight. They've disappeared so far up my own scrotum, I think they're ovaries. It's not right, having to wait until you come down off this stuff. What kind of fucking love-drug is that?

SPIDER Once you've had a taste of voodoo, there's no turning back. Once you've graced some farmer's field like a brand new crop, there is no stopping it growing.

In the valley, the natives are dancing themselves into a trance. As the sun sets red on one side, the moon rises blue on the other. The tribes are gathering for the Autumn solstice. They arrive in silhouette, driving across the horizon until they turn into the valley. A procession of headlights pick out individual dancers, gurning with delight, chewing their faces, pumping their feet, windmills of hands.

The pulse of my heart, the beat of the music are tuned to the rhythm of the planet, reaching back to our ancestors, reaching forward to our descendants. The voodoo of dance, music and drugs. It's a sacred ritual. These drugs should be treated with respect, they are sacred things, only to be used in rituals of celebration. Respect the voodoo and aspire to the spiritual.

A hand reaches out to me from a total stranger. A smile and I'm totally luvdup again. We are communicating mouth-to-mouth as naturally as the birds. Later, she thanks me for organising the party. And for a few hours, I am not some discarded piece of shrapnel, orbiting the earth with tons of other trash; I am simply a creature crawling on this planet with the entire solar system inside me.

THEY RETIRE TO THE LORRY.

LIAM Later, usually much later, in the morning when there’s only a small tribe of diehards still trance-dancing, we have our own party in the lorry. She likes to slave me, you know. Cage me in like a prisoner and tease me. I crawl into this bit of a prison cell she’s made from the table, while she slips an E up her fanny. She likes me to play “chase the E”, then beg her for a fuck; but today I’m breaking out.

SPIDER Liam, you’re hurting me.

LIAM And you love it.

SPIDER You fuckwit, let go.

LIAM You don’t normally complain.

SPIDER You don’t understand the difference, do you?

LIAM It’s all right for you to slave me.

SPIDER I never make out like I own you.

LIAM What if I want to own you?

SPIDER Let me go, Liam..

LIAM Say my name.

SPIDER That is your name.

LIAM Say my “proper” name.

SPIDER That hurts.

LIAM You’re mine, Spider. I’ve caught you. You do as I say. Now say my name.

SPIDER Asshole.

LIAM Say it.

SPIDER Please, no, don't.

LIAM Say it.

SPIDER Lee. Lee, Lee, Lee.

THERE IS A LOUD KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF THEIR LORRY.

SPIDER THROWS HIM OFF.

LIAM Fuck, there's somebody at the door.

SPIDER Bastard. I'll get you for this.

KNOCK AGAIN.

LIAM It's probably your dad, come to join the party.

KNOCK AGAIN.

LIAM Tell them to fuck off.

JULIA (CALLING) I'm looking for Spider?

LIAM Fuck off and die, will you, knocking at the door at this hour of the morning.

JULIA (CALLING) I'll call back.

SPIDER (CALLING) No.
Get your kit on, you, you're leaving.

JULIA (CALLING) I won't stay.

SPIDER Come in.

LIAM Hey, I'm not dressed yet.

JULIA This is obviously bad timing.

SPIDER Couldn't be better, actually. He doesn't like to stay where he's not wanted, do you “Liam”?

LIAM Are you throwing me out?

SPIDER It's my lorry. I'm not living with no fucking time-bomb. Now get out.

SHE PUSHES HIM OUT.

SPIDER And don't come back.

How did you find me in the middle of nowhere?

JULIA Your mum told me.

SPIDER My mum is dead.

JULIA Yes; but I'm here, aren't I?

SPIDER I don't understand.

JULIA Me neither. I just do as I'm told. Shall we get on with it?

SPIDER What do we have to do? Join hands by candlelight?

SHE PRODUCES A LAPTOP COMPUTER.

JULIA Dear me, no; I keep all my messages on disc. I find people like to keep the disc as a momento.

SPIDER Cyber-spooks. Cool. How do we make contact?

JULIA I don't solicit messages, I'm afraid. They use me. Usually when I'm busy at my computer. I can't turn it off, unfortunately, the messages. Or on, for that matter. It comes through like E-mail. Suddenly I'll go into one and the voices get me to type out their messages.

SPIDER So you can't call them back?

JULIA Sorry.

SPIDER Why bother?

JULIA They don't give me much choice. I try to deliver most of them.
Especially when a message seems important. You wouldn't
believe the apparent trivia sometimes. As if I haven't got enough
to do without being used like some kind of digital phone-in.

SPIDER Are you saying that my mum is out there in cyberspace
somewhere?

JULIA All I'm saying is that she's using me to reach you.

SPIDER I really should buy a computer. How do you know it's not some
sort of virus?

JULIA I don't know anything. And I don't have to stay.

SPIDER Why is she trying to reach me?

JULIA Read the message.

SPIDER INSERTS THE DISC. MUSIC.

SPIDER Can I trust you?

JULIA Can you trust her?

SPIDER What's the use if I can't write back?

JULIA She might never communicate again.

SPIDER OPENS THE FILE. CAST WHISPER IN CHORUS: “LOOK TO THE AIR”

SPIDER “Look to the air.”

Is that it? All this fuss for that?

JULIA It seemed important.

SPIDER It’s bollocks. I want you to go. You’re upsetting me.

JULIA Of course, it’s only natural. I won’t come again.

SPIDER I’m sorry.

JULIA There is one thing I would like to know? How did she die?

SPIDER Please leave me alone.

JULIA LEAVES AND RETURNS TO HER COMPUTER.

LIAM RETURNS.

SPIDER I thought I told you to leave?

LIAM You’re a very popular girl this morning.

SPIDER What do you mean?

LIAM I thought I’d best hang around for the fireworks.

SPIDER What you on about?

LIAM Your old man and his missus, they’ve obviously decided to join the party
after all.

SPIDER GOES TO CONFRONT HER DAD, FOLOWED BY LIAM.

SPIDER How did you know we was here?

LIAM Don’t look at me.

FRAN I went to see Julia.

SPIDER She never said.

LIAM She’s grassed you up, the cow.

FRAN We’re all concerned about you.

WAYNE It’s pay-back time.

LIAM Yep, that sounds like concerned to me.

WAYNE I think it’s best you leave, don’t you?

LIAM It’s not me what’s trespassing.

SPIDER What do you want?

FRAN We want to help.

WAYNE Where’s my money?

LIAM You’re looking at it.

SPIDER I bought a lorry. We had to have somewhere to live.

WAYNE I’ll take that then.

LIAM You really do fancy yourself as a baillif, don’t you?

WAYNE Tell the freak, this is a family matter.

LIAM I am family.

FRAN Let’s go, Wayne, this’s getting us nowhere.

LIAM Yeah, piss off, you’re spoiling the view.

WAYNE GRABS HIM BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK.

WAYNE I’ll leave when I’m ready.

SPIDER (TRYING TO SEPARATE THEM) Stop it, leave him alone. Fran, tell him.

FRAN (BREAKING THEM UP) Wayne, that’s enough.

LIAM You’re well out of order coming here.

WAYNE I’m sure the police would love to know what’s going on at these little parties of yours.

LIAM Do you hear that? He’s gonna set the dibble onto us.

FRAN He will not.

SPIDER I'll pay you back when I can, now leave us alone.

WAYNE I'm disappointed in you, Spider. You could do better than this.

SPIDER I don't give a shit if you're disappointed or not.

FRAN We're leaving.

FRAN TAKES HIM BY THE ARM AND THEY LEAVE.

LIAM That's told them.

SPIDER You too.

LIAM Have a heart, where am I going to sleep?

SPIDER I don't give a flying fuck, I want you out of my face.

LIAM There's gratitude for you, I just stuck up for you.

SPIDER Leave, Liam.

LIAM (LEAVING) No worries, I'm not staying where I'm not wanted.

MUSIC. SPIDER CURLS UP TO COMFORT HERSELF AND SLEEPS.

SHE STARTS TO HYPERVENTILATE SLOWLY IN HER SLEEP. SHE IS DREAMING.

SPIDER I need to know about mum.

WAYNE STEPS INTO HER DREAM.

SPIDER You tell it so well, like you’ve rehearsed it, like it was a story.

WAYNE I was on long-distance. I couldn’t face sleeping in the cab again.

I hardly ever slept in digs. That way I kept the bit of an allowance they paid for stop-overs. Besides, the pittance they allowed was only enough to share a poxy cell full of other ugly bastards with indigestion and heartburn, snoring and farting all night. If I could make it home, I would. Even if it meant four in the morning for a seven o’clock start the next day.

It was me who found you, the night of the accident. The air was thick with poison. Carbon monoxide from a faulty flu behind the gas fire.

I creep in quietly so as not to disturb you. Your mum is lying diagonally in our bed which is not how she normally sleeps. Her head is tilted back slightly towards the window and her neck is swollen like a bird in song. I wring her red neck in my hands; but nothing comes out.

I try to kiss her back to life but she is beyond a coma.

I hear a faint wheezing in the other bedroom. You’re alive. You’re curled up tight like a spider in fright. You’re breathing out in the strangest, long

stretches and inhaling occasionally in very quick, short bursts.

The doctors said you’d gone into a sort of trance by hyperventilating which allowed you to slow your breathing down to a minimum.

I live on the other side of the window through intensive care and thoughts of brain damage. Any kind of life is all I hope for. They place you in a decompression chamber. I can see you through a port-hole in the side. You’re going through the bends like a deep-sea diver. Your body is swollen bright red. Your blood is pressing tight against your skin, desperately trying to evacuate the poisonous gas. They are slowly adjusting the air pressure to try and bring you back to a normal state. For hours, I am looking to the air.

My little “Spider”, I called you. You survived. How is it that you could barely speak a full sentence and yet your toddler instincts were tuned to deal with the threat of suffocation?

When I finally return home, I am swollen with grief. I smash every window in the house, gagging for a flow of fresh air.

SPIDER AWAKENS AND GOES TO FIND JULIA WHO IS AT HER COMPUTER.

JULIA I was just about to shut up shop. Can I interest you in a holiday?

SPIDER I'm sorry about, you know, with Liam and that.

JULIA We all have our domestics.

SPIDER It came on top last night.

JULIA There's a bitterness eating away at him.

SPIDER I think he knows; but he won't do anything about it.

JULIA Was it Liam you came to see me about?

SPIDER She suffocated - you wanted to know. Dad says it was an accident; something to do with a gas fire.

JULIA Do you think that's what her message is about? Suffocation?

SPIDER I dreamt about her last night. She was very cold towards me. Why is she?

JULIA I don't know, Spider. Maybe you should ask your dad.

SPIDER They came over to see me, after you left.

JULIA I'm sorry, I advised Fran to visit on her own.

SPIDER It was a right mess.

JULIA You have to speak to your dad at some point.

SPIDER I want to speak to mum. Can we try and contact her?

JULIA I told you, it doesn't work that way.

SPIDER Have you ever tried?

JULIA And failed.

SPIDER It might make a difference, if I'm with you?

JULIA It's out of my control.

SPIDER Well, isn't it about time you took control? Are you going to allow yourself to be a conduit for spooks for the rest of your life? It should be give and take, shouldn't it? If you can't turn it off, it will end up knacking you.

JULIA Have you brought your disc?

SHE HANDS IT OVER AND JULIA BOOTS UP HER COMPUTER.

JULIA This is no ordinary booking, you know?

SPIDER Is it flights only or could you find me accommodation?

JULIA Now that would be a breakthrough.

SPIDER Package holidays with the dead.

JULIA I thought I was morbid.

There you go, her file is open.

SPIDER What do we do now?

JULIA Type your message, I suppose.

SPIDER Don't you ever get frightened?

JULIA Believe me, I wet myself with fear sometimes.

SPIDER You best do it; I'll tell you what to say.

JULIA When you're ready.

SPIDER “Dear cyber-mum...”

JULIA You want me to start?

SPIDER NODS. JULIA TYPES. BRING IN MUSIC QUIETLY.

SPIDER “Mum, we need to talk. Don't speak to me as the toddler you knew, speak to me as the woman I have become. I don't know what's going on in my life. I'm trying to make connections. If we could connect, things might be

different. Why have you contacted me? For my sake or yours?”

THEY STOP BECAUSE SPIDER IS UPSETTING HERSELF.

BUILD AND CUT MUSIC DEAD. EXIT JULIA AND SPIDER.

AT WAYNE’S HOUSE. LIAM APPEARS ON THE EDGE OF THEIR ESTATE. HE IS CARRYING A BASEBALL BAT.

FRAN Come and have some supper, love.

WAYNE She’s more trouble than she’s worth.

FRAN You don’t mean that.

WAYNE Not a letter, not a ‘phone call.

FRAN She thinks you don’t want her.

WAYNE I never said that.

FRAN You threw her out.

WAYNE She threw herself out. What was I supposed to do? Let her live rent-free with that foul-mouthed layabout?

LIAM Who the fuck does she think she is, throwing me out?

Look at them on their new estates with their conservatory extensions.

Why do they build conservatories? To let in more sunlight? So they can

be inside, feeling like they’re outside? So they don’t have to open their

windows? They still have to have blinds on all the windows so no one can

see their belongings, see what they have worth stealing.

WAYNE I blame that waste of space she took up with.

FRAN It’s a bit late for blame.

WAYNE What is it with their generation?

FRAN They’ve been brought up to expect so much.

WAYNE They get it all too easy.

FRAN I wouldn’t like to be any younger these days.

WAYNE Sex, money, leisure - on a plate. They’ve too much time on their hands.

LIAM I know, I know, “the only free cheese is in a mousetrap”. So I’m in your debt - happy? I’ll say anything you want on your ridiculous forms. Yes, I’ll take any job. Yes, I’ll travel anywhere. Yes, I’ll accept any amount of wages. Yes, I’m a lazy, work-shy cunt. I could fall into a barrel full of tits and come out sucking my thumb. I can live with that. Even if you can’t. But no, you insist I have to have a stake in society. A society that brags about “9,000 Barclayloans every week” on billboards bigger than some cunt’s cardboard shelter. “By the time you’ve read this, we will have trained 200 more managers”. Why, for fuck’s sake? Alarms are going off everywhere. You brush past a car and a bloody alarm goes off. A cat jumps onto a windowsill and an alarm goes off. Even the people without alarms, they’ve got the boxes to make it look like they’ve got one. A city of piercing sirens, pitched at the point your brain closes down its central nervous system; so fucking loud you want to do a Van Gogh on your ears. People are going to bed with cotton wool in their ears so they don’t have to put up with the noise; so they don’t

even hear the robbers when they break in anyway.

So many people making a living from criminals, never mind crime, and then whinging about someone lifting their poxy wheel-trims.

The police, the prisons, probation, the lawyers and the judges, the insurance companies, even the bloody telly, where would they be without crime? So my dad’s in jail, big fucking deal.

FRAN You’re so hard on them.

WAYNE Not hard enough. They think life is about enjoyment. They conveniently forget you have to graft for your pleasures.

FRAN Not everyone’s like you.

WAYNE No, more’s the pity. The only reason I’ve done all right as a truck-driver is because I’m not afraid of hard work.

FRAN You can be so self-righteous.

WAYNE You’re too weak.

FRAN Weak? Putting up with you? I don’t think so.

WAYNE If I want your opinion, I’ll ask for it.

FRAN No. You’ll get my opinion. What is weak, is a father not being able to communicate with his daughter.

WAYNE I know you’ve had to put up with a lot.

FRAN That’s not what I’m saying. It’s your constant self-pity, hiding behind all this blaming.

WAYNE They don’t deserve us as parents.

FRAN Listen to you.

WAYNE We were expected to do better than our parents. And we did.

FRAN Isn't that the problem? Not all our kids can do better. Some of them are
 out there wandering around like refugees.

WAYNE We had to make something for ourselves.

FRAN Then let them do the same. They don't want your life, they want
 their own.

WAYNE PICKS UP THE PHONE.

FRAN What do you think you're doing?

WAYNE Inviting a few people to their little party.

LIAM I tell you, all this fucking energy has to go somewhere. I'm totally wired.
 I fucking hate lorries, Spider. You had a dad, I had a mum. That's
 why we're together. Together we make a family.

IN A WOOD NEAR THE FIELD. JUST A SUGGESTION OF TREES USING ROPES.
DANCE MUSIC GRINDS TO A HALT. LIAM HAS RETURNED TO FIND THE
PARTY HAS BEEN RAIDED AND SPIDER HAS LOST EVERYTHING.

LIAM What the fuck do you mean “the party's over”? I'm still buzzing. I've got
 “amplified repetitive beats” drumming away on my synapses at 160 b.p.m.
 I've got serotonin oozing from every orifice. I am totally blissed-up, if you
 hadn't noticed.

SPIDER They've had the sound system. The generator. The decks. The
 choons.

LIAM Not the choons?

SPIDER The drugs.

LIAM Not the drugs, no?

SPIDER And the vehicle.

LIAM Your lorry? Not your fucking lorry?

SPIDER You're enjoying this, aren't you?

LIAM Spider, you know how much I loved that lorry.

SPIDER We're totally fucked.

LIAM It's him, he's grassed us up.

SPIDER Who?

LIAM It's obvious: your old man's shopped us.

SPIDER He wouldn't.

LIAM You heard him.

SPIDER He didn't mean it, he hates the police.

LIAM He hates you robbing him even more.

SPIDER What am I gonna do?

LIAM Somebody should do that treacherous cunt.

SPIDER I'll catch me death of cold out here.

LIAM Sweat it out.

 I could always keep you warm.

SPIDER You never kept me warm, Lia-

LIAM Go on, you were about to say my name?

SPIDER Don't you start that shit again.

LIAM Worried I might want you back?

SPIDER I'm never worried by the past.

LIAM I only want a fuck.

SPIDER Stroke a tree.

LIAM Spider, I want to come back.

SPIDER No, you want to own me. You made that very clear.

LIAM It was just a game, a party game.

SPIDER And now the party’s over, right?

LIAM (LEAVING) Yeah, and we all know who’s fault that is, don’t we?

LIAM RETURNS TO THE WINDOW AT WAYNE’S HOUSE. LIAM PULLS A BALACLAVA OVER HIS FACE AND, WITH THE BASEBALL BAT, HE SMASHES THE WINDOW AND FORCES HIS WAY IN.

LIAM On the fucking floor. Get on the fucking floor.

FRAN DOES BUT WAYNE ATTACKS LIAM. LIAM HITS WAYNE WITH THE BAT AND HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND FRAN TRIES TO HELP HIM.

FRAN Oh, Lord God have mercy.

LIAM Your money? Where’s your fucking money?

FRAN I’ll get it, I’ll get it, please, don’t hurt us any more.

LIAM Show me.

SHE DRAGS HERSELF AWAY FROM WAYNE.

LIAM Now.

FRAN Please, I’m trying to remember, I can’t -

SHE GOES TO A CUPBOARD AND FUMBLES WITH A DRAWER. LIAM TAKES OVER, TIPPING OUT THE DRAWERS AND GRABBING THE CASH.

LIAM Where’s the rest?

MEANWHILE, IN THE WOOD, SPIDER HAS CLIMBED PART WAY UP THE
ROPES AND IS STARTING TO CONSTRUCT A WEB. THE CAST FORM A
CHORUS AROUND HER. MUSIC.

CHORUS The streets are filling up with cars and carcinogens,
 viruses are breeding in the air-conditioned buildings,
 poverty wears a lottery ticket like an oxygen mask.

 She looks down and see a species
 with possession on their minds,
 still tearing at each other’s throats
 for a piece of land or a can of special brew.

 Matter is the stuff of earthbound creatures.
 People with their feet firmly on the ground
 while hankies cover their mouths to mask the stench
 of yet another century of wanton slaughter.

 Atrocities are concealed in the basement of civilisation,
 progress has no shame.

 There has been an accident.

 She can’t see exactly what has happened;
 but someone is mouth-to-mouth with another
 in a kiss of life,
 an emergency transfusion of used air.

 This outbreak of compassion passes by without much notice.

 “Look to the air”, she said,

where, in a world of energies,
you cannot own the waves
and there is no possession.

LIAM RETURNS. A DISTANT POLICE SIREN. LIAM BECOMES AGITATED.

LIAM You can't live there.

SPIDER Why not?

LIAM Because people don't.

SPIDER They do now.

LIAM You're losing it, Spider.

SPIDER No, Liam; I'm finding it.

LIAM What the fuck are you up to?

SPIDER A life?

LIAM Get real.

SPIDER I don't know; but what is there for me down there?

LIAM What is there for me?

SPIDER Maybe you should find your dad?

LIAM You'd love that, wouldn't you? If I got sent down?

POLICE SIREN IS COMING NEARER.

SPIDER What have you done, Liam?

LIAM You'll find out soon enough.

SPIDER You could join me up here?

LIAM In a fucking treehouse?

SPIDER We need to find new spaces.

“Look to the air”, that’s all I know for now.

LIAM I am looking, it’s just empty space.

SPIDER It’s not empty. You don’t understand spaces. You always think in terms of penetration, it’s the male psyche. Plug that hole; if there’s a gap, fill it. Gaps are already occupied, holes are already full. There’s no such thing as empty space.

POLICE CAR APPROACHES.

LIAM (LEAVING) I’ve not given up on you yet, Spider. I’ll catch you, sooner or later, I’ll catch you.

EXIT LIAM.

SPIDER FINISHES HER WEB. BRING IN MUSIC QUIETLY.

CHORUS At the turn of the century
 people first took to the air
 in their birdlike machines,
 flapping with excitement at the impossible.
 Now, as the century closes,
 she lives in the air,
 not like an aeroplane transporting her
 from A to B through the atmosphere
 but like a spider weaving the air,
 risking itself absolutely,
 dancing its way through nothing.
 She was nothing, no one.
 She came here because she was forced to the edge,
 dispossessed of what she owned,
 of who she was.
 This is the corner where the insects live.
 She is settling like a refugee
 and making nothing her home.
 She is filling it with new things of her own.
 She is repossessing herself,
 reinventing her environment.
 Sometimes, when she is hanging upside down,

plucking a tune on these strings,
she dares to consider herself a different species,
not a new species but one which has been lost.
She hangs here with our earliest ancestors,
pre-sapien, preternatural.

ALARMS. LORRIES. ACCIDENT. CHAOS.

MUSIC. SPIDER HAS LOCATED HERSELF AT THE CENTRE OF HER WEB.
SPIDER IS IN A COMA, FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT IN HER LORRY. THERE IS
ONLY A SUGGESTION OF A HOSPITAL BECAUSE THE REMAINDER OF THE
PLAY TAKES PLACE ENTIRELY IN THE SURREAL WORLD OF HER COMA.
THE ROPES WHICH FORM HER WEB ARE ALSO THE TUBES WHICH ARE
KEEPING HER ALIVE IN INTENSIVE CARE. WAYNE, FRAN, LIAM AND JULIA
APPEAR IN WHITE HOSPITAL GOWNS AND OXYGEN MASKS COVERING
THEIR FACES. THEY FORM THE CHORUS, BREATHING THROUGH THEIR
MASKS.

SPIDER Welcome to my space.

 A web of wires and waves.

 This space is nowhere, everywhere,
 a theatre of the air.

 My lungs have their fill of oxygen,
 my body pumps to its rhythm.

 There are lights for my eyes,
 sounds for my ears,
 smells for my nose.

 Wave upon wave reoccur
 and saturate my senses.

 I binge on the natural beat of our planet,
 the music of our sphere,
 and feast on the love I can filter from the air,

the profound, intoxicating air.
I surround myself with invisible energies.
I coil in magnetic fields
and cultivate enough electricity for my needs.
All communication is within my grasp:
my web vibrates in one small corner of space
and yet it extends across the earth.

CHORUS How long will she be in a coma?
The doctors say there’s no way of knowing.
She’s lucky to be alive.
I can hear a faint wheezing.
There’s nothing much we can do.
Except keep a vigil by her bed.

THE CHORUS SURROUND HER.

She was living in a tree.
She went to collect her lorry from the police.
She was so happy.
The hydraulics failed.
The lorry careered downhill towards a crossroads.
The lights seemed fixed on red.
It was a busy town centre.
She braced herself to ram the bridge.
The windscreen smashed outwards as the cab crushed around her.

The bridge was quaking on impact, hovering on the brink of collapse.

We saw the firemen clearing the rubble, cutting through steel.

We felt the weight bearing down on her.

We were powerless to help.

CHORUS RETIRES AND LEAVES FRAN KEEPING A VIGIL BY SPIDER’S
BEDSIDE. FRAN STROKES SPIDER’S HAIR AND MAKES SURE SHE’S
COMFORTABLE.

FRAN Spider, I’m leaving your father.

SPIDER For good?

FRAN Until he sorts himself out. I tried, believe me?

SPIDER I know.

FRAN JOINS WAYNE.

FRAN Wayne, I’ve been thinking, maybe we should go away for a while?

WAYNE I’m not going anywhere.

FRAN The hospital will call us if there’s any progress.

WAYNE No.

FRAN We can’t carry on like this.

WAYNE Like what?

FRAN Like us.

WAYNE I don’t know what you mean?

FRAN You’re not exactly dealing with anything, are you?

WAYNE I’m not complaining.

FRAN I am. I can’t live with you and a ghost.

WAYNE How can you say that? She’s in a coma.

FRAN I’m not talking about Spider.

WAYNE Oh.

FRAN Well?

WAYNE Spider might still be here today if she hadn’t got involved with that trash.

FRAN This is not about Liam.

WAYNE Eighteen months? They should’ve thrown away the key.

FRAN You’re doing it again.

WAYNE What?

FRAN Avoiding the issue.

WAYNE I don’t know what you’re saying?

FRAN Maybe I’ll go away for a while?

WAYNE Do what you want?

FRAN (TO SPIDER) What do you remember about your mother?

SPIDER Only what Dad’s told me.

FRAN He’s not told you everything.

SPIDER Like what?

FRAN I don’t know; but until he talks, neither of you are going anywhere.

FRAN TURNS TO WAYNE

FRAN I’m leaving.

WAYNE Where to?

FRAN I need a holiday – from you.

WAYNE Don't be so melodramatic.

FRAN I can't put up with you any more.

WAYNE Look, I'm sorry; things'll change.

FRAN Yeah, but will you?

WAYNE What have I done that's so terrible?

FRAN How could you shop your own daughter?

WAYNE I did her a favour: I got her away from that little shit, didn't I?

FRAN You don't see it, do you?

WAYNE We were the victims, remember?

FRAN Forget Liam. If you want Spider back, you're going to have to talk to her.

WAYNE I talk to her every day. She just lies there – breathing.

FRAN LEAVES.

WAYNE You will come back?

FRAN I'll phone you.

WAYNE They all leave me. Like I was some seaside town they were only ever visiting. Bit of a thunderstorm and they're off. Come back when the weather's fine. Well, I wouldn't have Fran back now. Not if she begged. Not if she won the fucking lottery. Stuff it.

IT IS NIGHT-TIME IN LIAM'S PRISON CELL.

LIAM Like father, like son.

So this is who I am?

Just another insignificant con

rattling around in prison.
So this is where I belong?
The worst time is lights-out
and the final ritual of skinning-up my last roly.
Knowing that my senses are rationed
to the smell of the blanket,
the tapping of pipes,
a stab of light through the spy-hole in the door,
the familiar touch of four white walls
and the gasps of air filtered through steel bars.
It's not so much the darkness
as the claustrophobia of my own thoughts.

LIAM LEAVES HIS CELL.

Here I am, sleepwalking again,
isolated from everyone,
cut off from everything.

SPIDER And who put you there, Liam?

LIAM It might as well have been you in the judge's chair.

SPIDER You're still blaming me?

LIAM I've thought about nothing but you.

SPIDER Yeah, well some people never know when a relationship's finished.

LIAM You should be glad I still care.

SPIDER You think I should be grateful? Like a good female? Forgive and

forget? That you assaulted me? That you battered my family? Do you think I have no poison in my tail?

LIAM I'm the one rotting in prison.

SPIDER Because you have no beauty in your life.

LIAM You and your voodoo shit – do you think anybody cares about that?

SPIDER Do you hold nothing sacred?

LIAM Control is all that matters.

SPIDER You lost control.

LIAM You crashed.

SPIDER We both crash-landed.

LIAM I've been lied to all my life.

ELSEWHERE, JULIA IS AT WORK.

JULIA Well, sir, I can't make up your mind for you, can I? What is it you're looking for exactly? Sun, sea and sand? Nightlife? Culture? Adventure? (PAUSE) Peace and quiet? Why didn't you say? We have some very remote locations.

SPIDER Still playing postie, Julia?

JULIA Spider?

SPIDER What's the matter? Did you see my eyes blink? Did you hear me say your name? Did my little finger rise and fall? Call the doctor quick, ask the nurse to check the scanner for fresh bleeps.

JULIA I sat at your bedside, looking for signs. Nothing. Not a single flicker.

SPIDER How do you know this is not my mother contacting you? How do I know

you're not my mother?

JULIA You think I make these things up? Do you suppose I enjoy this?

SPIDER Yes, I think you enjoy the attention, I think it makes you feel self-important.

JULIA I told your mother I didn't want anything more to do with your family.

SPIDER You switched her off, shut her down, is that it?

JULIA Your mother's ashamed. She can't communicate with her own daughter.

SPIDER You gave up on us.

JULIA I'm sorry for what's happened to you.

SPIDER I need you to visit my dad.

JULIA He doesn't want to see me.

SPIDER He won't see you; but he couldn't resist my mum.

JULIA How can I - ?

SPIDER Try.

JULIA I've work to do, I'm tired. You shouldn't be using me like this.

SPIDER Do you know what it's like, Julia, when the pressure builds in your head as every last breath leaves your body? Do you know how it feels to be possessed by death?

JULIA Don't give up. Draw your father in. Curl up like a spider in fright.
Slow down your breathing.

MUSIC. SPIDER IS CLEARLY STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE. CHORUS
BREATHING.

CHORUS Spider, come back to us.
 We’re reaching out to you,
 reaching out into space,
 willing you not to slip away.
 She is drifting like an astronaut,
 beyond the solar system,
 six billion miles from home.
 The faster she travels,
 the further away she becomes.
 She is entering deep space.

WAYNE Don’t die on me now, Spider. Don’t leave me like your mum.

SPIDER It was mum who brought me here.

WAYNE All that stuff about your mum: that woman, the medium, she doesn’t
 know what she’s talking about.

SPIDER It’s too late, dad.

WAYNE Spider, your mum’s not dead.

SPIDER Why are you saying that?

WAYNE She didn’t die, she left.

SPIDER Left?

WAYNE She left us when you were born. I didn’t want you to feel guilty.

SPIDER She didn’t want me?

WAYNE She couldn’t cope. At the time, she was, I don’t know, clinically
 depressed, I suppose.

SPIDER Mum didn't want me.

WAYNE She didn't want me neither. It was me she was running from, not you.

SPIDER The gas fire? The carbon monoxide poisoning? Intensive care?

WAYNE I made it up.

SPIDER Why?

WAYNE I couldn't face telling you the truth.

SPIDER You mean, you couldn't face the truth about yourself.

NO RESPONSE.

SPIDER You drove her away, like you drove me away.

WAYNE That's not what happened.

SPIDER You should've had me adopted.

WAYNE I wanted you.

SPIDER I could've been brought up by parents who loved me.

WAYNE I love you, Spider. It was a struggle to keep you, you don't realise just how –

SPIDER I hate you for this.

WAYNE I'm sorry.

SPIDER Do you know where she is?

WAYNE Not a call, not a letter since you were born.

SPIDER So she could be dead?

NO RESPONSE.

SPIDER As far as I'm concerned, you're both dead. I don't want to see you again.

WAYNE I don't deserve to be treated like this.

ALARM FROM A MONITOR AS SPIDER STOPS BREATHING.

CHORUS There has been an accident.

Someone is mouth-to-mouth with another

in a kiss of life,

an emergency transfusion of used air.

The space between us is also what connects us.

MUSIC. WAYNE GIVES SPIDER THE KISS OF LIFE AND SHE BREATHES

AGAIN. SHE RELEASES HERSELF COMPLETELY FROM THE ROPES.

SPIDER A police escort announces my arrival. I am driving a huge low-loader and the cargo is really important. It takes up both sides of the road so all the traffic has to pull over to let me through. There are flashing blue lights ahead and behind as I glide along. It's as if I own the road.

K.F.