

Body Snatchers

A Radio Play

by

Exemplar 3

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Characters:

- Dr Becket
- Jack Walker
- Joe Mason
- Sergeant (Bill)
- Tom Archer
- Newspaper seller

Scene 1

[QUIET BACKGROUND CHATTER, OCCASIONAL CLATTER AND SOUND OF HOOVES PASSING BY.]

Newspaper seller: Read all about it! Body snatchers strike again. Read all about it.

Tom: Awful, isn't it? Hard to believe that people make a living out of that sort of thing.

Jack: Yes, very bad business – well, not for us.

Tom: (CHUCKLES) Quite. Don't look now, but I think that's the chap we've been waiting for. Good thing too, I was starting to think he'd gotten lost.

Jack: Don't you worry, with the graveyard so nearby he won't be able to resist.

Joe: Go on Tom, I dare you – besides, it's your turn.

Jack: Yeah do it, I can just imagine the look on his face.

Tom: Well, if you think it's such a good idea, why don't you do it? I'm not taking the blame if it goes badly. I could get arrested for this!

Jack: Relax, everything's in place. Besides, you're the best one for the job; once the introductions are made we can take it from there.

Joe: And just think of the pay off, you've got to admit we need the money.

Tom: Are you sure that's the fellow? It could be rather awkward if we get this wrong.

Jack: Yes, I'm sure, I remember the picture clearly, there's no mistaking him.

Tom: (ANNOYED HUMPH) Alright then, here goes nothing.

[FOOTSTEPS SOUND ON COBBLES, SPLASH OF A PUDDLE. THROAT CLEARED.]

Tom: Excuse me good man, may I have a moment of your time, I promise it'll be worth your while.

Dr: (HESITANT) Certainly. How may I help you?

Tom: (FORMALLY) First let me introduce myself. I am Mr Archer. My esteemed colleagues and I were actually just wondering how we could help you – new in town as you are.

Dr: Well I – wait, how did you know that?

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Tom: (WITH THEATRICAL FLOURISH) Well you see, I happen to be rather well known in these parts, and nothing goes on without my notice – if you catch my drift.

Dr: (HUSHED) Oh, of course. I didn't mean to suggest otherwise.

Tom: Unquestionably – the thought never crossed my mind.

Dr: (RELIEVED) Good. Now you said you could help me?

Tom: Indeed. Please follow me. I'll introduce you to my associates and we'll see what kind of arrangement will be most beneficial for all parties involved.

[TWO SETS OF FOOTSTEPS. HORSES' HOOVES AND WHEELS OVER COBBLES IN THE DISTANCE.]

Tom: These are Mr Mason and Mr Walker, close personal friends of mine.

Dr: A pleasure to make the acquaintance of such distinguished gentlemen. I am Dr Becket.

Joe: The pleasure is all ours I assure you.

Dr: You have my sincerest gratitude for your assistance. As I am sure you know, as a man of my profession, discretion is of the upmost importance.

Jack: You are most welcome, doctor; rest assured that discretion is a speciality of ours.

Tom: Now, as far as your situation goes, we are willing to show a degree of flexibility – with some upfront fees naturally to cover any expenses.

Dr: I would expect nothing less. Is there somewhere more private where we could discuss the details?

Joe: Right this way.

[MANY FOOTSTEPS. KEYS JINGLE. DOOR OPENS THEN CLOSES, BACKGROUND NOISE IS CUT OFF. CHAIRS PULLED OUT.]

Dr: What about your other friend, Mr Archer?

Jack: Ah, don't worry about him; he's just making sure that we're not disturbed.

Dr: Good, good. (NERVOUSLY) So what did you have in mind? Some sort of protection seems to be most appropriate, given the circumstances.

Jack: Most certainly, but I must warn you that if we are to carry out our job effectively we will require certain persuasion as well as detailed knowledge of your business while here. Does this seem reasonable?

Dr: your terms are most agreeable young man, and I hope this will do in terms of covering your expenses in advance.

[MONEY SLIDES ACROSS DESK.]

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Joe: That seems quite in order Dr Becket, and as to your plans?

Dr: Ah, yes. Here's my diary, please feel free to make a copy.

Jack: That won't be necessary, doctor, a quick look over should be sufficient.

Dr: (INTERESTED) Do you mean to say that you have a photographic memory?

Jack: Quite so, it's something which has served me well over the years.

Joe: (CHUCKLES) You're not wrong there.

Dr: (IMPRESSED) How fascinating, and if you don't mind me saying, your brain would make an excellent research specimen.

Jack: Why, thank you doctor, I'll be sure to keep that in mind when drawing up my last will and testament. Now, if you would just sign this contract Mr Mason has written, we can begin our business together. Feel free to read it over, we're in no hurry.

Dr: Very well.

[FEW SECONDS OF SILENCE FOLLOWED BY SCRATCHING OF PEN. KNOCK AT THE DOOR.]

Tom: (MUFFLED BY DOOR) Old Bill here for you.

Dr: (WORRIED, SUSPICIOUS) What does he mean?

Jack: Nothing to worry about doctor, just some other business I've been taking care of. (LOUDER) Come in.

[DOOR OPENS, CHAIR SCRAPES.]

Dr: (ANGRY) What is the meaning of this? I demand an explanation!

Sergeant: Dr C Becket, I am arresting you under suspicion of body snatching and bribery of a public official. You do not have to say anything but I must warn you that anything you do say will be taken down and used in evidence against you.

[HANDCUFFS CLICK.]

Dr: (PANICKED) I don't understand. Mr Walker, do something!

Jack: Afraid not doctor, these are serious crimes you've been accused of. Lucky for the sergeant we saw you when we did. By the looks of your diary, several crimes have just been prevented, and it seems like we'll be able to apprehend your accomplices as well.

Dr: (OUTRAGED) How dare you deceive me like that. Do you have any idea how important my research is?

Tom: Nope, and quite frankly we don't care. Take him away officer.

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[FOOTSTEPS EXIT, DOOR CLOSES BEHIND. TWO MORE CHAIRS PULLED OUT. HEAVY EXHALATIONS AS SEATS ARE TAKEN.]

Joe: There, see, I told you it'd turn out all right. We caught the miscreant, and copped a score for our trouble. Not a bad earner if you think about it.

Jack: You got back just in time Tom. We were about to close the deal.

Tom: Luckily for me Bill was on the next street over, right where he said he'd be.

Joe: Well, I think it's about time we vacated Mrs Landay's out-house and got to spending our lolly. Wouldn't you agree lads?

[LAUGHTER SWELLS THEN FADES INTO INAUDIBLE CHATTER AS CHAIRS ARE PUSHED BACK FOOTSTEPS SOUND AND DOOR OPENS. AMBIENT STREET NOISES RETURN AND ARE THEN CUT OFF AS DOOR CLOSES.]

A Voice on the Wind

New Dawn

Golden leaves fall to dusty grounds
And drift in silence
Till with aging die. And yet
From under the remains of a fallen past
A new sun emerges
To the waking
Of young hearts,
And wide, adoring eyes.

The blinding light of dawn
Casts out the shadows
Which cling to the fading,
Fleeting night.

Glistening droplets perch
Upon the waxy surface
Of new-born leaves,
Which waft in subtle arcs of life;
Sweet beads of water
To quench the thirst
Of a rising summer sun.

Now at the dimming of the day,
The west horizon ignites
To crimson flames
Which burn their mark in the minds
Of mesmerised observers.
But through clutching fingers
Slips the moment
As a curtain falls,
And marks the passing
Of another dying day.

Calming quiet settles,
To soothe the weary souls;
A peaceful slumber to sustain.
Until once more
They wake, to work
Away their busy lives.

Jurassic Skies

Soaring across empty,
Unpolluted skies
With wings outstretched
The master, silent flies.
Beneath roll crashing
Seas, and trees
Whose branches reach
To sun, with leaves.
Alongside glide a plethora
Of companions on the wing,
Whose cries rise on the wind
As voices sing.

Swim With Me

'Why do you sigh?' asks the whispering wind.
'Why do you weep?' asks the murmuring stream.
'Your eyes are red and throat is sore,
Come let us carry you, and you'll cry no more.'
'What you offer is kind, but I fear untrue.'
Sweetly came the reply, 'Would I lie to you?'

'In crystal waters, you can rest in peace;
Lie down and relax, your tears will soon cease.'
'Don't be shy, dear, your secret we'll keep.'
'Come now and rest with me in a forever sleep.'
'Well, I would but you see, I cannot agree:
These tears can't be quenched by the likes of thee.'

'Now that's just unkind – she wanted to help.'
'Hush, hush now my friend, you can still hear her yelp.'
'What did you say?' I asked, surprised.
'Your true intent is revealed, is what I surmised.'
With those words I ran, the river to flee,
But when I return, she'll be waiting for me.

Ignorance

A joyful lightness, sprung
From the ignorance of a sheltered life
Which, in countless heartbeats,
Draws near the waiting dark.
A blink reveals the lies in life
And tears away the fanciful façade
Which tinted vision, and hid
The harsher tones.
Cold drops fall in that same motion;
A lament to mark
The deep-felt passing.

When shuddering sobs
Subside to silence, an armoured soul
Retreats to cold and brooding
Chambers, where spiralling despair
Removes all hope of coming change. But
In the depths of foul thoughts,
A rigid determination
Climbs into the fading light, and stands
With dignity against a monotonous regime
To fight for revolution,
Until no gasping breaths
Or conscious thoughts remain.

But from safe
And comfortable confinement, come looks
Of stinging pity and disdain,
Which mock the straining souls
Who long for freedom
From routine; the suffocating constraints
Of society and order.

The fighting spirit falters
Against the might of such adversity:
They fall to bruised knees,
The weight of the world
On their tender shoulders, heads bowed
In pretence of submission
As grim smiles
Curl the bleeding lips.

Encouraged fear dissolves
Away as calculated order fails
To hold the dreaming minds
And flees before new reigning chaos, glorious
In its possibilities. The rebels
Take up arms against the robot soldiers
Of the righteous looking lords. Now
The broken realm lays still,
Relishing the touch of sunlight,
A warmth to thaw
The entrained minds and shed
Their cold confines.

Man's Best Friend

A heart beat sounds beside your own,
In this rhythm, safety's sewn.
Warmth protects from winter's bite
And terrors of the darkest night.
From peaceful sleep you wake to see
The adoring looks he gives for free.
A loyal heart to protect and guard
Will wait for you in lonely yard.
And when you're home, you two will play
Until the day is played away.
To bed once more you both will go
And rest in safety with the love you know.

Dreamscape

The glinting figures flit in flight
With grace and life unbound,
To beckon closer winter's night
Which wakes without a sound.

In softest whisper, voices speak
And draw the dreaming mind,
Away from nightmares cold and bleak
To fantasies more kind.

And there with wonder do you see
The myths and legends walk,
With heads held high and spirits free
As through the skies they stalk.

But as the light begins to rise
The magic fades away;
You voice farewells in mournful cries
As night returns to day.

Dragon's Hoard

The leafless branches creak and moan
In windless forests old,
And creeping ivy white as bone
Conceals a treasure cold.

The golden fortune lost in time
Sits waiting in the dark,
With nothing save from age-old rhyme
To place the hidden mark.

Beneath the damp and leafy floor
A veiled staircase winds,
Which leads you down to oaken door:
A seal of magic binds.

And when you knock the sleeping wake
To find themselves confined,
Then with a crack your bones they'll break
And feed an evil mind.

Bad Lands

Biting sands dance in fluid streams
Across the bare rock, polished into lustrous crags
Which stand entombed
Between the transcendent crests
Of mercurial dunes.

White barked branches reach out
To royal skies, whose gentle curving margin
Is distorted by tortuous waves
Of incalcescence,
Which draws all trace of water
From arid soils, and leaves roots
Shrivelled, longing for a drop
To quench their thirst.

Night Hunter

Soft pads alight and stalk,
Across a starlit night;
A subtle form that drifts
Unnoticed, from fence
To leafy floor.

A sound startles
Toned muscles tense;
Glowing eyes dart
From earth to sky, when
With a croak, out hops
A wandering toad –
Too late to find
Another road. Razor claws
Sink in and tear.

Soon after, a rough tongue
Cleans away the traces
Of that bloody encounter,
While a tail contented,
Traces sinuous waves
Into the dewy air.

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In a Mirror, Darkly

Reflected in a mirror black
In darkness waits a mime,
To copy life, then with a crack
Steal light and freeze in time.

A perfect copy from afar
Conceals the evil side,
That lurks behind a blackened scar
Where wicked thoughts reside.

In mirrors there it silent waits
Beneath the idle skin,
To trap and trace the unique traits
And fool on looking kin.

The muted host cannot escape
A night that's closing in,
As in its head thoughts change their shape
And fear begins to win.

Now pools of poison spread across
A shattered surface cold,
So that the sunlight feels the loss
Of life and tales untold.

This venom of consuming hate
Drips from the crumbling walls,
And in a moment seals its fate
As reigning fortune falls.

The victims clasped in cruel embrace
Draw in their final breath,
Now that the dark has won the race
All that remains is death.

Cold eyes of steel survey the land
Which sighs without a sound,
Where hope once played now monsters stand
And claim the icy ground.

No footsteps sound as slow they pace,
Beneath the roiling cloud,
From treads seeps death without a trace
As thunder crashes loud.

Compassion falls before the storm
And aching grief consumes,
The silent spoke as shadows form
Now that the time resumes.

The mimic slips from pane to mind
To stare through lightless eyes,
He leaves his broken cell behind
And starts to spread the lies.

When in a mirror, darkly stirs
The evil that's within
The sleeping wake an set their lures
To turn your soul to sin.

Remains

Intricate lines, embossed
Upon an ancient stone, mark
The passing of long dead lives,
Tempting the earth into
Weeping; her delicate residuum
Seeping into the hollows
Left in stony graves
To lay a trace and make
Each part anew.

Samsara

A wilting petal falls
Then drifting, rests
On cold and
Crumbling stone,
Pale flesh against
The rain-stained rock.
Thunderous drops roll
To gentle rest against
The silent earth,
Till each separate hollow
Fills, the rising serum
To lift the fading flower
From its slumber
And ride upon the
Waters, deathly cold.

The delicate bud
That fumbling fingers tore
To weave green stems
To dainty garlands,
Whose leafy fronds
Did perch upon
Some radiant brow.
They now adorn
The palling crests
Of fellow fare,
Who leave the shore
And feel the tug of those
Languid tides against
Their empty sighs.
Each beating heart
Now falters, fading fast
Beneath the running stream,
That flows above their cradles
Cold, and on to darkness,
Marked by ghostly bone.

Gathering Storm

Golden droplets roll
In silence, slow motion
To capture
Precious rays of celestial light
Which drip
Through dark and gathering
Clouds, whose deep voices
Sound against
The frozen land
And move the leaves
A-quiver,
While creatures flee
And hide.

But no shelter shields
From flashing claws
Which strike
Against the gasping Earth
And set a blaze
Amongst the ancient barks
Whose arms reach out
In wordless cries
To biting skies,
As hot tongues lick
Black scars
Across their once fair forms.

Waiting Game

Tap, tap, tap –
The high pitched beats
Rebel
Against the silence.

Air drawn in,
Held,
Then released
In slow exhalation
To fight
The growing tightness
Which claws at throat
And heart.

A minute fades
The tension with it ebbs,
Unnoticed,
To lurk in quiet veins.

Tap, tap, tap –
The sound again:
A cold claw, tempted forth
To touch
The dormant core
And rouse the intemperate
Demon, whose fire
Blazes red.

Justice

Through day and night
They stood tall,
With heads held aloft
They watched over.
Against terrors of the night
They defended us,
And took no rest
Until justice was served.

While we slept sound in our beds
They fought for us;
When their bodies begged for rest
They endured.
In those treasured moments
They laughed with us,
And when darkness closed in
They shone bright.

Now, no blade nor gnawing hunger
Will ravage them,
As fate holds out her hand
And beckons them.
We live on with the lives
They have won for us,
To welcome home the hearts
Who fell for us.

Although they were slain
We do not despair;
When our eyes sting with tears
We hold fast.
We will savour the times
That they spent with us,
And lay at rest
Now that justice is served.

The Journey Home

I tell a tale which spans across each age
And journeys on in space and on through time,
A mission to explore each unread page
Of endless worlds in old forgotten rhyme.

When all seems lost and hope is nearly gone
A glint of comfort here can still be found.
Inside, you have the strength to journey on
Hold up you head and soon be homeward bound.

You feel the years pass by without respite
And watch the world evolve from what you know,
Although you fight and try with all your might
Some places you can never seem to go.

And now the moment finally has come,
To live once more now that the battle's won.

Decree

Smooth strokes of black
Lay their mark
Upon paper;
Gold plated nib
To scratch a voice.
A gentle breeze from lips
To page,
The words now set
Sink in.
Two sharp folds, a seal
Is laid, to tell
All those who see:
This seal to break
When time allows, and
State the lord's decree.

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Spring Morn

Under golden glowing skies
Rest yet dormant blooms,
Bathed in the radiance
That shines so softly past
Clouds spun of crystals.

The beams glide over
An abeyant Earth,
Subtle warmth liberating
Each separate blossom
From gelidity's grip.

Viridian leaves unfurl, to clasp
At rays
Which dance dappled
Across their lush fronds,
And ignite a fire in hollow veins.

Lent Lily

Soft velvet folds
Hold aloft
A sunshine crown
Standing proud
In the bright spring morn
To greet the cloudless
Day, which welcomes
With a fond embrace
Of yet scarce warmth,
The prim narcissus
And tempts forth
Its gentle form, to glow
In aureate splendour.
Bright corona, mirror
The luminary orb of day,
To fill quiet meadows
With the radiance
Of approaching summer
And sway in languid spirals
With gentle breeze,
And many a golden bee.

Reflective commentary

The aim of the poems was mainly to focus on the details of a scene or object, and pick out the minute particulars which add another dimension to a description. This can be found in Shelley's 'Ozymandias' – 'wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command'¹ – which gives additional detail on top of previous, more general descriptions. In my own work I have used this technique to centre the reader's attention – 'Viridian leaves unfurl' – onto the words which emphasise the feeling of fragility in nature and life. I have also taken an overview of the scenario to compare the immense to the infinitesimal, and show the insignificance, and yet importance, of the parts that make up the whole.

The inspiration for the majority of works was the intricacies of both human society, such as its tendency to fight both against oppression and for a cause, and the processes occurring in the natural world – the drama created by storm, or the desolation of a desert landscape. These are topics that have been extensively written about, including 'There is another sky' by Emily Dickinson, which highlights the beauty in the world around us – 'In its unfading flowers/ I hear the bright bee hum:'² – a theme I have incorporated in many pieces.

Diction has also been an important factor in the composition of the section. I have made use of both demotic and more complex language such as that used in 'Lent Lily' – 'Bright corona, mirror/The luminary orb of day,' and 'With gentle breeze/ And many a golden bee.' In the first of these passages I included the word 'corona' after further research on the subject matter (a daffodil), discovering the horticultural terms for parts of the plant. I then used the OED to uncover the etymology, and connotations that the word may have once possessed. This use of etymology was something highlighted by contemporary poet R.F. Langley: 'I never write a poem without having etymological dictionaries around'³, and something that I have found useful in expanding the meaning of lines beyond the usual definition. This was in this case both the small circle of light appearing around the sun, and the crown like appendage found in such flowers. The second passage uses much more familiar language which displays the simple beauty that is accessible to all: the bright colours of the bee and the warmth of the spring and summer seasons associated with it.

While many of my poems are written in free verse, for some I decided to adhere to a strict rhyming scheme, as well as an iambic tetrameter/trimeter form, inspired by poems such as 'The Mewlips' by J.R.R. Tolkien.

The Shadows where the Mewlips dwell
Are dark and wet as ink,
And slow and softly rings their bell,
As in the slime you sink.⁴

I have used the quatrain to tell a story in several of my poems, including 'Dragon's hoard' and 'Dreamscape' which have an ethereal and mythical tone.

¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias' from *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012)

² Emily Dickinson, 'There is Another Sky' from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, (USA: Black Bay Books, 1976)

³ R.F. Langley, 'R.F. Langley Interviewed by R.F. Walker' in *Don't Start Me Talking: Interviews with Contemporary Poets* ed. Tim Allen and Andrew Duncan (Cambridge: Salt, 2006), pp.237-257.

⁴ J.R.R. Tolkien, 'The Mewlips' from *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975)

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The leafless branches creak and moan
In windless forests old,
And creeping ivy white as bone
Conceals a treasure cold.

This was also the form I decided on for 'In a Mirror, Darkly', originally in free verse. Changing it to this metre, which involved changes to the syntax, greatly improved the flow, while also accentuating the sinister theme in the rhythm.

'My Last Duchess' by Browning uses rhyming couplets, as well as utilizing dialogue and a first person narrator. This gives a light, almost comical tone, while simultaneously injecting a slight unease through the words of the speaker – 'Even had you skill/ In speech – (which I have not)'⁵. I used a similar technique in 'Swim with me' where there is extensive speech, and rhyming couplets which lift the mood, while the dialogue itself has a much darker tone – "In my crystal waters, you can rest in peace,/Just lie down and relax, your tears will soon cease." 'Man's Best Friend' is also set in rhyming couplets, but with rather different effect, to give a childlike tone, particularly with the repetition of the '-ay' sound in 'you two will play/ Until the day is played away'. For this I was influenced by the naïve sonnets of John Clare.

With free verse, the main challenge was the positioning of the line break. Inspiration came from 'Dear Bryan Wynter' by W.S. Graham, and his employment of enjambement:

This is only a note
To say how sorry I am
You died. You will realise⁶

This can have the effect of giving a word or phrase different meanings depending on how it is read, particularly the abrupt 'You died' which has a much greater impact split from the beginning of the sentence. This is something that I have used in 'Waiting game' to illustrate the tension growing with the stunted, cut off lines:

Tap, tap, tap
The high pitched beats
Rebel
Against the silence.

These assist in the reading aloud of the poem, something much more common in poetry compared to prose, disrupting the sentence structure by giving pauses to breathe that amplify the disjointed thoughts represented by the poem. After work-shopping the piece, I changed the positioning of the line breaks to achieve this effect, as the lines were previously much longer:

Tap, tap, tap
The high pitched beats rebel against the silence.

⁵ Robert Browning, 'My last Duchess' from *My Last Duchess and Other Poems* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993)

⁶ W.S Graham, 'Dear Bryan Winter' in *New Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 171.

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An example of change in response to feedback is in 'Bad lands'. The original draft contained the line 'malignant incalcesence' which when presented to the group was found to disrupt the flow of the poem, and as a result cloud the image that it was trying to enhance. Feedback centred on the use of 'malignant', as it hampered the flow of the stanza, without adding anything to it. As a result, I redrafted and changed the line to remove 'malignant', which helped to clarify the imagery of the line – the intense heat – which was confused by the unfamiliar language, while also moving on from the previous line more smoothly.

My main inspiration and influence for the radio play comes from BBC radio 4 weekday comedies, such as *Cabin Pressure* by John Finnemore, and *Bleak Expectations* by Mark Evans. Both have a small cast of characters who find themselves in various humorous situations each week. Other inspirations include *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas and *Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully* by Eddie Robson, both of which provided me with an idea of how to integrate sound effects into my radio play.

After receiving feedback on the draft, I decided to omit one of the early characters who only had very few lines and confused the plot as he had no real dramatic purpose. I also added cues such as ambience, which were not present in the first version, including **'SOUND OF HOOVES PASSING BY'** and **'FOOTSTEPS SOUND ON COBBLES'**, which give the listener a sense of setting and location, something that would be difficult to otherwise convey without exposition in character dialogue. These directions are also used to show the movement from one location to another, as was used in *Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully*: **'FX: SHOP DOORBELL. ONE OF ULJABAAN'S MINIONS ENTERS.'**⁷ to show the transition to a shop. The **'[MANY FOOTSTEPS. KEYS JINGLE. DOOR OPENS THEN CLOSES, BACKGROUND NOISE IS CUT OFF. CHAIRS PULLED OUT]'** has a similar effect in establishing a new location.

Other editing decisions, after putting on a performance to better assess the play, include the extension of the interview between the protagonists and Doctor, which gives the audience a greater insight into the minds of the characters: 'How fascinating, and if you don't mind me saying, your brain would make an excellent research specimen.' While adding an element of dry humour – 'I'll be sure to keep that in mind when drawing up my last will and testament' – something that is present in many radio series including *Bleak Expectations*:

Sir Philip Bin: His torture began in a low-key way.

Pip: This salmon is a little overdone.

Benevolent: Have some wine with it.

Pip: But this is red wine! With fish! You fiend!⁸

I also included some additional lines delivered by a newspaper seller in the opening: 'Read all about it! Body snatchers strike again. Read all about it.' These helped to set the scene immediately convey the theme to the audience, rather than remaining obscure until near the end. After receiving feedback I also weeded out anachronisms by changing 'guy' to 'fellow' and 'sure' to 'certainly', which are more faithful to the time in which the play is set.

The forms that I've chosen – poetry and radio play – have allowed me to explore the different ways of displaying the cycles of life and death. In my poems this has been through nature, with pieces such as 'New Dawn' and 'Gathering Storm' representative of this. The radio play

⁷ <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/scripts/welcometoourvillage.pdf> [Accessed: 4th April 2014]

⁸ <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Radio/BleakExpectations> [Accessed: 4th April 2014]

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demonstrates a more human, less philosophical, approach to mortality, through the use of corpses in medical science. I feel that, as a writer, it is my role to explore the fundamental elements of human existence.

Commentary word count: 1501

Creative pieces word count: 3203

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