

Scene One

UNDERGROUND

I am
I am
I am wicked
I am sick
I am hurt inside
I shan't get help
Let it hurt even worse.

Twenty years gone now
I was
I was
I was a civil servant
I was a wicked civil servant

I took pleasure in my rudeness
They came to me
I'd gnash my teeth
and feel delight!

I waged a war for eighteen months
all just because an officer rattled his sword

(I won the war.
But that was then.)

But.
But, gentlemen!
Do you know the point, gentlemen?

The most wicked part is this:

I knew I was not wicked
I was merely scaring sparrows in vain.
I lied.
I was not wicked, only playing.

What a young pup I still was.

ABOVEGROUND

I am
I am

I am
I am twenty-four

My colleagues think I'm odd
They look at me with loathing
as well they should.

They think I'm a coward and a slave,
so I am a coward and a slave
Any decent man is a coward and a slave.

I am not like them, so they hate me, so I hate
them.

I am one, and they are all.

What? Do you think, gentlemen?
Do you think I ask for forgiveness?
It's all the same to me.

Not wicked, no, not good;
not a hero, not an insect.
Only fools can choose a side.
The clever man is trapped between.

I don't have the strength of a Romantic.
A Romantic can change.
Me, I cannot hold onto this hate for long.
One day I hate, the next I talk to them,
go to their houses, share a drink.

This friendliness happened only once. I could
not sustain it. It had to stop.

I am generally always alone.

This is what I know:

A clever man, a man without limits, must have
no character
A man of character, a man of action, must be
a limited being

To live beyond forty is banal!
Wait. Let me catch my breath.

You think I want to make you laugh?
I am not funny.
I am
I am
I am a civil servant, eighth rank, retired.

What can a man speak about with the most
pleasure?
Himself.
So I will talk about myself.

Scene 2

UNDERGROUND

I will tell you now, gentlemen, why I could
not become an insect.
Why I lay trapped between.

I swear, to be too conscious is a sickness,
any consciousness at all is a sickness.
The time I am most conscious
of the 'beautiful and lofty'
is when I do those deeds I should not do!

Conscious
of the 'beautiful and lofty'

I thought I this was my lot, not a sickness, not
a blight
just my normal condition in life
I thought 'twas only I who suffered so

ABOVEGROUND

I need to move.

I have a thirst.
Call it what you will. Call it debauchery.

One night I went out, carrying my shame.

The Man stops. Looks. The Officer enters. He is enormous.

Drunkards, brawling.

One day I might loathe them. Today I envy
them.
Perhaps I, too, will have a fight.

*The Officer walks across the space,
determined, unstoppable.
The Officer bears down on the Man. Without
making eye contact, the Officer stops, takes
him by the shoulder and moves him aside, as if
the Man were a piece of furniture.*

This I cannot forgive.

What I would give for a quarrel more real,
a quarrel more literary!

I wish to speak of honour,
to fight a duel,
but they would not understand me
and the officer would beat me
so I turn, cowardly, back home.

At home, I'd sit, aware of my bad deeds,
gnawing
tearing
sucking at myself
'til the bitter fruit turned sweet

If you are conscious that you are wicked, you
can find a twisted pleasure
knowing there is nothing you can do to
change you, nothing to do at all.

Inertia.

I wouldn't dare to do a thing even if I could.
If I was good, I could not forgive;
If I was bad I could not take revenge.

A normal man is overcome, filled up with
vengeful feeling
They charge at their goal like a bull, horns
down

A man of greater consciousness will fold
before his foe.
He knows he is not just. A mouse, not a man.

I cannot forgive

My spite and hatred grew
for months on end

I wrote a witty expose
I sent it to the papers
They would not publish me.

I wrote a letter,
aiming for his sense
of the 'beautiful and lofty' –
a challenge to a duel.
I could not send it.

The Officer re-enters

I began to see him
on the road
as others strolled
he treated them as he had me:
trampling them
I stood in his way
Filled with spite
I gave up first, I stepped aside
(Still filled with spite)

*The Officer begins to walk, marking out large
traverses across the space, gradually coming
closer to the Man.*

Next time, I will not step aside.
I will stand, stiff, solid
I will push him back!
No, not a push, a bump
I will bump him as much as he bumps me.

I laid my plans, I plotted well.
I bought new clothes
I walked the street
I came to stand
I meditated
I said my prayers
Asking God to give me strength

The mouse builds fences all around
Walls himself in with doubts and thoughts
until

*The Officer walks over the Man, just like
before. The Man twitches away into the space,
lost, adrift, while the Officer calmly strides
offstage.*

*The Man resumes, slowly regaining his
composure over the course of the next lines.*

Things ended in the best possible way!
I thought I would give up at last
I came back to see him off

the mouse waves his little paw
And slips, shame-faced, back to his crack

*The Officer re-enters. The Man sees him,
prepares to step aside, then, unexpectedly, he
squeezes his eyes tight, contracts every muscle,
and –*

- time slows –

*- the Man makes the tiniest of impacts with
the Officer and both continue on their paths,
the Man stumbling, wounded slightly.*

Ecstasy!

The mouse sits, filled with spite, thinking back,
adding thoughts.
Never forgetting, never forgiving,
living in cold, loathsome, half-belief, half-
despair.

*The Man sings, overblown, triumphant, over
the music of the Underground Man*

But wait there twenty years, underground,
rotting with grief,
that pleasure starts to build, just as before
The bitter fruit turns sweet.
The bitter fruit turns sweet.
Fevered, conscious,

Ecstasy!

Ecstasy!

Scene 3

UNDERGROUND

But you laugh, you say
'Next you will find pleasure in a tooth-ache!'

There is pleasure in a tooth-ache
pleasure in a moan of pain
a moan that speaks
a moan that screams:

How futile is this pain
I suffer, but I cannot strike my foe
I am the slave of pain

Do my moans bother you? If I suffer, let you
suffer too!

ABOVEGROUND

Too soon, the spell ends.
I sank into my dreams
For months at a time

I cannot bear this solitude

*Simonov enters, mid-conversation with two
friends. Ferfichkin is short and impudent,
Trudolyubov is tall and cold.*

Simonov!

TRUD: ... that's twenty-one roubles for the
three of us. Zverkov doesn't pay, of course.

SIMONOV: Naturally not! A man can't pay at
his own farewell dinner-

FERF: Do you really think – do you really think
he'll let us pay for it all? A well-off man like
Zverkov?

SIMONOV: It's settled. The three of us, four
with Zverkov, twenty-one roubles, the Hotel
de Paris, tomorrow at five o'clock.

MAN: I thought
to offer my company would be most
handsome
They would all be won over at once

A silence. The friends look at the Man.

UNDERGROUND

bitter pleasure

in conscious disgrace

ABOVEGROUND

SIMONOV: You want to come too?

TRUD: It's not like he was on very good terms with Zverkov –

SIMONOV: We'll put him on the list.

FERF: The money! Seven roubles! If he has it.

TRUD: Enough. Let him come, if he wants to so much.

Trudolyubov moves to exit, Ferfichkin follows.

FERF: But we have our own circle, we're friends. This isn't an official meeting, what if he wasn't welcome? He can't...

The two exit, still talking.

SIMONOV: Yes... tomorrow, then. And will you give me your share of the bill now? Just for certain.

MAN: I remember
I owe him fifteen roubles
I cannot forget and I cannot repay

SIMONOV: All right, you can pay tomorrow, I just wanted to know... please don't...

Simonov starts to pace, or fiddle with his clothes perhaps. He's trying to avoid attracting the Man's attention. The Man takes a step towards Simonov, as if to speak.

SIMONOV: I've got to go and... not far from here...

Simonov exits, in a hurry. As he exits:

SIMONOV: The Hotel de Paris, tomorrow, five o'clock sharp!

UNDERGROUND

Conscious man cannot respect himself
if he takes pleasure in his shame

Pleasure in shame

Once
I would think myself incapable of doing wrong
I would weep and repent
Then fail once again

ABOVEGROUND

That night I dream
of my schoolmates –
crude, merciless
ugly faces

I hate them
but perhaps I am worse.

Only once I had a friend.
But I was a despot in my soul
I wanted to rule his soul
his simple, giving soul

Once I had him, I hated him, I pushed him
away
I only needed the victory.

*The Man checks the time; it is almost five
o'clock. He begins to prepare, changing his
clothes, despairing at his dishevelled
appearance.*

I know it will be measly, common, not lofty,
not beautiful
I know I do not care
I know I will still go

The Man moves to a table and sits, waiting.

*Enter Zverkov, a large, swaggering man. He
was once handsome, but has gone to seed
slightly. He is followed by Simonov, Ferfichkin
and Trudolyubov. They are all laughing at a
joke Zverkov just made.*

I knew Lieutenant Zverkov once
he no longer welcomes me
Too insignificant

UNDERGROUND

And you ask why I twisted and tormented myself so?

Answer: it was too boring to sit, with folded arms, still.

I wanted to live, somehow, a little.

I would feel offended on purpose.

ABOVEGROUND

The friends see the Man, and the laughter dies down. Zverkov snickers, assumes a mock-dignified air, and bows.

ZVERKOV: I learned with surprise of your wish to participate with us. In any case, I am glad...

TRUD: Have you been waiting long?

MAN: I arrived exactly on time.

TRUD: Didn't you tell him the time had been changed?

SIM: I didn't. I forgot.

ZVERKOV: You've been here an hour already?

Zverkov laughs. Ferfichkin, the sycophant, laughs too.

MAN: It's not funny. It's absurd.

FERF: If that had been played on me, I'd...

ZVERKOV: You should have just ordered something.

SIM: Let's be seated, gentlemen, please? (*to Man*) I didn't know your address, so how could I have told you?

They sit.

ZVERKOV: Now, fellow, how's your keep?

ZVERKOV: Your salary. Not a fortune, I take it?

FERF: No sir.

TRUD: In my opinion, it's downright poor.

ZVERKOV: And how thin you've grown, how changed...

FERF: Do stop embarrassing him.

UNDERGROUND

I lose my temper
crushed by inertia

A simple man takes revenge.
He finds a cause.

ABOVEGROUND

MAN: I am not ashamed!
We should turn to more intelligent
conversation.

FERF: So you intend to display your
intelligence?

MAN: That would be superfluous.

FERF: You just keep cackling away, eh, dear sir?

ZVERKOV: Enough, gentlemen, / enough!

SIM: How stupid this is!

TRUDOLYUBOV raises a glass.

TRUD: Your health, and a good journey!

*They all drink, cheer and embrace ZVERKOV.
The MAN refuses to touch his glass.*

MAN: I shall make my own speech.
Lieutenant Zverkov, let it be known
I hate phrases and phrase-mongers
I hate gallantry and gallantizers.
Especially gallantizers.

I love truth, sincerity and honesty.
I love thought, Mr. Zverkov; I love true
friendship, and not... I love...

*He is drunk, and simultaneously losing control
of his speech and becoming aware of the
offense he is causing.*

To your health!

ZVERKOV: Much obliged.

TRUD: Devil take it!

SIM: He ought to be thrown out!

FERF: No, sir, it's a punch for that!

MAN: Sir, tomorrow you will give me
satisfaction for those words!

UNDERGROUND

The conscious man finds none.
If I strike out, my only cause is spite.

I have no cause on which to rest.
I cannot set myself at ease.

Hate, love, without a cause
will quickly drain away.

I cannot start
I cannot finish

My purpose is only babble

From empty into void
From empty into void

ABOVEGROUND

FERF: A duel, sir? At your pleasure.

The MAN is so ridiculous at this point that the friends start laughing.

SIM: I'll never forgive myself for letting him come.

MAN: I should strike them all!

No. I shall sit to the end,
for I regard you as pawns,
nonexistent pawns.

He starts pacing, while the others return to their conversation.

SIM: My time in the / Caucasus...

TRUD: True passion consists of / this alone...

FERF: I was gambling down at the / Den, and I saw ...

ZVERKOV: What is it that makes Shakespeare so immortal?

MAN: If only they knew my feelings and thoughts,
how developed I am!

ZVERKOV: Gentlemen, let us all move on.

MAN: Zverkov! I beg your forgiveness.

FERF: So you're afraid of a duel?

MAN: No! I insist on it, and you cannot refuse me.

SIM: He's indulging himself.

ZVERKOV: What do you want?

MAN: I ask your friendship. I offended you, but...

ABOVEGROUND

If only I were lazy

I would have the finest wine

I would drink the health of the beautiful and
lofty

The beautiful and lofty

I would demand respect.

UNDERGROUND

ZVERKOV: You? I'll have you know, sir, that
you could never under any circumstances
offend me!

TRUD: Enough of him. Let's go.

ZVERKOV: I'll have the girl named Olympia,
agreed?

FERF: No objections!

*All exit but the Man and Simonov, who is
adjusting his coat, determined not to look at
the Man.*

MAN: Simonov. I need six roubles.

SIM: You want to go with us?

*Simonov is astonished at the Man's
persistence. The Man nods.*

SIM: I have no money.

Simonov tries to leave. The Man grabs him.

MAN: Why do you refuse me?

If you knew
If you knew why I ask
everything depends on it
my whole future
all my plans

*Simonov takes out money and thrusts it into
the Man's hand.*

SIMONOV: Take it, if you have so little shame.

*Simonov exits. The Man slowly puts the money
away.*

MAN: I will follow them to the palace of flesh
they shall fall on their knees
they shall embrace my legs
they shall beg for my friendship
Or – I shall –

Scene 4

ABOVEGROUND

This follows immediately from Scene 3. The MAN rushes into the wintry outdoors. During this scene, the MAN's sung thoughts often contradict each other, but this should not be played as a mad person.

It has come
come at last
My encounter with reality

He laughs, then checks himself.

What a scoundrel
To laugh at this now!
Oh, what of it- all is lost anyhow.

The scent is cold, but I know their target.

I will redeem it
(redeem it), or perish this very night!

He leaps into a cab.

Drive!

beg for my friendship
they will never
beg for my friendship
it is a bluff, a mirage, romantic, fantastic

there is only one path left:
I must slap Zverkov in the face.

Faster!

I will brand him
Let them beat me to the ground
it will not wash away the slap
Honour demands a duel.

Faster, coachman, faster, you rogue!

But I see the other side of the coin...

Why

Why did I invite myself
Why did I go

No, impossible
they did me a dishonour
and they must pay it back!

Faster!

But what if Zverkov refuses me
in contempt?
I shall grab his leg
bite his hand
spit in his face

then I would be taken to court
thrown out of work
exiled for life
years would pass
I would crawl back
dressed in rags
"Look, monster, look
I lost it all because of you
yet I forgive you."

The MAN is overcome with emotion.

What can I do?
To go there is impossible
the result will be impossible
to leave things as they are
impossible

No!
It is fate!

Drive, drive!

It will happen without fail now
no power can stop it
no power can stop it

He arrives, runs inside.

Empty.
Where are they?

The MAN stops, deflated.

MAN (both)

He sees LIZA. He is drawn to her.

I would have done it but

Everything has vanished

Everything has changed

Let it be

I will seem repulsive to her

He moves to her.

I am glad of it

LIZA

When from out of error's darkness
With a word both sure and ardent
I had drawn the fallen soul,

(I am an ideal sealed against the world
feel my edges
there are none)

And you, filled with deepest torment,
Cursed the vice that had ensnared you

(mother maiden crone
I am none
there is only one girl left
for me to choose)

And so doing wrung your hands;

(you know the word for me)

When, punishing with recollection
Forgetful conscience, you then told
The tale of all that went before me,

(for you
I am a symbol)

And suddenly you hid your face
In trembling hands and, filled with horror,
Filled with shame, dissolved in tears
Indignant as you were, and shaken

(for me you are another man
made of skin
writing his book
When from out of error's darkness
if I wrote my history
you would be less than a footnote
an asterisk
hiding in my truth)

Shaken

Shaken...

Scene 5

UNDERGROUND

These are only golden dreams.

Staticians, sages all say:

Man only does evil because
he does not know his real interests
Open his eyes to the true profit,
the profit in doing good

And he would do good

Oh, those lovers of mankind
innocent children!

We know the way to profit,
still we choose a different path
the difficult, the absurd
searching for it all but in the dark

There is one thing they have left out
dearer to man
than profit
dearer than honour
dearer than peace

Before I name this
I want to compromise myself,

ABOVEGROUND

*The MAN slowly awakes and stares at LIZA.
She rises too. An uncomfortable silence grows
between them.*

MAN: What is your name?

LIZA: Liza

MAN: Nasty weather

This next exchange is quite rapid.

MAN: Are you from here?

LIZA: No

MAN: Where?

LIZA: Riga

MAN: Been here long?

LIZA: Two weeks

UNDERGROUND

So I declare:

Civilisation only lets man feel more sensations.

One day man will find pleasure in blood.

ABOVEGROUND

MAN: Do you have parents?

LIZA: Yes... No... I do.

MAN: What are they?

LIZA: Just...

MAN: Why did you leave them?

LIZA: I just...

MAN: Today I saw them drop a coffin

LIZA: A coffin?

MAN: A bad day to be buried.

LIZA: Why bad?

MAN: Snow, slush,
nasty weather.

LIZA: Makes no difference.

MAN: Makes no difference
how you die?

LIZA: Why should I die?

MAN: You will die someday
like the one I saw.
She was a girl like you.

LIZA: Who says that I will die?

MAN: If not now, then later.
Today you are young,
soon, your light will fade

UNDERGROUND

Man has become more vile
and still you say:
Man only answers to the law of nature.
We must only discover the law of nature
then we can calculate man

All questions will vanish in an instant
then we will build the Palace of Crystal
The Palace of Crystal

ABOVEGROUND

MAN: You will be worth less
You will fall ever lower
You will catch sickness
Once it gets into you
it will not get out
You will die.

LIZA: So I will die.

MAN: It is a pity.

LIZA: For who?

MAN: A pity about life.

MAN: I am sorry.

LIZA: For who?

MAN: For you.

LIZA: There is no need.

MAN: Do you think you're on a good path?

LIZA: I don't think anything.

MAN: Wake up while you still have time!
You could marry, be happy.

LIZA: Not all married ones are happy.

MAN: Better than here.
With love,
one can live without happiness.

UNDERGROUND

Man will demolish it all at a whim!

Only to live once more

By his own foolish will

ABOVEGROUND

MAN: Here, you are a slave!

We
we came together
we did not speak a word
is that any way to love?

It is an outrage!

LIZA: Yes
It is an outrage

MAN/LIZA: It is an outrage

*Emboldened by this moment of connection,
the MAN presses harder.*

MAN: Why did you come here?

LIZA: I just...

MAN: How good you would feel to be back at
home
warm, free

LIZA: What if it's not like that at all?

MAN: Who can say.
I know you've been wronged.
A girl like you
would not come here by free will

LIZA: What sort of girl am I?

He pretends not to hear.

MAN: You are
You are

Liza

I will talk about myself.

If I had a daughter
I would love her more than my sons

UNDERGROUND

free, unfettered
wanting

Wanting is the profit
That rules all

ABOVEGROUND

LIZA: Why would you?

MAN: I would never give her away
to marry a man

LIZA: Some are glad to sell their daughter
not give her away with honour

MAN: Then your family
has no God
no love
no goodness

For you are poor.

LIZA: The masters are no better.
Honest people have good lives.
Even the poor.

MAN: Perhaps.

Man only counts his grief
not his happiness

He does not see there is enough of both.

When you marry you will see
even quarrels can be happy.

I knew a woman who said:
"I love you
I torment you out of love
You should feel it."

UNDERGROUND

Man needs only independent wanting

Whatever it will cost

Wherever it may lead

The devil knows...

You laugh, gentlemen...

You say we can find
the law of our free will,
the formula for wanting

ABOVEGROUND

MAN: Love is the mystery of God

Two souls

No secrets

This is happiness

Liza

You must first learn how to live

Only then can you accuse!

LIZA: You are

You are

(spoken) You sound just like- a book.

The Man reacts, pained.

You are young and beautiful.

As soon as I woke with you

I felt vile

If you were somewhere else,

I might love you,

Beg for your hand –

Here, I do not ask your will,

you ask mine.

You let your soul be sold.

There is no greater crime.

You will give all:

health, youth, beauty, hopes

still they will turn on you

The men

The madam

The girls

UNDERGROUND

When I scream with rage

I could not do otherwise
I was bound by the law of nature

No, sirs!
Reason is only reason

Wanting is the whole of life

I want to live

(spoken) Though our life is dirt,
still it is life,
not the extraction of a square root.

ABOVEGROUND

MAN:

When they throw you out
you will not speak a word!
You will fall
ever lower
Liza, Liza
You will fall ill
like the girl in the coffin
when you lie dying
they will abandon you
for taking up space.

“Be silent, stop your moaning,
the men cannot sleep –
Die faster, you whore!”

Cheap coffin
nasty weather
mud and swamp

Knock on your coffin at night
When dead men rise

MAN/LIZA: Let me out to live in the world!
I lived but saw nothing of life
I want to live

LIZA collapses, weeping.

*The MAN lights a candle, and the room
suddenly fills with light. LIZA rises.*

MAN: Liza, forgive me,
come to me.

LIZA: I will find you.

MAN: ‘Til then, good-bye.

UNDERGROUND

ABOVEGROUND

LIZA: Wait!

LIZA rushes to the side, locates a piece of paper, produces it triumphantly. She is alive and smiling for the first time.

LIZA: It was a dancing party
The home of nice people,
family people
They know nothing about me, about this

There was a man...
We danced and talked all night.
He knew me –
He knew me when I was a child.
We played together, long ago.
He knows nothing of what
I am
I am
He sent me...

She hands the paper to the MAN. He presses her hand, and she turns and exits.

Scene 6

UNDERGROUND

You shout at me

“The good men

You forget the good men.”

Think of

a sage, a lover

a man of light

Drown him in

joy

That is when he turns

cruel, ungrateful

If man is bound to joy,

then man will wish for pain

Man has the right to pain

Show him the law of nature

Prove he is not human

nothing but a cog.

He will invent destruction, chaos

launch a curse upon the world

just to have his own way.

ABOVEGROUND

The MAN arrives home. APOLLON, his lurking, silent servant, waits for his command.

Liza

She will come here,
she will see this house
gone to seed

Drowning in filth!

Apollon!

The house must be cleaned.

APOLLON stares, then leaves.

The brute

how I hate his stare

She will find me

Her cursed, romantic, pure heart

It took so little talk

to turn her soul awry

I will save her

Liza

I feared I would force your love

As the despot of your soul

But now

Now

UNDERGROUND

ABOVEGROUND

LIZA

you are

shaken

you are mine

shaken

you are my creation

I am

beautiful and lofty!

pure, beautiful

I am, I want

you are

I am

my beautiful wife

he will go mad
to have his own way

*He snaps back to reality,
irritated that LIZA hasn't
arrived.*

The slut will not come.

APOLLON enters

Apollon
You stare
You lurk
Get out
Get out!

*LIZA enters. The MAN falls
silent. APOLLON vanishes.
The two stare at each other.*

You say, man loves to
create
To build a great palace
Inside, he is afraid
To reach his goal

you have dreamed me free
from sin
now meet your vision
wrapped in skin

To finish the palace

You find me in a strange
situation

UNDERGROUND

The goal we strive for on earth
is the process of achievement
The goal is nothing, a formula
two plus two is four

You say:
Man only loves the good
Whether good or bad, I know
it is sometimes pleasant to break something

Man will never give up true pain

Destruction and chaos

Suffering is the sole cause of consciousness

ABOVEGROUND

I am not ashamed.
I am poor, but noble.

Would you like tea? Apollon! The tea!

LIZA: No.

MAN: You despise me

LIZA looks away and does not respond.

LIZA: I want
to leave that place
for good

A silence.

Have I disturbed you?

MAN: Why did you come here?
Why did you come?

You thought I came to save you?
Save you,
save you from what!
I came to laugh at you.
Power,
that is what I want
your tears, your humiliation

I want

I want

Apollon, the tea!
Let the world perish, I will have my tea.

UNDERGROUND

You believe in a Crystal Palace,
forever indestructible,
a place without suffering.

suffering is negation

suffering is doubt

a place one cannot taunt

And if taunting is what I live for?
My wanting, my desire

scrape it out of me

destroy my desires, wipe out my ideals

Show me a new ideal and I will follow you

The law of nature tells us
the Palace of Crystal cannot be!

I will not accept anything less
a compromise
a ceaseless recurring zero

ABOVEGROUND

I am

I am a blackguard.

I am a scoundrel.

I feared you would come
And see your hero in a wretched dressing
gown.

This I cannot forgive.

I am ashamed, afraid.

I feel as if I have been flayed
the very air hurts me

I am vile, ridiculous, petty, stupid, envious,
worse than any other worm
They are in no way better than I, but they
never feel shame.

I am struck, all my life, by every blow

I must hate you for being here,
hearing my confession

What more do you want?
Why do you torment me?

*LIZA understands. SHE opens her arms to
embrace him.
A moment.*

UNDERGROUND

So long as I love and desire,
if I compromise, let my hand wither!

Perhaps I was angry
I never found the Crystal Palace

If only I could be made to never want
To stick out my tongue
I would let my tongue be cut off
From sheer gratitude

I know it is impossible.

Why have I been given these desires?

ABOVEGROUND

LIZA: Love is

MAN: They will not let me
I cannot be
Good

LIZA: Love is

MAN: No love
Love is tyranny
Love always starts in hatred
Always ends in moral conquest
Love is a despot and a victim

LIZA: Love is resurrection
regeneration
salvation

LIZA knows the moment is over.

MAN: I want
I want peace
alone in the underground

LIZA: Good-bye.

Before she can leave, the MAN runs to her and puts a crumpled bill into her hand. Before she can react, he flees. LIZA exits, leaving the bill behind.

The MAN realises what he has lost.

MAN: Liza
Liza
Liza

UNDERGROUND

The final end, gentlemen

better to do nothing

Long live the underground!

No, not the underground
Something better

different
I thirst
I cannot ever find

Devil take the underground!

I swear
I do not believe my own words

You say, gentlemen
"Why speak?"
Why speak?

relief

ABOVEGROUND

Will I make her happy?
Tomorrow I will hate her
wear out her heart
torment her to death.

It will be better, yes

if she carries it forever
a purifying insult
stinging, painful
consciousness

Elevate, purify

Will it make her happy?

Which is better
cheap happiness
lofty suffering

I should end this, gentlemen.

my words are real
unpleasant
we all despise real life
iving
living is labour
service

Why speak the real?
It only brings
pain

UNDERGROUND

Gentlemen
all lies

Coward

I do not speak for you.
There is no 'you'.
I speak for myself

You are

You are a device
to let me speak
I know there is no audience
nobody to listen

I am
living life
underground

twenty years

listening
these voices

through the crack

living
under life
I am

what

what to

what to love
hate
what to respect
what to despise

ABOVEGROUND

You say,
gentlemen
real lies

Mouse

Speak for yourself
there is no 'we all'

I am

I am alone

I am
living life
underground

living

of yours
crack

I am

life

lies
I do not know

to join

hold to
what to hate
love
what to respect
what to despise
what, what

UNDERGROUND

I am
stuck
I was

I was, I am

I am

I am what

I am
I
I
I
I
I

ABOVEGROUND

what I am
I am
am

was

what I

am I
I am
I
I
I

END