

Claude de Bussy's "Claire De Lune"

Black.

Black.

Black.

VOICE OVER

And what do you do?

Bright lights!

SUPERTITLE descends:

NAPOLEON DEFEATED!

THE WAR ENDS.

All characters are still.

Slowly, they stand.

Bloody and beaten.

Torn clothing, missing limbs.

One falls.

Another lifts him/her up.

Sigh.

Cough.

Cry.

Laugh.

Silence.

Breathe.

Silence.

Breathe.

Silence.

Breathe.

VOICE OVER #1

The century now closed is luminous with great achievements. In every department of human endeavor marvelous progress has been made. Marvelous.

(beat)

Buuuut, there was idleness, poverty, squalor, the rattling of skeleton bones, the sunken eye, the living death of famine, the crushing and the grinding of the relentless mills of plutocracy, which more rapidly than the mills of the gods grind their victims to dust.

(beat)

And what do you

(echoes)

DREAM?

#1
 Administrative Assist-
 (beat)
 Oh.

In unison,
 ALL look to the sky.
 Rumpled Black morning coats
 descend.
 ALL put them on eagerly.

Bowler hats descend.
 ALL put them on.

Canes descend.
 ALL grab them.
 Twirl.

Little Mustaches descend.
 ALL put them on.

Flickering lights of a movie.

The piano plink of a 1920's
 vaudeville picture show.
 The LITTLE TRAMPS do a soft shoe.

TRAMP #1
 Naked.
 The air is cold.
 Eyes open.
 First light I ever see.
 It burns.
 Blur.
 Blur.
 Blur.
 Suddenly
 It is clear.
 It is sharp.
 It is
 beautiful.
 Look.
 A doctor.
 I'm going to be
 A doctor.
 Look.
 A Father.

#1

(cont'd)

I'm going to be

A father.

Look.

My mother.

I am

I will be

My mother.

Listen.

Cries.

My cries.

of

Joy.

Joy.

Joy.

I am

I will be

Joy.

Naked.

Eyes open.

Clear.

Sharp.

Beautiful.

VOICE OVER #1

I see.

The Music abruptly ends.

Stop dancing.

VOICE OVER #1

And what do you

(echoes)

WANT?

TRAMPS remove hats.

Stroke hair, bewildered.

TRAMP #2

I'm a teach-

(beat)

Oh.

I

forgot

what?

Forgot

An idea!
Put hats back on.

TRAMP #2
what
I
was doing
saying
here.
Forgot.

Bang canes on ground.
One, Two, three. Four.
A rhythm. The soft shoe
continues.

TRAMP #2
Where
was
I?

Canes are whipped from their
hands, rise into sky.

TRAMP #2
Right

TRAMPS reach up.
Nope.
Jump up.
Nope.
TRAMPS back up.
Run.
Leap.
Crash.

TRAMP #2
Here
is
Where
am
I?

Stand.
Brush selves off.
Hats rise slightly into sky.
TRAMPS reach for them.
Miss.

TRAMP #2

I

Higher.
Hop for it.
Miss.

TRAMP #2

I

Grab chairs.
Stand on them.
Collapse.
Crash to floor.
Hats rise out of sight.

TRAMP #2

Can't stand
the memory -
a too long ago time when I didn't stand,
I ran
on
dirt
cobblestone
blacktop
streets
with small children in
knickers
shorts
I wore shorts.
I was a small child.
I was a small man.
I did not
remember.
I knew

TRAMPS throw temper tantrum,
banging fists on ground.

TRAMP #2

I was
I am
I am going to be
Exactly
Exactly
Exactly
Me.

TRAMPS rise into the sky.
Panic.

Panic.
I said, PANIC!
Excellent.

TRAMP #2
I was
my greatest wish
I was
my tell the other knickers and shorts
secret dream.

An idea!

TRAMP #2
Then

TRAMPS remove jackets.
Fall to Ground.
Crash!
Jackets fly out of sight.

TRAMP #2
I forgot
what?
Forgot

TRAMPS stand.
Hands in pockets.
Pull out...rolls and forks.
An idea!
Stick forks in rolls.
Famous Chaplin Roll dance.

TRAMP #2
What
I
was doing
saying
here.

Pants are whipped off.
TRAMPS cover their privates.

TRAMP #2
No.
Don't
Forget.

Pants rise out of sight.
Flickering lights end.
HARSH Fluorescent.

VOICE OVER #1
These are the times that try men's souls.
Pity.

MUSIC: Jazzy flapper groove.
SUPERTITLE descends:
THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH WORKING
CLASS.

VOICE OVER
And what do you
 (echoes)
FEEL?

TRAMP #3
I'm an acto-
 (beat)
Oh.

VOICE OVER
Forget?

#3
No.

DING.
All look around.
Confused.
Shrug.

#3
Just a bad dream.
What was it about?
I DON'T
Remember
My dream.

DING.
ALL look around.
Shrug.

#3
Aches.
My head.
Aches.

#3

(cont'd)

My finger.

Aches.

My back.

Aches.

My heart.

DING.

All look out.

#3

Yellow.

My skin.

Vitamins.

Take your vitamins,

Honey

DING.

All look down.

#3

Aches.

My tongue.

It's hot.

It's coffee.

Supposed to be hot.

DING.

All look up.

#3

Wrap it.

With what?

A bandage.

(beat, then can barely speak cause of bandage about tongue)

I'm bandaged.

DING.

DING.

DING.

All look at clock.

#3

And

I'm late.

Nondescript office wear descends.

Jumpsuits made to look like Khakis
and Blue shirts with striped ties.

ALL put them on with difficulty -
still trying to hide their
privates.

DING.
All look at clock.

DING!

Zip up fast.
DING!
Faster.
DING DING DING!
Move it!
The music grows louder.
Each TRAMP performs a different
abstracted work action.
Slow.
Methodical.

See the Viewpoints exercise:
Punching time cards.
Pressing metal.
Counting.
Lifting.
Etcetera...

VOICE OVER
And what do you
 (beat)
KNOW?

TRAMP #4
I'm a photogr-
 (beat)

Oh.
Here.
I'm here.
Here.
Hear.
I can't
hear
my
thoughts
my
self

#4

(cont'd)

above the din
 above the lines
 of skin

The activity grows in pace.

TRAMP #4

pressing against machines
 against skin
 against tin
 against wool
 against metal
 against skin
 against sweat
 against time card corridors
 against skin

The pace grows.
 The music howls.

#4

(cont'd)

against needles sewing
 against coal
 against skin
 against steam
 against heat
 God, it's hot
 against freezing.
 God, it's cold
 against cotton
 against keys
 against iron
 against screens
 against skin

The pace is frantic.
 The Music screams.
 TRAMP #4 has to yell over it.

#4

(cont'd)

I can't
hear
my thoughts.
Hear.
Here.

Cacophony of sound and motion.
CRESCENDO!
ALL collapse to the floor.
Music ends.
DING!
Nothing.
DING!
Nothing!
DING! DING! DING!