

Leviathan

By Josh Fox

The following speech should be delivered directly to the audience with no pauses, very rapidly and passionately.

A white man dressed as a politician walks up to a podium. House lights are on.

MAN:

Hello and welcome to the-

Lights change fast to a bright spotlight on MAN house lights go out fast.

Who are you? What's your name? Do you understand? Shit, it's been a bad, bad day. Oh Jesus what a day. I don't think I can keep this up anymore. I feel like my head's going to fall off. Who are these people? Who do they think they are? That man smells so bad. It's disgusting. It's disgusting to me. What, did he pee on himself. Oh, Jesus, I keep seeing these things in front of my eyes. I don't understand what they are. Like glowing lights. It's like a sign from the other side of ... Do you see anything? Ooooooooooh. My head. Do you see blood? What blood is this? On my head? Do you see it?

It's all very well and good for you to sit there and tell me who I am supposed to love and who I am not supposed to love, but I have to live in the world. I don't have to do things right. AM I happier. Yes! I am happier. That's true. But I have to live in the world. I can't do everything right Am I supposed to? Am I supposed to stop? Am I supposed to stop loving what I love. Am I supposed to stop caring about what I care about? Am I supposed to stop breathing and living? Am I supposed to do everything right? And how is that possible?

No, I thought it was just me. I must be seeing things all over. something's gone very wrong. I'm so mad. I'm so fucking mad. I want to smash these walls, you know? I want to smash them and wash off all the stains and blood, think of all the blood that's been spread on these walls. jeez, these men, they sit in here and they're all drunk, and beating each other up. what are they doing? how many of these people raped someone? my god. or have been raped by someone? Or some horrible middle ground where you're raping and being raped at the same time. Oh, Jesus, Why am I thinking like this? this was such a bad day. I think I have to start over. I have to stop.

You who you think you know so much. Are you happy? Or are you just calm? Am I supposed to stop smoking, stop believing in mantras and in the Tarot and in astrology. In the beauty of the sky? Do I want to let go of everything to find wisdom? Well then I'd be lonely. Yes it was pain. Yes it was abuse, but it was MINE. It was MY abuse. And we loved each other for it. We loved each other immeasurably. We loved each other do

you not get that?

And it makes no difference how often I can say that I have loved. Or how often I wake up in the middle of the night with the sweats all over me and the humming in my head. I have dreams. Constant dreams. Where my bones for a moment have found their way home. Home. Imagine that. In dreams. Everything relaxed, I can put my feet up and no thoughts except to fall asleep beside the one you have trampled and been trampled by such that your guts are intertwined in this bed, this home that give you sleep and warmth and good dreams forever. My blood flowing out of me and into you. Blood flowing out of one and into the other. Blood intermingled between foes, lovers, enemies, family, running up and down the bedroom walls as you sleep. Am I supposed to want to separate from that? Do I want to suffer the insufferable being right all the goddamn time. Is that what you are telling me? That I was the one that made the mature decisions. The tough calls. The adult inside that feeds on the misery and fear and passes it off with a calm joyless kind of reason. Like arthritis in your throat, your words stiff and your jaw crackles. I bit my tongue. I bit it like a chunk of raw hamburger. You said bite it more. You told me to sleep with this loss. And in the dreams. The dreams that not even you can explain, I return. I return. My body returns to the state of bliss that it once knew. I am there, in bliss. Will I not return? Will I never return? Can you say yes or no? Oh, I know you live in reality. Not bliss. God forbid it should ripple the surface of your waking nightmare. Of course not. It doesn't. I couldn't. It makes no impression on the day. It makes no visible mark. The reality is cold and is steel. Brushed steel. You know, or burnished. Is it burnished or brushed? Those kind of marks can only be made by machines. Fingernails clawing at the surface do nothing. Thick metals. Heavy metal doors. Six inch doors with bolts like safes. Dreams don't make an impression on metal. Days lurch forward. Solitude cannot be pierced. The eyes grow weaker. The brain knows that seeing is finite. Stopping? Will I stop? Who will stop me? I won't. Comfort would bring death. Or is it the other way around? It's getting darker in here. Darker and darker. Was it I who put out the lights or was it you? The fire was the light. The cave, the puppets, the shadows, the ghosts that said enlightenment was the only good. That the good had it's own will to make more good. The good that recognizes our disease and how to prescribe a cure. There are flies that buzz around my bedroom at night and I can't get them out. They land on my face while I'm sleeping. I don't want to die like you. I don't want to die at all. Ideology is motivated by fear and fear alone. Of course fear trumps hearts. The fire that would kill not to be extinguished. Am I guilty of fearing the love that was just a fear of being alone at the top of this junk heap? The love was the fear and the fear the love. There was no way to stop one blood from flowing into the other. There was no reason to. The bed was full. The fire burned in the middle of it. We ate dinner in that room and we could actually taste our food, living as we were on the edge of the fear, on the edge of doom. True love is forever living on the edge of doom. I don't expect you to understand these things. I don't expect me to understand these things. But I have not been home in what feels like centuries. I have not been home in what feels like millennia. Where has it left us now, my love? The restfulness of home has left my bones for good. And there is a good gaping grinding left in the joints. Harrowing down to one day crunch themselves into the crumbly grumbling ground. When I was a kid I used to sneak fistfuls of raw hamburger meat out of the freezer and suck on them til they

turned grey. The taste of the raw flesh all ground up, o my god! I can't breathe anyway. Am I being buried alive? You see? Thanks! I did what you told me to do! I DID WHAT YOU RECOMMENDED! What you continue to prescribe even though the lights are dimming and dim further until this slow dotting away of the world, just stop breathing. I am incarcerated in this mind this mind that is not even mine. I can hear it coming from all sides. My lungs are filling with fluid. I can't stop it from hitting my ear drums. I can't close my ears. The great creator of earth and man and all things made us so. I have no flaps of skin to shroud my brain in silence. I have to tune it out. What else can I do? I ask you? What other way is there to preserve peace? You can't tell me that there is a way not to listen to the noise that crusts the ears. I am on a crusade. Freedom only exists within. Without I make sure that my fists touch your soft parts. But there is a radio in my head. I can't convince you. I saw photographs of a child with no arms, his arms had been blown off or something. Or amputated. Or sheared by machines. No arms, armless. No legs either I think. Bloody stumps, he was crying. He was shrieking. I saw another of a child who had cancers all over his stomach and legs. Huge tumors. Beyond treatment. There are worms inside of my stomach.

I don't like to think of these things but I'm not naïve. I don't think there's an answer. I know that power exists. I know that power acts the way power does. I know there is no justice. I know that there is no justice. I know that nothing can be made right again once it has been wronged. There are no arms that can grow back. Our arms don't grow back. Mine haven't. My brain still lacks the trust that was snapped off-- braised. Braised, tenderized. Eaten. We collapse in our wounds. I can't count stab wounds. Who counts the stab wounds? Who? I can't count scars. I can't even see them all. They are in places I can't find anymore. Bodies that are no longer attached to mine. Get out of my car, get out of my bedroom. Get out of my bath. Get your naked ass off the highway before I run you over. Ha HA! It is not in my best interests anymore. It is not in our best interests to persist. The world comes at me as a shrieking inevitability. I have stopped believing that I will escape. I have stopped believing that none of this pertains to me. I have surrendered to your deep freeze. I am not exempt. No one is exempt, in fact. No one will escape by their wits. They never did. Dumb luck, not angels, not intellect will decide who lives and who dies, who loves and who is steeped in tears or blood or painted with tar, or who melts into the pavement. I walked on the asphalt in cobble hill and the pavement was so hot I could press bottle caps into the blacktop. I looked down and it was teeth. Teeth! A set of teeth pushed into the blacktop by my big toe. Biting at the ground. All else melted away. I found a goat's tooth in my junk drawer. Full of brick a brak, a vial of sand from the Sahara, spent double A batteries, bags full of ayurvedic round brown pills, an indelible marker, business cards from all corners of the globe given to me by hopefuls I can no longer put faces to, traces of affairs, a silk scarf used to wrap a faded drawing with a poem scrawled along the side and a goat's tooth. I dumped it all in the trash. I sent it away, far away from me. Except the goat's tooth. I kept it. Teeth are not to be thrown in the goddamn trash! I have retreated into the mind. But this is not the America I want to live in. But that doesn't matter. The America that I want to live in is not where I live. I am forced to live in the America that wants to live in me. It pried me open and got inside. I find myself inside of it, whatever is left of myself to find. In a landscape implanted. I woke up from the dream and found my mouth full of

goats teeth. And of course, now, I can't seem to eat what I want, my jaw is open too wide. My mouth has forty teeth, each far too large for a tenderness to form on the lips. I want to eat rusty metal cans. This is not the America I want to live in. This is not the person that I wanted to become. I want to be interviewed in magazines. I want to have my picture taken and put in the paper, in the barbershop window, I want constructive criticisms. I want a special place to sit on the bus. This chair reserved for the elderly or disabled or those with a mouth full of goats teeth clawing at a steel door. Welcome. Sit and let us take you where you are going. I want to believe in life on the planet earth. I want to will into the brain, my own brain a kind of new thing. I can feel my blood surging forward to flow into a river of other people. My clothes fall away and I and run into a swarm of naked bodies. I forget everything and start fresh, without fear, without memory, without feelings, with sand squishing in my toes, without a brain, without a landscape, without a country, without a face, without ears, without a voice, without a soul, with nothing. We love each other immeasurably. Do you not get that? I fear every moment that love might be taken from me. All of us, running to and fro each into other, eating together, playing, sleeping, swimming, praying, living, likely to fall in love and stay in love and die in love and never get out of it. There is no need to grieve death. We will pass through this, as all.

The state of nature is constant fear. I give my personal power to you. Protect me. I will not sacrifice any further.

Silence. Restore house lights on a twenty second fade while MAN stares out. Fast Blackout.