

T I M E

In an age of collision and blended time,
after the atomic war,
species intermingle
and resemble other species.

SETTING

In a dark forest,
inside the hulk of a dead tree,
pitch black, gloomy,

here and there roots dangle.

Drip, drop.

Tears of water
splash down.

Spit dribbles down
from the open mouths of bats
hanging from the ceiling.

Drop, drip.

Outside the window,
livers clustered together
are dangling
in the dark
from a red tree.

Taxidermied animals
on the wall
hang off hooks.

Devices for experiments.
Glass bottles filled with internal organs
inside a cabinet smeared with blood.

Like a butcher in a butcher's shop,
like a scientist in a lab,

drip, drip, drop.

Pacing back and forth,
someone outside
grabs the handle to the door
and turns the knob.

Drip, water drops.

Drip, drop.

ACT ONE

Mom wears leather gloves and a butcher's apron. Sitting down, she is stuffing dead animals.

Wads of cotton and iron spikes are piled next to the refrigerator and TV.

Son wears a shirt with stretched out baggy sleeves (the bigger the better, to emphasize he has no arms). He feebly enters the scene.

Son puts his face up to Mom's anus. His nostrils flare out.

Mom:

Son,
what are you doing home?

Son:

Shit,
somehow I ended up here again.

Mom:

You shouldn't just show up
without calling.
What if my boyfriend was here?
That would've been a big deal, no?

Son:

I didn't have the money to call.

Mom:

If you're here to strangle me
and steal my money again,
it'd be better to give up right now.
I'm broke.

Silence.

Mom:

By the way, how did you find your way here?

Son:

I caught a whiff of your excrement.
So I followed it, you know, just in case.

I'm good at smelling
the smells
you leave behind.

Silence.

Mom:

What did you think you'd find?
My corpse, wasted away, lying here
with its mouth open?

That expression you're making,
is that really what you expected to see?

Are you surprised I'm not dead?

Don't you think you've gone too far this time?
Actually looking for me?

Silence.

Mom: (*Surveying Son's body:*)

And what happened to your arm? Your one good arm?
It's gone.

Son rocks the rocking chair.

Son:

Y'know, I had an accident.

Mom:

Accident? What accident?

Tell me! Did you step in a trap?

Son:

Mom, you know how life is.

Son rocks the rocking chair.

Mom:

Right! Just an accident.
If only I hadn't eaten those things
when I was carrying you...

Son:

God... not that story again.
Mom,
can't you stop with that story?

Mom:

Son,
it's the first time in two years that we meet...

Son:

Okay, go ahead,
you want to tell me about the time,
the time you had morning sickness...

Mom:

Morning sickness, right!
Those mamushi snakes
your father brought me,
I knew I shouldn't have eaten them.

Son:

Dad wanted to feed you
sprightly birds, but no...
You're probably
the only person in the world
who ever craved live vipers
because you got pregnant.

Mom:

If only I had known
that the baby mamushi
inside that mother mamushi
would tear out of its mother's body
and eat your arm...

Son:

Mom, how many times have I told you?
That's just what you *assumed* happened.

Mom:

It must have been scary...
Every night I could feel that snake
sleeping, grinding
its teeth inside my gut.

Son:

That was just a nightmare.
I dreamed the same thing
when I was inside you.

Mom:

Son, that day
I heard your screams crystal clear.
They came from the inside of my body.

Son:

I remember.
I couldn't even speak
near the mamushi.
I was too afraid.

Mom:

I remember
you inside me.
Yawning twice a day,
peeing three times,
and at night

you practiced crying
until daybreak. Yes.
Every ten seconds you cried.

Son:

Actually, funny,
it's been so long since then...
I really can't remember now.

Mom:

That's right.
It must have been dark inside there. Gloomy even.
And I don't remember it that well either.
The outside world sure is better, isn't it?
Better than inside that dark belly.

While you were in my stomach
you would knock on the walls
with your small fists.

The noise was so loud that
I was too embarrassed
to walk around the forest.

Silence.

But your father, he said,

*Do you hear that?
A bird is flying around
in your stomach.*

It made him so happy.

*Son suddenly looks forlorn,
looking around at all the stuffed animals in the house.*

Son:

Mom, do you still

take dead animals and bring them here?

Mom:

I wish.

I don't know if they all have gone extinct or not but lately I haven't even seen any of them. Not even a trace.

It's even hard to find
roadkill or
animals killed in traps.

I swear, it won't be long and
my anus is going to shrivel up
and I'm going to die just like that.
Death by shrivelled anus.

You know, sometimes I think it would be better
to get stuffed and taxidermied
rather than go on
living with this hunger.

Son:

You're right.

I know life sure would be better
if I'd already been stuffed.

Mom: *(Looking at him like he's pathetic.)*

At least animals that have been taxidermied
can be sold outside.

Mom looks concerned.

Are you not eating these days?

Son shakes his head from side to side.

Son: *(Looking at the stuffed animals:)*

Mom,

I feel like their eyeballs

are pointed at us.

Mom:

When I stuff an animal
the first thing I do is carve out the eyes.
Eyes are so unpleasant.

You know something funny,
that's the same thought I think
when I look
at your eyes too.

Son:

Don't they rot?

Mom:

I'm very thorough about the preservation process.

Son:

You dig out
every last inch of
intestine
before stuffing the body with cotton.

Mom: *(Laughing:)*

I bet all these lovely creatures are warmer now
and softer inside
than they ever were when they were alive.

*Mom gets up and puts the taxidermied animal in the refrigerator.
She returns with a cup of tap water.*

Son:

They're rotting.

Mom:

Taxidermied animals don't rot.
Never.