

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

March 24, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Sophie Delphis, mezzo-soprano
with Yoshi Weinberg, flute, and Joseph Vaz, piano

deixis (2022)

Yaz Lancaster
(b. 1996)

Yoshi Weinberg, flute

La voix humaine (1958)

Francis Poulenc
(1899–1963)

Joseph Vaz, piano
George R. Miller, director
Julia Ponce Diaz, associate director
John Hardy, set and costume designer

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Notes on the Program

Francis Poulenc's *La voix humaine* sets a 1930 play of the same name by Jean Cocteau, who also provided the set design and direction in the 1959 premiere production. Intimate and heartbreaking, the one-act opera follows one woman (named only "Elle" in the score) alone onstage for the entire run, in a phone call with the lover who's left her. We hear only her side of the conversation, her monologue interrupted by telephonic malfunctions, operator mistakes and silences as she awaits a response.

Poulenc underlines the woman's inherent nobleness, stressing in his interpretation notes at the beginning of the score that she should be played "by a woman both young and elegant."¹ And while we see her dart through a host of deep and extreme emotions throughout the opera, there remains a certain restraint that makes the work all the more heart-rending, keeping the character from becoming a caricature of a betrayed woman on the edge. Instead, the opera presents a microcosm of a life, a relationship, an undoing. Much is left for us to decipher in between the lines of the libretto: Neither the woman nor her lover are ever named, and the exact nature of their liaison or their breakup is left unspoken. There are few stage directions in the score, and the woman's ultimate fate is never overtly stated.

A particularly notable and enigmatic absence, of course, is the other side of the conversation. The audience is instead forced to rely on the little morsels of concrete information scattered throughout the woman's lines, from snatches of happy memories to small details about her setting, to form a picture of her habits and character. It's a score that singularly shines a light on the communicative potential of both what's said and what's unsaid.

This is also true within the confines of the storyline, as the woman and man spend a substantial portion of their conversation hiding information from one another, omitting painful truths and trying to assuage each other. She expends a great deal of energy choosing her words carefully, flitting between a constructed narrative of trusting resilience and her visceral, anxious anguish. It's only halfway through the opera that she exclaims, "Seulement, tu comprends, on parle, on parle..." (*You see, we're talking, we're talking...*) (reh. 52). She trails off, but a logical conclusion of her thought may be, "...and we're not really saying anything." At this turning point, she begins to unravel the constructed scene she's painted for her lover since the start of their conversation. Yet, her impulse to be heard and loved – or in pragmatic terms, *to keep him on the line* – repeatedly holds her back from total frankness, always prepared to make conciliations. Because we only hear her side of the conversation, it's impossible to know how much of her apologizing and backtracking are self-conscious, preventative measures, or whether her lover's reactions actually demand them. Once again, even as we peer into this most intimate of moments, the exact nature of each character and their relationship, and who's "right," remains blurry.

As befits the premise of the opera and the theatrical origins of its libretto, the natural ebb and flow of human conversation reign supreme. As in most of his art song literature, Poulenc prioritizes the cadence and comprehension of the text, both in his vocal line and in the accompanying orchestral figures that underscore it. This constant stream of short, "quasi-parlando"² fragments lies in a generally low tessitura, with repetitive pitches or motivic elements, while the accompaniment often plays a lucid, vertically chordal foundation underneath.

¹ Poulenc, Francis. *La Voix humaine* (Paris: Ricordi, 2009), Notes pour l'interprétation musicale.

² Poulenc, *J'écris ce qui me chante* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 643.

The emotional themes of *La voix humaine* are easily understandable even as Poulenc pares down the affective elements of opera. The scenery is “reduced,” as described in Cocteau’s introduction to the score, to “the corner of a woman’s room.”³ The vocal lines eschew arioso impulses, and Poulenc largely refuses to feed listeners much luxuriant plaintiveness. He instead opts to strip his dramatization of melodrama, in favor of internal contemplation and a devastatingly direct approach to text setting. As in his art songs, Poulenc creates a series of self-contained miniatures, gems of context and connotation.

Every so often, a more overt lyricism emerges in snatches of reverie and nostalgia in both the orchestral and vocal lines. Here Poulenc dips into a compositional language redolent of *chansons populaires* and a *café-concert* aesthetic, and the typically sparse, chordal accompaniment becomes briefly sweeping and melodious. Amidst the clipped phrases of a synthetic telephone conversation, these short passages of lushness offer a warmer, more emotional underpinning in a score that runs the risk of coming off stagnant or unemotive in its dedication to prosodic simplicity and its cruelly realistic representation of an inorganic form of communication.

Because so much of the score is effectively *récitatif*, the conversations occur in more or less real time. The arioso stretches offer musical momentum and longer stretches of context that help to fill out the story narratively, but they also pause the temporal reality of the scene. These segments follow the operatic aria tradition – as well as that of the theatrical monologue – by blowing up time to explore an emotional reality. Fittingly, they’re almost exclusively memories. One of the most overtly melodic motives of the score is a descending melody in the accompaniment comprised of a half note and eighths cascading down an octave below in the treble and propelled by bass syncopation:



Piano reduction, reh. 26

The first occurrence of this figure is about seven or eight minutes into the opera and coincides with the woman’s first honest allusion to events past: “Souviens-toi du dimanche de Versailles...” (“Remember that Sunday in Versailles...”) (re. 26). The motive’s two other occurrences are less overtly or exclusively a warm, nostalgic memory, but always allude to connection and shared past. The woman sings:

Pardonne-moi. Je sais que cette scène est intolérable et que tu as bien de la patience, mais comprends-moi, je souffre, je souffre. **Ce fil, c'est le dernier qui me rattache encore à nous...**

Forgive me. I know that this scene is intolerable and that you have a lot of patience, but please understand, I'm suffering, I'm suffering. This cord, it's the last thing still tying me back to us... (reh. 73)

³ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, Introduction to the score.

Then, in a short echo of the theme close to the end of the opera, she asks her lover not to return to the same hotel in Marseille where the two of them used to stay (potentially with his new lover): “j’aimerais que tu ne descendes pas à l’hôtel où nous descendons d’habitude...” (reh. 104).

Departures into lyricism aren’t limited to a distant, happier past. The narrative keystone of the opera occurs at the midpoint of the work, when she recounts the true events of the previous night: her attempted suicide and the resulting dreams/nightmares of overdosing on sleeping pills. She relives the night in gruesome and almost fantastical detail in what comes closest to an aria in the piece.

The typical operatic interaction between naturalistic “récitatif time” (“story time”) and expanded “aria time” is complicated by the conspicuously repetitious nature of most of the score and dramatic material. These occurrences of lyrical, dilated time are in fact more propulsive than the real time action. The account of her suicide attempt mentioned above isn’t just the longest stretch of uninterrupted lyrical singing; it’s the longest stretch without interruptions – be they technical malfunctions or replies from the other side of the line – *in general*. Shifts in temporality – both the feeling of time passing and the chronological moment being lived or relived – are integral facets of the woman’s solitude and alienation. In her heartbreak, she’s unmoored in time, existing simultaneously in her present telephonic limbo, her technicolor memories, her uncertain and anxious future. Reaching out to the disembodied voice of her lover means reaching through layers of time as much as through the physical distance between them.

But the “real time” of the opera, in all its naturalistic unfolding, is as dilated as any dream monologue: the schema of the piece is built on a series of repetitions and interruptions. Over and over, we see the woman wait for his call, wait for others to get off the line, wait for the connection to clear up. Her “Allô!” is a punctuation mark that not only opens her conversations but interrupts them, reminders of the fragile link offered by the telephone and of her febrile state, “uneventful moments [that] mirror the general situation of obstructed agency.”⁴ Despite – and indeed *because of* – the dramatic simplicity and directness of the piece, Poulenc and Cocteau plunge us into a narrative full of shadows, obstructions and bottlenecks. Representational time is expanded by malaise; supposedly simple statements are constantly undercut by elisions, silences or reprisals. And every “conversation” is as solitary as every supposed soliloquy.

In the opera, technology is a lifeline and a curse. The telephone is the woman’s only connection to the man she loves, a source of comfort and company through the sound of his voice, but it’s also an entirely insufficient avatar, and each reminder of its technical deficiencies and limitations – misdials, malfunctions, hang-ups – is a painful stab of solitude and anxiety. As the opera begins to wind down, the woman sums up the maddening paradox of intimacy and distance created by the telephone and the limited metonymy of having only a disembodied voice to hold onto:

On a l’illusion d’être l’un contre l’autre et brusquement on met des caves, des égouts,
toute une ville entre soi. J’ai le fil autour de mon cou. J’ai ta voix autour de mon cou.
Ta voix autour de mon cou.

*We feel like we’re next to one another, and suddenly there are cellars, sewers, a whole city between us.
I have the cord around my neck. I have your voice around my neck. Your voice around my neck.* (reh.
100-101)

⁴ Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 13-14.

Over and over, the understandable “reality” of the opera’s plot – in all its supposed simplicity – is warped. Loss and loneliness can’t be cleanly defined, and the phone becomes symbolic of a false sense of legibility through the connection it supposedly offers. The chipper narrative the woman unspools at the beginning turns out to be a lie, as is the assumption that her lover is calling from his home. Supposedly direct conversation is weighed down with accidental or wilful misunderstandings, layers of memory, conflicting plans. In this exploration of the affective and cognitive grey areas of communication and narrative, and their interaction with technology, *La voix humaine* remains a fundamentally modern work. Even as the rotary telephone (in its strong supporting role to the lone singer) has become a museum curiosity, the scenario of Poulenc and Cocteau’s work is as emotionally probable and affecting as ever.

When I first read through the score of **Yaz Lancaster’s *deixis*** – which I premiered with Yoshi Weinberg in December 2022 – the piece immediately reminded me of *La voix humaine*. The text, by the composer themselves, revolves around being and being perceived, with a strong parallel to the intersection of communication/connection and selfhood found in the Poulenc:

I am not here
I do not exist
no one can hear (me)
no one can see me (anymore)
nobody can see me
no one touches (me)
you can hear (me)
you cannot hear me
you can see me
you cannot see me
nobody touches me
you touch me

Additionally, much like the one-way dialogue of *La voix humaine*, the text is cut and repeated throughout the piece, and exists in a blurry space of meaning and understanding further emphasized by the way in which it’s deployed. The flute and vocal lines weave together in a conversational interaction, while the spare, glassy musical setting also keeps each instrument distinct.

In their program note for the premiere, Lancaster described the work as “[dealing] with the space between semantic and denoted meaning.” Within the original context of the commission, this pertains to their identity as a nonbinary composer, and the continuously shifting meaning that the term holds: “I continually examine the label and my relation to it as this context shifts. The text captures this feeling of translucence or vanishing, as the space/time/context(s) between these connotations grow.” But the ambiguity of being/vanishing and severing/attachment explored in the piece also resonate more generally. What particularly strikes me is the possibility of neutrality in ambiguity that the piece offers. Whereas solitude is unquestionably a curse in *La voix humaine*, “nobody touches me” is neither inherently positive nor negative in *deixis*. It’s neither, and it’s both. Fuzziness via elision and repetition are means of obfuscating any one ultimate affect. It’s able to hold and generate multiple, conflicting truths at once.

It can be tempting to jump to the most pathetic, tragic scenario and outcome in the Poulenc: a broken woman kills herself after a painful and protracted final conversation with the man who spurned her. It’s not my desire to argue in favor of a secret “happy ending” to *La voix humaine*. The conversation we witness for forty or forty-five minutes is undeniably one full of anguish and suffering, and it doesn’t

end *happily*. But it does finally end in a catharsis that the woman and the audience have been denied for the entire run of the opera. And in that catharsis, there's a possibility for reclaiming agency. Once again, I reiterate Poulenc and Cocteau's specifications for their main character: she is young and elegant. She is not some abstract, unhinged woman lolling around the stage in hysterics. "Elle" is meant to evoke empathy, not pity, or its too-close relative, contempt.

About the Artists

Franco-American mezzo-soprano **Sophie Delphis** has performed for Beth Morrison Projects, Opera Parallèle, National Sawdust, SongFest as a Stern Fellow, American Opera Projects, the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, the Tianjin Symphony Orchestra, UMS (University Musical Society), Bronx Opera, Opera on the James, Bare Opera, City Lyric Opera and the iSING Festival, among others. Her operatic roles include: Félicie/Adélaïde (*La Belle et la Bête*, Glass), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Giunone (*La Calisto*), Carmen and Mercédès (*Carmen*), Flora (*La Traviata*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Cenerentola and Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), Concepción (*L'heure espagnole*), Hansel, (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Elle (*La voix humaine*). An avid recitalist, Sophie regularly produces recital programs and fundraiser concerts for musical and cultural organizations in the United States and China. Recent and upcoming works include Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* and *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, Bolcom's *Cabaret Songs*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten* and Messiaen's *Harawi*. Along with classical repertoire, she enjoys collaborating with composers, improvisers, and theater artists on new works. Sophie can be heard as the Mother/Witch in the original English cast recording of Matti Kovler's *Ami and Tami* and as a soloist on the Grammy Award-nominated Naxos recording of Milhaud's *Oresteia* trilogy, produced by UMS in association with the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance. In addition to performing, Sophie is passionate about writing, linguistics, and non-musical art forms. She teaches French language and poetics, as well as interpretation of *mélodies* repertoire. She has served as the house translator for the Paris-based classical and jazz label NoMadMusic. She currently resides in New York City, where she is pursuing a doctoral degree in voice performance at the Graduate Center CUNY as a student of Amy Burton.

Yoshi Weinberg (they/them) is a New York City based flutist, harpist, and composer. Lauded for their "sublime tone" and "creative interpretation and technical virtuosity" (*I Care If You Listen*), Yoshi is a dedicated performer of contemporary and experimental works. Yoshi has performed as a soloist across North America and Europe including Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Roulette Intermedium (NYC), the Fitzgerald Theater (St. Paul, MN), the Ordway Center (St. Paul, MN), Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), Mahaiwe Theater (Great Barrington, MA), Orchestra Hall (Minneapolis, MN), Gesellschaftshaus (Magdeburg, Germany), Fondation des États-Unis (Paris, France), Conservatoire Darius Milhaud (Aix-en-Provence, France), Duomo di Pavia (Pavia, Italy), Palau de la Musica (Valencia, Spain), among many others. They currently are Artistic Director of InfraSound, and is founding member and flutist for Apply Triangle, Infra-Sound, and KnoxTrio. Additionally, Yoshi served as Artistic Director of the Minnesota new music ensemble RenegadeEnsemble for the 2017-2018 season. As a composer, Yoshi's compositions have been described as "a stunning compositional display of polyphony and texture" (ICIYL) and "transcendent, emotional, and intimate" (*Sparks and Wiry Cries*). Their works have been premiered by InfraSound, e(L)ement duo, the dream songs project, and RenegadeEnsemble, and have been featured on Minnesota Public Radio and at the American Harp Society Summer Institute.

Yoshi is currently pursuing their D.M.A. in Flute Performance at CUNY Graduate Center, studying with Robert Dick. They received their M.M. in Contemporary Performance from Manhattan School of Music, and their B.M. in Performance from Saint Olaf College.

Joseph Vaz was born in Faro, Portugal, and has been studying piano since he was eight years old. He recently was a semifinalist in the 2020 West Virginia International Piano Competition, and has placed in several national and international competitions. Joseph has performed at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall and numerous other venues in the United States, Italy, and Austria. His orchestral debut came with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra in February 2015, and he has also performed as soloist with the Seven Hills Sinfonietta and other orchestral ensembles. He regularly presents solo and chamber recitals for his degrees and for his community. Joseph's recent appearances at summer festivals include the Bowdoin Music Festival and Chautauqua Piano Institute on scholarship. Having completed his B.M. at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music with Emile Naoumoff and his M.M. at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with Ran Dank, he now is pursuing his D.M.A. at the CUNY Graduate Center with Julian Martin.

An active collaborative pianist, he has worked with all types of musicians in chamber music and with multiple orchestras for operas and concert programs. Interested in many genres of music-making, Joseph enjoys working in musical theatre, and recently appeared in the role of Oscar the rehearsal pianist in CCM's production of *42nd Street*. Outside of music, Joseph has a Bachelor's degree in mathematics and a minor in French from Indiana University.

Texts and Translations

deixis

Text by Yaz Lancaster

I am not here
I do not exist
no one can hear (me)
no one can see me (anymore)
nobody can see me
no one touches (me)
you can hear (me)
you cannot hear me
you can see me
you cannot see me
nobody touches me
you touch me

La voix humaine

Libretto by Jean Cocteau (1889-1963)

Allô, allô...
Mais non, Madame, nous sommes
plusieurs sur la ligne, raccrochez...
vous ét' avec une abonnée...
Mais, Madame, raccrochez vous-mêm'!...
Allô, Mad'moisel'!...
Mais non, ce n'est pas le docteur Schmit...
Zéro huit, pas zéro sept. Allô!...
C'est ridicul'...
On me demande; je ne sais pas.

Allô!...
Mais, Madam', que voulez-vous que j'y fass'?...
Comment, ma faut'? Pas de tout...
Allô, Mad'moisel'! Dites à cette dame de se retirer.

Allô, c'est toi?...
Oui, très bien.
C'était un vrai supplice de t'entendre à travers tout
ce monde...
Oui... Oui... Non... C'est une chance...
Je rentre il y a dix minutes.

Tu n'avais pas encore appelé?...
Ah!... Non, non. J'ai diné dehors, chez Marthe...
Il doit être onze heur' un quart. Tu es chez toi?...
Alors regarde la pendule électrique...
C'est que je pensais...
Oui, Oui, mon chéri...

The Human Voice

Translation by Sophie Delphis

Hello? Hello?
No Ma'am, there are several people on the line. Hang
up...
You're talking to a subscriber.
Madam, hang up yourself...
Hello, Miss...
No, this isn't Doctor Schmit...
Zero seven, not zero eight... Hello!
this is ridiculous...
Someone's calling me. I don't know.

Hello!...
But Ma'am, what would you have me do?...
How so, my fault... not at all...
Hello, Miss... tell this woman to hang up.

Hello, it's you?...
Yes... very well...
It was a real torture hearing you over all of these
people...
Yes... yes... no... it's lucky...
I just got home ten minutes ago...

You hadn't yet called?...
Ah!... no, no... I dined out... at Marthe's...
It must be 11:15... You're home?...
Well, look at the electric clock...
That's what I thought...
Yes, yes, my dear...

Hier soir? Hier soir je me suis couchée
tout de suite et comme je ne pouvais pas
m'endormir,
j'ai pris un comprimé...
Non... un seul... à neuf heures...
J'avais un peu mal à la tête, mais je me suis secouée.
Marthe est venue.
Elle a déjeuné avec moi. J'ai fait des courses.
Je suis rentrée à la maison. J'ai...
Quoi?... Très forte...
J'ai beaucoup, beaucoup de courage...

Après? Après je me suis habillée,
Marthe est venue me prendre...
Je rentre de chez elle.
Elle a été parfaite...
Elle a cet air, mais ell' ne l'est pas.
Tu avais raison, comme toujours...
Ma robe rose... Mon chapeau noir...
Oui, j'ai encore mon chapeau sur la tête.
Et toi, tu rentres?
Tu es resté à la maison?..
Quel procès?... Ah, oui. Allô!
Chéri... Si on coupe redemande-moi tout de suite...
Allô!...
Non je suis là...
Le sac? Tes lettres et les miennes...
Tu peux le fair' prendre quand tu veux...
Un peu dur... Je comprends...
Oh! mon chéri, ne t'excuse pas,
c'est très naturel et c'est moi qui suis stupide...
Tu es gentil... Tu es gentil...
Moi non plus, je ne me croyais pas si forte.

Quelle comédie?... Allô! Qui?..
Que je te joue la comédie, moi!
Tu me connais, je suis incapable de prendre sur
moi...
Pas du tout... Pas du tout... Très calme...
Tu l'entendrais... Je dis: tu l'entendrais.
Je n'ai pas la voix d'une personne
qui cache quelque chose...
Non. J'ai décidé d'avoir du courage et j'en aurai...
J'ai ce que je mérite. J'ai voulu être folle
et avoir un bonheur fou...

Chéri, écoute... allô! chéri... Laisse... Allô!
Laisse-moi parler... Ne t'accuse pas.
Tout est ma faute... Si, si.

Souviens toi du dimanche de Versailles
et du pneumatique... Ah! Alors!
C'est moi qui ai voulu venir...
C'est moi qui t'ai fermé la bouch',
c'est moi qui t'ai dit que tout m'était égal...

Last night? Last night I went to bed straight away,
and since I couldn't sleep

I took a pill...
No... just one... at 9:00...
I had a bit of a headache, but I roused myself.
Marthe came.
She had lunch with me. I got some groceries.
I came home. I...
what?... Very strong...
I have lots and lots of courage...

After? Afterwards I got dressed.
Marthe came to get me...
I'm coming back from her place.
She was perfect...
She seems that way, but she isn't.
You were right, as always...
My pink dress... My black hat...
Yes, I still have my hat on my head.
And you, you're just coming home?..
You stayed home?..
What lawsuit?... Ah, yes. Hello!
Dear... If we're cut off, call me right back...
Hello!
No... I'm here...
The bag? Your letters, and mine.
You can have them picked up whenever you want...
A little hard... I understand...
Oh! My dear, don't apologize.
It's very natural, and I'm the stupid one...
You're nice... You're nice...
Me neither, I didn't think I'd be this strong...

What histrionics?... Hello... Who?..
I'm putting on an act, me?!..
You know me; I'm incapable of pretending...
Not at all... Not at all... Very calm...
You would hear it... I said: you would hear it.
I don't have the voice of someone who's hiding
something...

No. I've decided to be brave and I will be...
I have what I deserve. I wanted to be wild and have
wild joy...

Dear... listen... hello!... dear... Let me... hello...
Let me speak. Don't blame yourself.
Everything's my fault... Yes, yes.

Remember that Sunday in Versailles
and the telegram... Ah!... So!...
I was the one who wanted to come...
I was the one who wouldn't let you speak,
I was the one who said it was all the same to me...

Non... non... là tu es injuste.
J'ai téléphoné la première,
un mardi, je suis sûre... Un mardi vingt-sept...
Tu penses bien que je connais ces dates par coeur...
Ta mère? Pourquoi?
Ce n'est vraiment pas la peine...
Je ne sais pas encore... Oui, peut-être...
Oh! non, sûrement pas tout de suite, et toi?...
Demain? Je ne savais pas que c'était si rapide.
Alors, attends, c'est très simple:
demain matin le sac sera chez le concierge.
Joseph n'aura qu'à passer le prendre...
Oh! moi, tu sais, il est possible que je reste,
comme il est possible que j'aie passer
quelques jours à la campagne, chez Marthe...
Oui, mon chéri... Mais oui, mon chéri...

Allô! et comme ça?
Pourtant je parle très fort...
Et là, tu m'entends?
Je dis: et là, tu m'entends?...
C'est drôle parce que moi
je t'entends comme si tu étais dans la chambre...
Allô! allô! Allons, bon!
maintenant c'est moi qui ne t'entends plus...
Si, mais très loin, très loin...
Toi, tu m'entends.
C'est chacun son tour...
Non, très bien.
J'entends même mieux que tout à l'heure,
mais ton appareil résonne.
On dirait que ce n'est pas ton appareil.

Je te vois, tu sais.
Quel foulard? Le foulard rouge.
Tu as tes manches retroussées...
Ta main gauche? le récepteur...
Ta main droite? ton stylographe.
Tu dessines sur le buvard,
des profils, des coeurs, des étoiles...
Ah! Tu ris! J'ai des yeux à la place des oreilles...

Oh! Mon chéri, surtout ne me regarde pas...
Peur? Non, je n'aurai pas peur... c'est pire...
En fin je n'ai plus l'habitude de dormir seule...
Oui... oui... oui... je te promets...
tu es gentil...

Je ne sais pas. J'évite de me regarder.
Je n'ose plus allumer dans le cabinet de toilette...
Hier, je me suis trouvé nez à nez avec une vieille
dame...
Non, non! une vieille dame avec des cheveux blancs
et une foule de petites rides.
Tu es bien bon!...

No... no... there, you're being unfair...
I phoned first...
a Tuesday... I'm sure of it. Tuesday the 27th.
You ought to know that I know these dates by heart...
Your mother? Why?
There's really no need...
I don't know yet... Yes... perhaps...
Oh! No, definitely not right away, and you?...
Tomorrow?... I didn't know it would be so quick...
So, listen... it's very simple:
tomorrow morning the bag will be at the concierge's.
Joseph will only have to come and pick it up...
Oh! me, you know, it's possible I may stay,
just as it's possible I may spend a few days in the
country, at Marthe's...
Yes, my dear... oh yes, my dear...

Hello! and now?...
But I'm speaking very loudly...
And now, do you hear me?...
I said: and now, do you hear me?...
It's funny, because for my part,
I hear you as if you were in the room...
Hello!... hello!... Well!
Now I'm the one who can't hear you anymore...
Yes, but very far, very far...
You, you hear me.
It's each one in turn...
No, very well.
I hear even better than before,
but your telephone is echoing.
It doesn't sound like your telephone...

I can see you, you know...
What scarf? The red scarf.
You have your sleeves rolled up...
Your left hand? The receiver.
Your right hand? Your pen.
You're drawing on the blotter:
profiles, hearts, stars.
Ah! You're laughing! I have eyes in my ears...

Oh! no, my dear, please don't look at me...
Afraid?... No, I won't be afraid... it's worse...
Well, I'm no longer used to sleeping alone...
Yes... yes... yes... I promise you...
You're nice...

I don't know. I avoid looking at myself.
I no longer dare to turn on the light in the bathroom.
Yesterday, I found myself face to face with an old
lady...
No, no! an old lady with white hair and a host of little
wrinkles.
You're very nice!

Mais, mon chéri, une figure admirable,
c'est pire que tout, c'est pour les artistes.
J'aimais mieux quand tu disais:
Regardez-moi cette vilaine petite gueule!...
Oui, cher Monsieur! Je plaisantais...
Tu es bête...
Heureusement que tu es maladroit et que tu
m'aimes.
Si tu ne m'aimais pas et si tu étais adroit,
le téléphone deviendrait une arme effrayante.
Une arme qui ne laisse pas de traces, qui ne fait pas
de bruit...
Moi, méchante? Allô! allô, chéri...
Où es-tu?

Allô, allô, Mad'moisell'...
Allô, Mad'moiselle, on coupe.

Allô, c'est toi?... Mais non, Mad'moiselle.
On m'a coupée... Je ne sais pas... c'est à dire...
si, attendez... Auteuil zéro quat'virgul'sept.
Allô! Pas libre? Allô, Mad'moisell'.
Il me redemand'... Bien.

Allô! Auteuil zéro quat'virgul'sept?
Allô! C'est vous, Joseph?...
C'est madame...
On nous avait coupés avec Monsieur...
Pas là?... Oui, Oui, il ne rentre pas ce soir...
c'est vrai, je suis stupide!
Monsieur me téléphonait d'un restaurant,
on a coupé et je redemande son numéro...
Excusez-moi, Joseph.
Merci. Bonsoir, Joseph.

Allô! ah! chéri! c'est toi? On avait coupé...
Non, non. J'attendais... On sonnait,
je décrochais et il n'y avait personne...
Sans doute... Bien sûr...
Tu as sommeil?...
Tu es bon d'avoir téléphoné, très bon...
Non, je suis là...
Quoi? Pardonne, c'est absurde...
Rien, rien, je n'ai rien...
Je te jur' que je n'ai rien...
C'est pareil... Rien du tout.
Tu te trompes... Seulement, tu comprends,
on parle, on parle...

Écoute, mon amour. Je ne t'ai jamais menti...
Oui, je sais, je sais, je te crois,
j'en suis convaincue... non, ce n'est pas ça,
c'est parce que je viens de te mentir,
là, au téléphone,
depuis un quart d'heure, je te mens...

But, my dear, and admirable face,
that's worse than anything; that's for artists.
I preferred it when you used to say:
Look at that ugly little mug!...
Yes, dear Sir!... I was joking...
You're silly...
Good thing that you're awkward and that you love me.

If you didn't love me and if you were deft,
the telephone would become a frightening weapon.
A weapon that doesn't leave a trace, that doesn't make
noise...
Me, mean?... Hello! hello, dear...
Where are you?...

Hello, hello, Miss...
Hello, Miss, we're hanging up.

Hello, it's you?... No, Miss.
I was cut off... I don't know... that is...
yes... wait... Auteuil zero-four-comma-seven.
Hello!... Busy!... Hello, Miss,
he's calling me back... Good.

Hello! Auteuil zero-four-comma-seven?
Hello! Is that you, Joseph?
It's Madame...
Monsieur and I were cut off...
Not there?... Yes, he's not coming home tonight...
that's right, I'm so stupid!
Monsieur was phoning me from a restaurant.
We were cut off, and I'm trying his number again...
Excuse me, Joseph...
Thank you... Good night, Joseph...

Hello! Ah! Dear! It's you?... We were cut off...
No, no. I was waiting. Someone rang;
I answered, and there was no one...
No doubt... Of course...
You're sleepy?...
You're good to have called... very good...
No, I'm here...
What?... Excuse me... It's absurd...
Nothing, nothing... Nothing's wrong...
I swear to you that nothing's wrong with me...
It's the same... Nothing at all.
You're mistaken... Only, you understand,
we talk, we talk...

Listen, my love. I've never lied to you...
Yes, I know, I know, I believe you...
I'm sure of it... no, it's not that...
it's because I just lied to you...
just now... on the phone,
for the past quarter of an hour, I've been lying...

Je sais bien que je n'ai plus aucune chance à attendre,
mais mentir ne porte pas la chance
et puis je n'aime pas te mentir,
je ne peux pas, je ne veux pas te mentir,
même pour ton bien.
Oh! rien de grave, mon chéri.
Seulement je mentais en te décrivant
ma robe et en disant que j'avais dîné chez Marthe...

Je n'ai pas dîné,
je n'ai pas ma robe rose.
J'ai un manteau sur ma chemise,
parce qu'à force d'attendre ton téléphone,
à force de regarder l'appareil,
de m'asseoir, de me lever,
de marcher de long en large, je devenais folle!

Alors j'ai mis un manteau et j'allais sortir,
prendre un taxi, me faire mener
sous tes fenêtres, pour attendre...
eh bien! attendre, je ne sais quoi...
Tu as raison... Si, je t'écoute... Je serai sage,
je répondrai à tout, je te jure.
Ici... Je n'ai rien mangé. Je ne pouvais pas.
J'ai été très malade... Hier soir, j'ai voulu prendre un
comprimé pour dormir;
je me suis dit que si j'en prenais plus,
je dormirais mieux et que si je les prenais tous,
je dormirais sans rêve, sans réveil,
je serais morte...
J'en ai avalé douze dans de l'eau chaude.
Comme une masse.
Et j'ai eu un rêve.
J'ai rêvé ce qui est.
Je me suis réveillée toute contente
parce que c'était un rêve,
et quand j'ai su que c'était vrai, que j'étais seule,
que je n'avais pas la tête sur ton cou,
j'ai senti que je ne pouvais pas vivre...
Légère et froide et je ne sentais plus mon cœur
battre et la mort était longue à venir
et com' j'avais une angoisse épouvantable,
au bout d'une heure j'ai téléphoné à Marthe...
Je n'avais pas le courage de mourir seule.

Chéri... chéri...
il était quatre heures du matin.
Elle est arrivée avec le docteur qui habite son
immeuble. J'avais plus de quarant'.
Le docteur a fait une ordonnance
et Marthe est restée jusqu'à ce soir.
Je l'ai suppliée de partir
parce que tu m'avais dit que tu téléphonerais
et j'avais peur qu'on m'empêche de te parler...

I know that I no more luck waiting,
but lying won't bring me luck,
and besides, I don't like lying to you.
I can't, I don't want to lie to you,
even for your own good...
Oh! nothing serious, my dear...
It's just that I was lying when I was describing
my dress to you and telling you that I had dined at
Marthe's...

I didn't have dinner;
I'm not wearing my pink dress.
I have a coat over my nightgown,
because after waiting for your call,
after watching the telephone,
sitting, standing,
walking back and forth, I was going crazy!

So, I put on a coat and was going to go out,
take a taxi, have myself brought
to your windows to wait...
Well! To wait, to wait for... I don't know what...
You're right... Yes, I'm listening... I'll be well-behaved...
I'll answer everything, I promise.
Here... I haven't eaten anything... I couldn't...
I've been very ill... Last night, I wanted to take a pill to
sleep;
I told myself that if I took more,
I'd sleep better, and if I took them all,
I'd sleep without dreams, without waking;
I'd be dead...
I swallowed twelve of them... In hot water...
Like one lump.
And I had a dream.
I dreamt about things as they are.
I woke up so happy
because it was a dream,
and when I realized that it was true, that I was alone,
that I didn't have my head on your neck,
I felt that I couldn't live...
Light and cold, and I no longer felt my heart beating,
and death was slow in coming,
and since I had dreadful anxiety,
after an hour I called Marthe.
I didn't have the courage to die alone...

Dear... Dear...
It was four o'clock in the morning.
She arrived with the doctor who lives in her building.
I had a fever of more than forty.
The doctor wrote a prescription,
and Marthe stayed until this evening.
I begged her to leave
because you'd told me you would call,
and I was afraid they'd keep me from talking to you...

Très bien. Ne t'inquiète pas.

Allô! Je croyais qu'on avait coupé...
Tu es bon, mon chéri.
Mon pauvre chéri à qui j'ai fait du mal...
Oui, parle, parle, dis n'importe quoi.
Je souffrais à me rouler par terre
et il suffit que tu parles pour que
je me sente bien, que je ferme les yeux.
Tu sais, quelquefois quand nous étions couchés
et que j'avais ma tête à sa petite place contre ta
poitrine, j'entendais ta voix,
exactement la même que ce soir dans l'appareil.

Allô! J'entends de la musique...
Je dis : J'entends de la musique...
Eh bien, tu devrais cogner au mur
et empêcher ces voisins de jouer
du gramophone à des heures pareil'...

C'est inutile. Du reste le docteur de Marthe
reviendra demain...
Ne t'inquiète pas... Mais oui.
Elle te donnera des nouvelles...
Quoi? Oh! si, mille fois mieux.
Si tu n'avais pas appelé, je serais morte.

Pardonne-moi. Je sais que cette scène est
intolérable
et que tu as bien de la patience,
mais comprends-moi, je souffre, je souffre.
Ce fil, c'est le dernier qui me rattache encore à
nous...
Avant-hier soir?
J'ai dormi. Je m'étais couchée avec le téléphone...
Non, non. Dans mon lit... Oui. Je sais.
Je suis très ridicule, mais j'avais le téléphone
dans mon lit et malgré tout,
on est relié par le téléphone.
Parce que tu me parles.
Voilà cinq ans que je vis de toi,
que tu es mon seul air respirable,
que je passe mon temps à t'attendre,
à te croire mort si tu es en retard,
à mourir de te croire mort,
à revivre quand tu entres
et quand tu es là, enfin, à mourir de peur que tu
partes...
Maintenant, j'ai de l'air parce que tu me parles...

C'est entendu, mon amour, j'ai dormi.
J'ai dormi parce que c'était la première fois...
Le premier soir on dort.
Ce qu'on ne supporte pas c'est la seconde nuit,
hier,

Very, very well... Don't worry...

Hello!... I thought we'd been cut off...
You're good, my dear...
My poor dear, whom I've harmed...
Yes, speak, speak, say anything...
I was suffering to the point of madness,
and it's enough that you speak
for me to feel fine, to close my eyes.
You know, sometimes when we were in bed
and I had my head in its little place against your chest, I
could hear your voice,
exactly the same one as tonight on the phone...

Hello! I hear music...
I said: I hear music...
Well, you should knock on the wall
and stop those neighbors from playing
the gramophone at such hours...

It's useless. As for the rest, the doctor and Marthe will
come back tomorrow...
Don't worry... Of course...
She'll keep you updated...
What?... Oh! yes, a thousand times better.
If you hadn't called, I'd be dead...

Forgive me. I know that this scene is intolerable
and that you have a lot of patience,
but please understand, I'm suffering, I'm suffering.
This cord, it's the last thing still tying me back to us...
Two nights ago?
I slept. I went to bed with the telephone...
No, no. In my bed... Yes. I know.
I'm very ridiculous, but I had the telephone
in my bed and after all,
we are connected by the telephone...
Because you're speaking to me.
For the past five years I've lived through you;
you've been my only breathable air.
I've spent my time waiting for you,
believing you dead if you're late,
dying at the thought of your death,
coming back to life when you come home,
and when you're here, finally, dying of fright that you
might leave....
Now I have air because you're speaking to me...

Of course, my love; I slept.
I slept because it was the first time...
The first night you sleep...
What you can't stand is the second night, yesterday,
and the third, tomorrow,

et la troisièm', demain et des jours
et des jours à fair' quoi, mon Dieu?
Et... et en admettant que je dorme, après le
sommeil
il y a les rêves et le réveil et manger
et se lever, et se laver et sortir et aller où?...
Mais, mon pauvre chéri, je n'ai jamais eu rien d'autre
à faire que toi...
Marthe a sa vie organisée... Seule...

Voilà deux jours qu'il ne quitte pas l'antichambre.
J'ai voulu l'appeler, le caresser.
Il refuse qu'on le touche...
Un peu plus, il me mordrait. Oui, moi!
Je te jure qu'il m'effraye...
Il ne mange plus. Il ne bouge plus.
Et quand il me regarde il me donne la chair de
poul'...
Comment veux-tu que je sache?
Il croit peut-être que je t'ai fait du mal...
Pauvre bête! Je n'ai aucune raison de lui en
vouloir...
Je ne le comprends que trop bien...
Il t'aime. Il ne te voit plus rentrer.
Il croit que c'est ma faute...
Oui, mon chéri. C'est entendu; mais c'est un chien.
Malgré son intelligence, il ne peut pas le deviner...
Mais, je ne sais pas, mon chéri!
Comment veux-tu que je sache?
On n'est plus soi-même.
Songe que j'ai déchiré tout le paquet de mes
photographies d'un seul coup,
sans m'en apercevoir.
Même pour un homme ce serait un tour de force.

Allô! Allô! Madam' retirez-vous.
Vous êt' avec des abonnés...
Allô! mais non, Madam'...
Mais, Madame, nous ne cherchons pas à être
intéressants...
Si vous nous trouvez ridicules,
pourquoi perdez-vous votre temps au lieu de
raccrocher?...
Oh!... Ne te fâche pas... Enfin!...

Non, non. Elle a raccroché après avoir dit cette
chose ignoble...
Tu as l'air frappé... Si, tu es frappé,
je connais ta voix...
Mais, mon chéri, cette femme doit être très mal
et elle ne te connaît pas.
Ell' croit que tu es comme les autres hommes...
Mais non, mon chéri, ce n'est pas du tout pareil...
Pour les gens, on s'aime ou on se déteste.
Les ruptures sont des ruptures.

and days and days doing what, my God?...
And... and allowing that I might sleep, after sleep
there are dreams and waking and eating
and getting up and washing and going out and going
where?
But, my poor dear, I never had anything to do other
than you...
Marthe has her life organized... Alone...

For two days he hasn't left the hall...
I wanted to call him, to pet him.
He refuses to be touched.
I feel like he might even bite me. Yes, me!
I swear he scares me.
He no longer eats. He no longer moves.
And when he looks at me, he gives me goosebumps...
How do you suppose I should know?
Perhaps he thinks that I've harmed you...
Poor animal... I don't have any reason to resent him.
I understand him only too well...
He loves you. He no longer sees you come home.
He thinks that it's my fault...
Yes, my dear. Of course; but he's a dog.
Despite his intelligence, he can't guess it...
But I don't know, my dear!
How should I know?
We're no longer ourselves.
Just imagine that I ripped the entire bundle of my
photos in one stroke,
without realizing it.
Even for a man it would be a feat of strength...

Hello! Hello, Madam, remove yourself.
You're with subscribers.
Hello! No, Madame...
Why, Madame, we're not looking to be interesting...
If you find us ridiculous,
why are you wasting your time instead of hanging
up?...
Oh!... Don't get angry... Finally!...

No, no. She hung up after having said that horrible
thing...
You seem stricken... Yes, you're stricken;
I know your voice...
But, my dear, that woman must be sick in the head,
and she doesn't know you.
She thinks that you're like other men...
No, my dear, it's not at all the same.
People think you either love or hate one another.
Break-ups are break-ups.

Ils regardent vite. Tu ne leur feras jamais
comprendre...
Tu ne leur feras jamais comprendre certaines
choses.
Le mieux est de faire comme moi
et de s'en moquer complètement.

Oh!... Rien.
Je crois que nous parlons comme d'habitude
et puis tout a coup la vérité me revient..
Dans le temps, on se voyait,
on pouvait perdre la tête,
oublier ses promesses, risquer l'impossible,
convaincre ceux qu'on adorait en les embrassant,
en s'accrochant à eux.
Un regard pouvait changer tout.
Mais avec cet appareil, ce qui est fini est fini...

Sois tranquille.
On ne se suicide pas deux fois...
Je ne saurais pas acheter un revolver...
Tu ne me vois pas achetant un revolver.
Où trouverais-je la force de combiner un
mensonge,
mon pauvre adoré?
Aucune... J'aurais dû avoir du courage.
Il y a des circonstances où le mensonge est utile.
Toi, si tu me mentais
pour rendre la séparation moins pénible...
Je ne dis pas que tu mentes.
Je dis: si tu mentais et que je le sache.
Si, par exemple, tu n'étais pas chez toi,
et que tu me dises...
Non, non, mon chéri! Écoute... je te crois...
Si, tu prends une voix méchante...
Je disais simplement que
si tu me trompais par bonté d'âme
et que je m'en aperçoive,
je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi...
Allô! Allô!

Mon Dieu, fait qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait...

On avait coupé.
J'étais en train de te dire que si tu me mentais
par bonté et que je m'en aperçoive,
je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi...
Bien sûr... Tu es fou!
Mon amour, mon cher amour.

Je sais bien qu'il le faut, mais c'est atroce.
Jamais je n'aurai ce courage...

They look quickly. You'll never make them
understand...
You'll never make them understand certain things...
The best thing to do is to do what I do
and not to care at all...

Oh!... Nothing.
I think that we're talking as usual
and then, all at once, the truth returns to me...
Before, we saw each other.
We could lose our heads,
forget our promises, risk the impossible,
convince those we loved by kissing them,
by holding onto them.
A look could change everything.
But with this machine, what's done is done...

Don't worry.
You don't try suicide twice...
I wouldn't know how to buy a revolver...
You can't see me buying a revolver...
Where would I find the strength to come up with a lie,
poor beloved?...
None... I should have had courage.
There are circumstances when lying is useful.
You, if you were to lie to me
to make the separation less difficult...
I am not saying that you're lying.
I'm saying: if you were to lie and I knew it.
If, for example, you weren't at your place,
and you told me...
No, no, my dear! Listen... I believe you...
Yes, you're taking a mean tone.
I was simply saying that
if you misled me from goodness
and I realized it,
I would only feel more tenderness for you...
Hello!... hello...

My God, call me back.
My God, call me back.
My God, call me back
My God, call...

We were cut off.
I was telling you that if you lied to me
out of goodness and I realized it,
I would only have more fondness for you...
Of course... You're crazy!
My love... My dear love...

I know that it's necessary, but it's awful...
I'll never have what it takes...

Oui. On a l'illusion d'être l'un contre l'autre
et brusquement on met des caves, des égouts,
toute une ville entre soi.
J'ai le fil autour de mon cou.
J'ai ta voix autour de mon cou.
Ta voix autour de mon cou...
Il faudrait que le bureau nous coupe par hasard...
Oh! Mon chéri! Comment peux-tu imaginer que je
pense une chose si laide?
Je sais bien que cette opération est
encore plus cruelle à faire de ton côté que du mien...
non...non...

A Marseill'?
Écoute, chéri, puisque vous serez à Marseill'
après-demain soir, je voudrais... en fin j'aimerais...
j'aimerais que tu ne descendes pas à l'hôtel
où nous descendons d'habitude...
Tu n'es pas fâché?...
Parce que les choses que je n'imagine pas
n'existent pas,
ou bien elles existent dans une espèce de lieu
très vague et qui fait moins de mal... tu comprends?
Merci...merci. Tu es bon. Je t'aime.

Alors, voilà.
J'allais dire machinalement à tout de suite...
J'en doute. Oh!... C'est mieux.
Beaucoup mieux...

Mon chéri...
Mon beau chéri. Je suis forte...
Dépêche-toi... Vas-y.
Coupe! Coupe vite!
Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime... t'aime.

Yes, we have the illusion of being next to each other
and brusquely we put cellars, sewers,
an entire city between us...
I have the cord around my neck...
I have your voice around my neck.
Your voice around my neck...
The phone office would have to cut us off by
chance...
Oh! my dear! How could you imagine that I would
think such an ugly thing?
I know that this thing is
even crueller to do on your end than on mine...
No... No...

To Marseille?...
Listen, dear, since you'll be in Marseille the night after
tomorrow, I'd like... well I'd like...
I'd like you not to go to the hotel where normally we
go...
You're not angry?
Because the things that I don't imagine
don't exist,
or they exist in a sort of very vague place that hurts me
less... you understand?
Thank you... thank you. You're kind. I love you.

So here it is...
I was going to say, out of habit, "see you soon."
I doubt it... Oh!... It's better...
Much better...

My dear...
my beautiful dear... I'm strong.
Hurry... Go on.
Hang up! Hang up quickly!
I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you... love you.