

# **FLYING**

By Olga Mukhina

Translated by John Freedman

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*Author's Note: This text was created according to the principles of verbatim. That is, it is an entirely documentary play. It is sampled, so to speak, from 15 interviews. It contains not a single phrase of my own unless it is the odd stage direction or a simple explanatory phrase. Even the incident with the window and the dog is the whole truth and nothing but. Believe me. All of this is life, like rain in July; this wintery snow is for you.*

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MUKHINA.

## **M**

### **Snowstorm**

*A freelance DJ*

### **Blizzard**

*VJ and streetfighting man*

### **Maniac**

*Promoter and BASE jumper*

### **Volodya**

*Policeman*

## **W**

### **Snowflake**

*Brunette, a vamp and a TV star*

### **Lenochka**

*Blonde, cute, a media-planner*

### **Orangina**

*Redhead, a glamorous beauty, a designer*

### **Bushy-Tail**

*Light-brown hair, waitress, a beauty, a virgin*

Television studio employees, journalists, café clients, guests at the home of Maniac, people on the street, soldiers, dancers, "Yo-Yo" the pet dog.

**PART ONE**

**FEAR**

*A large office at the BCH television studio flooded with light.*

*The BCH initials are on everything. Five people sit at five computers. Maniac, who is a tall, handsome blond, Orangina, Snowflake, Lenchka and Blizzard, a psychedelic-trance star and a charming, short-statured young man of about 26 with the face of a child and child-like eyes to match. All of them are at work. There is a sixth - a young man also of about 26 with the pale face of a cherub, as if he were created to give women insomnia. He sits on a sofa, wears large silver headphones and leafs through a magazine. A small yellow case stands at his feet. He occasionally puts down the magazine and moves about the room, dancing and looking around. This is his first visit here - he is a stranger. All are dressed in black or dark blue tight-fitting clothes. Only Orangina wears orange. Lenchka wears a T-shirt emblazoned with the text, "Fuck Face Control," and she has a big, black eye. She constantly looks at it in her mirror, touches up her make-up, powders the shiner and brushes it with toner. Snowflake wears a black blouse printed with "Sin" in red letters. The red straps of her bra occasionally slip seductively off her shoulders. Snowflake takes tranquilizers three times a day and so is always very calm.*

*Music plays. People come and go, bringing things in, taking things out. The five sign papers. Maniac stamps official documents, draws something, leafs through glossy magazines. It is as though all of them have stepped out of one of these magazines - they are young, hip and attractive. Someone fiddles with computer or stereo wires; someone else is looking through compact discs. Maniac counts money. Someone wipes off a camera lens. Someone watches television; someone looks at a computer monitor. On some computer monitors we see the faces of Snowflake and Blizzard - their faces are also on magazine covers and advertising posters. On one of the computer screens we see the words of the TV station's slogan running continually: "No Fear in Love." Someone smokes in the corridor and peeks in the door. The teapot whistles;*

*someone is making tea, someone else - coffee. Someone is sitting beneath a palm tree, others beneath an aquarium. A big gold fish swims in the aquarium. Some people are tired, others are sad and stare thoughtfully out the window. Outside the window there is snow, life, sun, blue clouds, cafes, cars, bustling people in scarves and winter hats.*

**MANIAC**

The sensation reminds you of fear. You feel it between your solar plexus and your neck. Somewhere in the chest. You know it because you feel the desire to touch. You physically want to touch someone. To see, to hear, to smile and to be embarrassed.

**BLIZZARD**

It's a chemical reaction.

**MANIAC**

Nobody can define why it happens at this very moment with this specific person. Every telephone ring sets you on fire, every time you go out you hope you will see them.

**SNOWFLAKE**

Nobody knows the secret.

**LENOCHKA**

The meeting of two parallel lines.

**BLIZZARD**

Nobody knows why it disappears.

**ORANGINA**

You try to get it back, but it's not the same.

*They work silently. It's obvious they've been working together forever; they're a tight-knit, well-oiled crew, as if they are relatives or a band of small monkeys. They are constantly in motion, never sitting still, always doing something and they have no idea they are being observed. Maniac likes Snowflake but Snowflake has all kinds of affairs going. She considers Maniac a friend. Blizzard is smitten with Orangina, he directs his every word at her. She pretends not to notice; she likes Snowstorm. In fact, all the girls like Snowstorm, although maybe that's only true because he's the newest one here - they all*

*want to be the first one to win him. Lenchka has a husband; he's the one who gave her the black eye. She likes Snowstorm, too, but she is mortified because the shiner has made her less beautiful than she really is. All of them are extremely attractive; you want to look at them, to be next to them, to be their friends, to fall in love with them. Something about them gives off warmth, contentment, tranquility and a physical sense of pleasure.*

**BLIZZARD**

I had a girlfriend, a ballerina, and we used to buy things in pairs - unisex. That way both of you can always wear the same things.

**LENOCHKA**

It's that easy?

**BLIZZARD**

Not really. When she dumped me she took everything. Even the sheets. When I tried to stop her she hit me on the head with a chair.

**SNOWFLAKE**

She was absolutely firm in her decision.

**BLIZZARD**

The whole hall was bloody.

**MANIAC**

Did she find somebody else?

**BLIZZARD**

You know how girls do it.

**ORANGINA**

How?

**BLIZZARD**

To get rid of one guy they find a third they go live with and then they dump him. They just keep crab-legging it from guy to guy until they find what they want.

**MANIAC**

I asked a friend today if you can just walk up to a woman you like and put your head on her shoulder. He said you can.

**BLIZZARD**

Basically, that's what everybody does.

*Maniac goes to Snowflake and puts his head on her shoulder. Snowflake smiles and washes a tablet of some kind down with a drink of water.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

I finally decided today. I'm not going to love anybody anymore.

**ORANGINA**

Why's that?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I can't love anybody if they don't love me.

**MANIAC**

I can't either.

**SNOWFLAKE**

I'm only going to love when somebody loves me.

**LENOCHKA**

I feel this hatred welling up in me. Instantly. I don't know what it is.

**SNOWFLAKE**

I know exactly what you mean. And I'm perfectly aware of it as it happens.

**MANIAC**

It's the ego.

**SNOWFLAKE**

But that's what my love is like.

**LENOCHKA**

If I see somebody's getting frustrated with me, that's it. It's all over. The love boat has landed. On the rocks.

**SNOWFLAKE**

I know it sounds awful, like somebody handing down an irreversible verdict. It's not very Russian and it's not very

feminine - but these mood swings have just become a part of my life.

*They work silently. Someone sighs, someone eats something, someone drinks something, someone goes out, another comes in, someone forgot something and came back in before going back out.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

I was walking down the street today and on the corner when I turned in from the left side, right there on that spot, I promised myself - this is it. I'm crossing out love and I'm never going to love alone again.

**LENOCHKA**

Yeah, let's put an end to solitaire love.

**ORANGINA**

What's he say about it?

**SNOWFLAKE**

He says, "Your skin drives me wild! Show me another man who can love you more than I do!"

**LENA**

How's that for an equation?

**MANIAC**

Yeah, but he doesn't know you're toying with him -

**SNOWFLAKE**

Is that what I'm doing?

**MANIAC**

Well, yeah -

**ORANGINA**

I need him, I need him not; I love him, I love him not

**BLIZZARD**

Good in the evening, bad in the morning

**ORANGINA**

Or the other way around

**SNOWFLAKE**

You know what he says to me? A thousand years ago people like me were burned at the stake

**SNOWSTORM**

Snowflake, that's a compliment

**SNOWFLAKE**

It is?

**BLIZZARD**

A hundred years ago you would have been stoned

**ORANGINA**

Poor women

**SNOWFLAKE**

I don't care what you say; I think women are an incredibly deprived lot

**BLIZZARD**

I mean, women have fear instilled in them from childhood

**SNOWFLAKE**

I mean, it's men that are afraid of women

**ORANGINA**

I mean, everybody's afraid of everybody

**MANIAC**

I mean, everybody's just afraid of fear

**LENOCHKA**

I'm afraid of darkness, maniacs, the cold, germs, snakes, spiders, heights, fast cars, policemen, guards, face-control, rude people, dogs, men and random sex

*Orangina looks out the window, beyond which another window is visible, as well as the window of a café, a really pleasant place where it smells of coffee and a waitress's hands are cleaning off a table and emptying ashtrays. A handsome young man named Volodya is drinking espresso and talking about something as he cracks and eats pistachios. The waitress, Bushy-Tail, looks like Twiggy. She has huge eyes, a smart little blue dress, long legs, a white apron and a chic, tidy hair-do. She is always smiling, humbly and modestly.*



**VOLODYA**

I think about women a lot. I think about them constantly. In fact, I don't think about women in the plural, but about one woman, one single woman. Of all the women I've ever met, I know not one could ever become my other half.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Why not?

**VOLODYA**

Ah, for one reason or another. When people come together - it's a whole science.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What about when they break up?

**VOLODYA**

No one person is ever to blame for breaking up. It's nobody's fault. It's just two puzzle pieces that don't fit.

*Volodya sips his coffee. Bushy-Tail leaves. Volodya is silent. Looks at her. Waits for her to come back. Looks out the window. Sees Orangina looking out her window but he doesn't know her name. Bushy-Tail returns, replaces his ashtray.*

I've always been attracted to unhinged women, I guess you could say. I mean, the kind of girls who know how to stick up for themselves, the kind that can really stick it to you. But I've always wanted someone defenseless and fragile so that she'd be the kind I'd be able to protect and take care of.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Can you do that?

**VOLODYA**

You know, I never leave anyone in the lurch. Anybody's secrets are safe with me. If you ever end up on an uninhabited island with me - you won't go hungry.

*The office. People are coming and going. The group of six is constantly surrounded by a crowd of faceless people. Five of them are working. Snowstorm is always up and dancing. Somebody sighs. Lenchka puts make-up on her eyes. Somebody's looking at the clock; somebody's washing their hands. Snowflake sprays on*

*some perfume. Somebody's cleaning their desk,  
somebody's putting something on, somebody's taking  
something off, somebody's getting ready to go  
somewhere.*

**LENOCHKA**

I think women are made purely for decoration

**ORANGINA**

*(Taking Snowstorm's photo)* Those are just childish illusions

**LENOCHKA**

Why did people invent Faberge eggs or Feng Shui?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I would really like to settle down. Become soft, calm and caring. But I'm so sensitive. I like it when people care for me

**MANIAC**

People ask God for love even though they haven't the vaguest notion what it is. What a nightmare.

**LENOCHKA**

I'm afraid of falling in love

**BLIZZARD**

Why?

**LENOCHKA**

I can't. I'm married

**ORANGINA**

I fall in love once a year

**SNOWFLAKE**

I never do

**BLIZZARD**

Being in love should be more controllable the older you get. But

-

**ORANGINA**

Whenever I fall in love I am all nerves

**MANIAC**

Love is a damned psychosis. Last fall I liked this one girl so much my knees went weak. I prayed to God, "Lord, bring her back

to me. Bring her back." And what do you think happened? What came of all that? Six months of nagging ailments.

**LENOCHKA**

*(Reading from a book)* An obsessive thought of a yellow-black aura evoked by the constant reconsideration of a certain individual of the opposite sex

**SNOWFLAKE**

All you have to do is redirect the energies of love

**LENOCHKA**

The older you get, the less there are

**BLIZZARD**

Love is destiny putting you to the test

**MANIAC**

It's destiny having a systems failure

*The café. People are coming and going. Music plays against the sound of tinkling forks, plates, knives, glasses, cups and saucers. It smells of cinnamon, honey and hot apple cider.*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Are you married?

**VOLODYA**

No.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Why not?

**VOLODYA**

I had a girlfriend. She was a ballerina. I had really strong feelings for her. They still surface at times. Like a time bomb or something. We used to meet in corridors and dark corners, there was never anything official about it like I would have liked. She always denied it all and she begged me never to tell anyone about us. "If you tell anybody, I'll kill you," she used to say. That's the kind of girl she was

*Through the big window the six are seen leaving their office and going out onto the street. One breathes in the fresh air, another lights a cigarette and stands looking around with satisfaction. Snowstorm forgot*

*something and goes back inside. Everyone waits. The girls are beautiful and flirtatious and they look towards the window of the café. Snowstorm returns with a yellow suitcase. Everyone waves their arms in different directions; they can't come to a consensus about where to go. Big snowflakes fall on them all. Someone is cold, others are not. Someone goes back in for a hat or a scarf. Others fumble as they put on gloves or mittens, taking them off, dropping them, picking them up as they cross the street while others catch up with them. One tries to hold another's hand, but the hand is pulled back before it can be clasped. Someone pulls up a collar or a hood; someone puts on glasses. They laugh.*

And then this guy shows up in a white Lexus. Makes a ton of money a month, all real cool-like. A DJ or something. Talk about being outgunned. I tried to make her see sense, tell her it was just a fling, but people don't hear anything at moments like that. So she packed up her bags and she was gone. I even wanted to marry her. But it turned out she didn't love me.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Why not?

**VOLODYA**

I don't know. Probably because she was afraid of ruining her reputation.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What's that supposed to mean?

*The six enter the café, which is packed and noisy. They shake snow off their coats as they remove them. It seems they are endlessly taking things off, coats, scarves, hats, gloves, mittens, until they finally get down to their beautiful, bared shoulders, bare midriffs and thighs. They take seats, read the menu, someone walks by, someone else recognizes someone and waves, someone moves in front of someone, somebody makes room for somebody else who couldn't find a seat, somebody scoots over, others bring a chair, while others move over to a table by the window and people exchange seats. Someone recognizes Snowflake and Blizzard and points a finger at them. Someone opens his mouth...*

**MANIAC**

When you start looking for things in love, there's nothing left to find

**BLIZZARD**

What's dangerous is sudden moves

**LENOCHKA**

Why?

**MANIAC**

Because then the search is expanded. And there's a whole universe out there. Whatever you want to find is out there to be found.

**BLIZZARD**

It all happens suddenly. You don't have time to think. Any person with brains figures that out sooner or later

**LENOCHKA**

Love dies anyway

**ORANGINA**

And so fast

**LENOCHKA**

But why?

**MANIAC**

Because whatever it is, it's already been done

**LENOCHKA**

Who?

**MANIAC**

Who? Partners. Lovers. People. A human. One, two

**BLIZZARD**

It all comes down to sex

**MANIAC**

Is that before you know it's love or after?

**SNOWFLAKE**

And you've got to have education of some kind

**SNOWSTORM**

At least elementary

**BLIZZARD**

Basically it's a very difficult thing, all these physical signs

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Approaches with a notepad and pen)* Whiskey? Tequila? Two whiskeys and one tequila? One? One whiskey and two tequilas? Gold or silver?

**MANIAC**

*(To Snowflake)* What're you gonna have? To drink?

**LENOCHKA**

If a woman takes the time to answer, then she's already said "yes" to everything he has in mind. And that's all there is to it. It's horrible. There's nothing more horrible than that. A random affair in the making.

**BLIZZARD**

That's what destroys our youth

**MANIAC**

If only

**SNOWFLAKE**

Carrot juice

**ORANGINA**

And orange juice

**MANIAC**

I suggest a compromise

**BUSHY-TAIL**

A carrot-orange cocktail?

**MANIAC**

And a salad of some kind

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What kind?

**MANIAC**

Herbs

And herbal tea  
**LENOCHKA**

Green tea  
**BLIZZARD**

With jasmine?  
**BUSHY-TAIL**

And orange pekoe  
**SNOWFLAKE**

I need a vitamin boost  
**BLIZZARD**

And dessert  
**SNOWFLAKE**

Make that two  
**ORANGINA**

I don't know what I want  
**SNOWSTORM**

The fish plate's good  
**BUSHY-TAIL**

I hate fish  
**SNOWSTORM**

It's very good  
**BUSHY-TAIL**

**BLIZZARD**  
(Takes Bushy-Tail by the hand) If it's not will you have dinner with me?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Try it

**SNOWSTORM**

I'll chance it

*Volodya puts on his coat and scarf, all the while keeping a close eye on Bushy-Tail, no matter where she goes. He casts a suspicious glance at Blizzard, waves to Bushy-Tail, pointing to his watch. She nods back at*

*him, as if sharing with him something only they know. Volodya goes out into the snowstorm on the street. The café is filled with music, the television is tuned to BCH, on which the TV star Snowflake is seen reporting the news but without sound.*

You're a lot more elegant in real life than on screen

**SNOWFLAKE**

The screen adds twelve pounds

**LENOCHKA**

Really? I didn't know that

**SNOWFLAKE**

Do you like my eyebrows?

**ORANGINA**

*(Taking Snowflake's picture)* Oh, yes

**LENOCHKA**

I bought some new boots

**MANIAC**

I want some just like that. Do they have big sizes?

**LENOCHKA**

I'll ask if you want

**ORANGINA**

*(Smelling Snowflake)* I just love the way you smell

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(Her cell phone rings with the melody from "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg." She doesn't answer it.)* With his love he pours molten copper over my head

**MANIAC**

If you aren't part of the solution, you're part of the problem

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Here's your fish plate

**BLIZZARD**

Why don't you join us?



**BUSHY-TAIL**

You haven't even tried it yet

**SNOWSTORM**

The smell alone is making me sick to my stomach

**BLIZZARD**

I love fish

**SNOWSTORM**

What's your name?

**MANIAC**

Her name's Bushy-Tail

*A small book of some kind falls out of Bushy-Tail's apron. Orangina picks it up.*

**ORANGINA**

*(Photographing first the book and then Bushy-Tail)* What are you reading?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

A biology textbook. I want to be a doctor

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(Gagging)* Are you kidding?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Why?

**MANIAC**

You're too beautiful

**BLIZZARD**

Order something for yourself

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Another time

**MANIAC**

I'll take care of this

**BLIZZARD**

Tell me, Bushy-Tail, what do you love more than anything on earth?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Macaroni and cheese

**BLIZZARD**

Is that bizarre? I do too.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

And boiled onions

**BLIZZARD**

You're joking

**BUSHY-TAIL**

No, it's true

**BLIZZARD**

I thought I was the only person on earth who loved boiled onions

*Bushy-Tail leaves, clears something from the table, brings back another order, is always efficient and on time with everything. She seems to be everywhere at once. People are walking all around. Blizzard is seen on the TV screen.*

**SNOWSTORM**

Do you have the sensation that the world revolves around you?

**BLIZZARD**

Non-stop almost

**ORANGINA**

And that everything around us is a lie?

**BLIZZARD**

I have the feeling people confuse the truth for what it's not

**SNOWFLAKE**

She really is a pretty girl

**ORANGINA**

She has such delicate wrists, slender ankles and such an androgynous figure

**BUSHY-TAIL**

(Appears) What kind of figure?

**LENOCHKA**

Two huge eyes

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I've never considered myself pretty. Not for five minutes

**ORANGINA**

You could be a trend-setter

**SNOWFLAKE**

God wanted to make her a handsome boy

**SNOWSTORM**

But changed his mind at the last minute

**MANIAC**

Come on, Bushy-Tail, have a drink with us

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Speaks and disappears)* I don't drink or smoke

**LENOCHKA**

*(To Snowflake)* Did you quit smoking?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I never smoked to begin with

**ORANGINA**

You don't know how lucky you are

**SNOWFLAKE**

I have lots of other flaws

**BLIZZARD**

*(To Bushy-Tail)* Where do people like you come from?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Appearing)* The Far North

**LENOCHKA**

Just what I thought for some reason

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Where are you from?

**MANIAC**

The eternal question - whence have we come?

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's because she's so natural, sincere and photogenic

**ORANGINA**

How old are you, Bushy-Tail?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Me? I'm seventeen. What about you?

**ORANGINA**

Me? I think I'm twenty-five. I don't remember

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(Hands Bushy-Tail a business card)* Call me this evening

**BLIZZARD**

Don't be afraid

**ORANGINA**

BCH

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What's that?

**BLIZZARD**

Don't you watch television?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

No

**SNOWFLAKE**

"Love Knows no Fear"

**BLIZZARD**

Definitely give it a watch

*Outside. Volodya walks along the street looking in shop windows, shivering from the cold. He stops in a store, shakes the snow off his shoulders, looks over the men's clothing then moves on to look at the women's clothing. Looks at the hats, tries on one, another, a third, standing before the mirror, gazing at himself from all possible angles. Takes off the hat, puts it back in its place and walks back out onto the street.*

*In the café it's warm. Someone is even dancing;  
someone has walked away, another has returned. Someone  
is still eating, someone is drinking. Snowflake reads  
a book, Snowstorm drinks whiskey on ice, smokes and  
people watches.*

**SNOWSTORM**

I was totally phased out by helplessness, uselessness, moneylessness - I left my wife. I went to another city to live with a friend. I wasn't doing anything at the time, just playing some music, writing some poetry, and I remember how everything just came crashing down on me. I was writing these really gruesome, depressing poems with suicidal overtones. They came under the title of "Me Searching for Glory." They were about this guy lying in a bathtub who slits his wrists and realizes that the only thing tying him to the real world is his girlfriend who he really loves and empathizes with. These poems were colored by the dramatic experiences of a friend of mine - he'd split up with his girlfriend, too. She was a ballerina. And the last line went like this:

She'll return to me, of course,  
Some other Monday morn.  
But today the end is my goal.  
A knife is my compass,  
My heart is my atlas.

And then it all ends with a lot of howling. The only things I had to my name were a towel, three books, forty rubles and 200 records. Two hundred records was the sum of my life. That's the exalted state I lived in at the time. I was a genuine maniac. A maniac of despair.

**MANIAC**

*(Peering over Snowflake's shoulder)* What are you reading?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I'm rereading Nabokov.

**MANIAC**

You break my heart. That's my favorite writer.

**LENOCHKA**

So what do you do when you're not working?

**MANIAC**

I swim. That's why I have big shoulders

**ORANGINA**

That's beautiful (*Takes Maniac's photo.*)

**BLIZZARD**

I like track and field, myself

**LENOCHKA**

You run fast?

**BLIZZARD**

I wanted to run to the sun when I was a kid

**MANIAC**

What is that food you're eating?

**BLIZZARD**

Bread, mushrooms and cheese

**MANIAC**

I've got greens of some sort

**LENOCHKA**

Vitamins

**MANIAC**

I wonder who the first guy to eat greens was

**LENOCHKA**

Our neighbors used to complain to my mother that I sniffed the grass

**SNOWFLAKE**

You get in trouble?

**LENOCHKA**

She says, what do you sniff grass for?

**MANIAC**

Really

**SNOWSTORM**

My mom still has no idea that I smoke and use psychotropics

**BLIZZARD**

Is that already a beer you're drinking?

**SNOWSTORM**

Beer and coffee

**LENOCHKA**

Ooh, yuck

**MANIAC**

What are your blinies with?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Kiwi and strawberries

**LENOCHKA**

Mine are with chocolate

**ORANGINA**

Mine are with honey and lemon juice

**SNOWSTORM**

Don't non-conformists live well?

**MANIAC**

But we die young

*Volodya walks along the street outside, stops in front of a woman's lingerie store, goes inside, warms up his hands, looks at his watch, gets embarrassed, leaves, goes back in the opposite direction, enters the previous store, tries on hats again - one, another, a third. Finally chooses one and buys it, puts it on and goes back out on the street.*

*In the café the six pay their bill and prepare to leave. Someone washes his hands, others endlessly keep putting things on while somebody helps someone else put something on.*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Looking over the business card. To Orangina, who takes her picture) What do you do?*

**ORANGINA**

I'm a designer. I make everything beautiful. You know how that is?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Nodding in the direction of Maniac) What about him?*

**MANIAC**

I have the luxury of doing nothing whatsoever at the moment.  
Sometimes my friend and I (*embraces Blizzard*) hire prostitutes  
and we film it on video

*Blizzard gags. Bushy-Tail's eyes get real big.  
Orangina takes advantage of the moment and photographs  
it.*

**LENOCHKA**

Ooh, yuck

**SNOWFLAKE**

That's his stupid idea of a joke

**BLIZZARD**

Want some chewing gum?

**LENOCHKA**

Is it strawberry?

**ORANGINA**

My favorite

**SNOWFLAKE**

My perfume is strawberry

**SNOWSTORM**

I've been wondering how come it smells so sweetly of  
strawberries

**LENOCHKA**

*(Takes the chewing gum from Blizzard's hand and then takes his  
hand in hers)* What an interesting hand. Now, now, now, now, now  
- let's look at this in the light

**MANIAC**

What about me?

**SNOWSTORM**

Do you believe in palm readings?

**MANIAC**

Tell my fortune



**BLIZZARD**

What do you see?

**MANIAC**

What are you looking so hard for there?

**SNOWSTORM**

Careful, Lena. He's jumpy

**LENOCHKA**

You have a very strange life line

**BLIZZARD**

Why?

**LENOCHKA**

Because it breaks off

**BLIZZARD**

Okay -

**SNOWSTORM**

So now you live on with the weight of this painful paranoia hanging over you

**MANIAC**

How much time does he have left?

**LENOCHKA**

You have about -

**MANIAC**

The years are numbered

**BLIZZARD**

*(Pulls his hand away, hugs it to him)* Knock it off. I don't want to know.

**LENOCHKA**

I realize, you probably shouldn't do that

**SNOWFLAKE**

That's serious stuff

**ORANGINA**

You have a beautiful T-shirt. What's that written on it?

**LENOCHKA**

Angels don't weep

**ORANGINA**

What about yours?

**SNOWSTORM**

Masturbating is no crime

**MANIAC**

What do you think?

**ORANGINA**

I think it's a sin

*Snowstorm has left, but he comes back.*

**SNOWSTORM**

I forgot my case

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I thought I saw someone forgot a case

**SNOWSTORM**

*(Picking up his case)* That was me

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(To Snowstorm)* I forgot, what's your name?

**SNOWSTORM**

Blizzard

**BLIZZARD**

Blizzard - that's me. He's Snowstorm. "There once lived two fine friends - Snowstorm and Blizzard." You know that song?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

No

**BLIZZARD**

That's about us. He wrote the lyrics. I wrote the music

**SNOWSTORM**

But we'll sing that for you another time

**BUSHY-TAIL**

How come you have such funny names?

**MANIAC**

Because they're homosexuals

**BLIZZARD**

He's joking

**SNOWSTORM**

Does that bother you?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I don't care

**SNOWSTORM**

Somebody gimme a smoke

**BLIZZARD**

Here

**MANIAC**

You like to dominate?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Remaining alone. Looks over the business card) In the Far North there's never anything to do. There's nothing except theater. And in the Far North women really dress up beautifully to go the theater. It's not like here. People here just wear whatever they wore to work when they come to the theater. Where I come from, women put on evening gowns and jewelry, and they never fail to put on heels. When you walk to the theater the fresh sea air comes in and it smells like fresh-cut cucumbers. That means the fishermen are beginning to sell their day's catch of smelt - that's a kind of fish. It smells like fresh cucumbers.*

*The six are out on the street. They head in the direction of the office, slowly, deliberately, taking their time, chewing their gum, looking around, sometimes just stopping and standing there. Once again, someone forgot something, so they went back to get it. Someone puts on glasses, someone else takes something off and asks another to try it on. They exchange clothing and laugh, looking at their reflections in storefront windows and car windshields. Someone pulls out a make-up case, someone else steps off to the side and talks on their cell phone.*

**SNOWSTORM**

Unlike you I simply have no talent for talking to women. For  
some reason I start lying immediately

**BLIZZARD**

You just have to think that they have nothing you want

**SNOWSTORM**

But that's not true

**MANIAC**

Just pretend it is

**BLIZZARD**

Coffee, ice cream with mint and don't look 'em in the eye

**SNOWSTORM**

I do just the opposite. I look deep into their eyes

**BLIZZARD**

She'll think, "how come he's not looking at me"

**MANIAC**

You look at 'em later

**SNOWSTORM**

I made a date for dinner with this one girl. I call her up and  
confirm and then I come to pick her up and call her and she  
hangs up on me

**MANIAC**

What the hell are you confirming? Dinner dates aren't office  
jobs, you know

**BLIZZARD**

Did you talk to her about love?

**SNOWSTORM**

What's there to say about love on the phone?

**LENOCHKA**

Women don't accept commands

**ORANGINA**

Women only understand presents and aromas

**MANIAC**

Women have to listen to everything all the time, to convince themselves and others that they are wanted 24/7. That used to be done by letters, now it's telephones and text messages

**BLIZZARD**

People have started hiding behind text messages

**MANIAC**

Orgasm. Sex only in words, only in text messages. Without that you've got a temper tantrum

**BLIZZARD**

Her underwear didn't match her eyes

**MANIAC**

And she already wore that dress last time

**BLIZZARD**

To another restaurant

**MANIAC**

And not with him

**LENOCHKA**

You are exceedingly cynical

**MANIAC**

I can't deny what's true

*They ascend in a transparent glass elevator, shake off the snow, take off their gloves, mittens, caps, and scarves and wipe off their foggy glasses.*

**LENOCHKA**

Sex for men is a sport

**MANIAC**

The kind of sex where you go and come - that strikes me as something savage. You kind of want something more

**ORANGINA**

Everyone dreams of happiness

**MANIAC**

Or of sex

**SNOWFLAKE**

Is there anything sacred in your life, Maniac?

**MANIAC**

No. You can't serve God and mammon. You can't sit on two chairs at once

**LENOCHKA**

Snowstorm, are you married?

**SNOWSTORM**

No

**LENOCHKA**

Why not?

**MANIAC**

When the evaluations begin - all these "are you married, I'm not married" - that's it. From there on even the slightest minus becomes a huge tragedy. Everything should be absolutely ideal

**SNOWSTORM**

I've got some numbers in my cell phone belonging to girls who send me messages sometimes. Most of them are exes, women I've been involved with. Sometimes I have sex with them

**BLIZZARD**

It can happen to anyone

**ORANGINA**

But not everyone

**BLIZZARD**

Sometimes it's really hard to jive different sex drives

**ORANGINA**

You've got to understand them to do that

*The café. Volodya drinks an espresso. Bushy-Tail eats pistachios out of his bowl.*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

So what was she afraid of? You were telling

**VOLODYA**

She was ashamed of me because she said I was just a sergeant

**BUSHY-TAIL**

(Impressed) You're a sergeant?

**VOLODYA**

First I was a junior sergeant. Then, after 14 days, I made senior sergeant

**BUSHY-TAIL**

That fast?

**VOLODYA**

For service to my country. When I was out on a mission. True, they wanted to discharge me later, 'cause I wasn't the only one who got a promotion. We were out celebrating that. And nobody ever celebrated big events like that without me. I ripped off my stripes and I said, leave me alone - I'll just be a regular soldier. But they changed their minds later. Before the army I studied agriculture in college.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Isn't that something

*The office. People walk around and leave. Five people sit at five desks, working at their computers. Snowstorm keeps dancing. He's wearing silver headphones. People are drinking coffee and tea, others feed the gold fish. Snowflake and Blizzard are having their make-up done. Orangina takes photos as someone is hooking wires up to something. Maniac signs pieces of paper as others come and go.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

If a man and a woman come to an agreement, then, yes, mutual understanding of some kind is possible

**MANIAC**

Nobody understands anybody. Everybody only understands their own desires

**BLIZZARD**

Eat, drink and sleep

**SNOWSTORM**

It's hard for anyone to see beyond the end of his own nose

**LENOCHKA**

The only thing anyone knows well is what he wants

**SNOWFLAKE**

If someone can clearly define his desire, then something may come of it

**MANIAC**

What if he wants sex? Does he get it?

**SNOWFLAKE**

What if he wants a fairy tale?

**LENOCHKA**

Rules are what we want

**SNOWFLAKE**

We don't do things by consensus, we just follow our feelings

**LENOCHKA**

Irrationality is a woman's only logic

**BLIZZARD**

(*To Orangina*) Admit it. That's true

**MANIAC**

Let's go to my place and watch a movie

**LENOCHKA**

That's the second "yes" a woman says: If a woman agrees to go to the movies, then that's all she wrote

**MANIAC**

If only

**BLIZZARD**

For love a woman must have three things

**SNOWFLAKE**

What?

**BLIZZARD**

First, a stopwatch

**LENOCHKA**

Why's that?

**BLIZZARD**

So as not to open her mouth for more than six seconds



**MANIAC**

Forget all that la-la-la bla-bla-bla chicky-chicky sis-boom-bah

**BLIZZARD**

Remember: you have only six seconds. Men understand only short, unambiguous commands

**MANIAC**

And don't back a man into a corner

**BLIZZARD**

Family life is just like life on the job. Right-left, gimme your hand, sit, when, how much, and where. Wednesday evening, Tuesday. I can make it Wednesday, Wednesday at five, all right

**LENOCHKA**

What's the second?

**BLIZZARD**

The second is a black belt

**SNOWFLAKE**

Karate?

**BLIZZARD**

A classic black belt

**ORANGINA**

What's the third?

**MANIAC**

The third is that there is only one foreign language. And you have to learn it

**BLIZZARD**

That language is called the male language. You have to learn to speak to men in their own language

**LENOCHKA**

How do you learn it?

**BLIZZARD**

You simply have to forget Russian. And learn three phrases. These three phrases are very difficult to pronounce. (*Counts off on his fingers.*) I'll wait for you. I love you. I kiss you. And then in the opposite order. Kiss you. Love you. Waiting for you.

**MANIAC**

And no philosophical, psychological or religious conversations

**LENOCHKA**

Why not?

**MANIAC**

It's forbidden

**BLIZZARD**

One way or another, they lead to fights

**LENOCHKA**

What do you talk about then?

**MANIAC**

You have to understand each other without words

**SNOWFLAKE**

But understanding is very difficult

**MANIAC**

There's a lot of zeroes on the end

**SNOWFLAKE**

A man and a woman can understand each other on an animalistic level, that they want each other, that they want tenderness and understanding

**LENOCHKA**

They themselves don't know what that means

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's all very mystifying

*Bushy-Tail and Volodya walk down the street.*

**VOLODYA**

I was christened when I was sixteen years old. I was big. I believe everything that has anything to do with God. Do you?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Yes, I do believe

**VOLODYA**

I went into the army and I had this cross. I lost it in combat training. I lost my cross. Basically all we did was beat each other's faces in. And then a week later at five in the morning we get into formation in the yard in full combat dress and they do the roll call and say, "You're going to Chechnya." You don't question orders. On the runway at the airport this guy approached us. He says, "You guys are going on a mission and I've got crosses for you. Only I don't have enough for everybody." It goes without saying that I didn't get one. There were 54 of us. We didn't have enough ammunition to go around. Naturally, there wasn't enough for me. They passed me over. But all I could think of is that I didn't have a cross. And with no ammo all that stuff just starts to overwhelm you. Bad, bad thoughts.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

How could you not have ammunition?

**VOLODYA**

They gave me some later. Later on there was plenty of everything. One day we were cleaning out one house. It was obvious Russians lived there. There was a small icon right where you'd expect one to be in the corner of the room. The place looked like a hurricane hit it. We went in, looked around and I sat down on a chair. I felt something poking me underneath. I stood up and looked and there was this cross lying there. So, you see? I found one. I haven't taken it off since.

**BUSHY-TAIL**

They say you shouldn't wear someone else's cross.

**VOLODYA**

Yeah, I've heard that; about taking on somebody else's sins. But I found that one there and I've had no problem. After that luck was on my side. A grenade blew up three feet from me and I didn't have a scratch. I don't know if that was a fluke or what. Everybody thought I was dead meat but it didn't even touch me. Except I went deaf for awhile. Not a scratch. And now I've met you.

*Volodya and Bushy-Tail stand at the entrance to her apartment building. Bushy-Tail says goodbye and goes in. Volodya continues to stand there as if he's waiting for something.*

*The six stand in a parking lot. Snow is falling and all of them are gesturing in different directions as they discuss who will ride with whom in whose car. Everyone approaches his or her own car. Maniac invites everyone to pile into his; Blizzard invites all to join him in his. The women laugh as they decide which car to get in and the men try pulling them in their direction. Blizzard and Maniac clean the snow off their cars. Maniac's car is red, Blizzard's is white. The doors are now open, music can be heard from the cars and everybody is dancing in the snow as they wait for the engines to warm up. It emerges that Maniac's car is an Alpha-Romeo, Blizzard's is a Lexus. Snowflake and Lenchka get into the Alpha-Romeo, Orangina and Snowstorm get into the back seat of the Lexus. They drive off.*

*Bushy-Tail's apartment. Bushy-Tail pulls a box out of her closet - in it is a new pair of black shoes, a white dress and fancy earrings. She looks over Snowflake's business card. Makes a telephone call. Somewhere on the other end of the city the music from The Umbrellas of Cherbourg can be heard.*

*The Lexus. Blizzard, Snowstorm and Orangina.*

**BLIZZARD**

*(Turning up the music) What do you think of this?*

**ORANGINA**

*I like it*

**BLIZZARD**

*The female organism also differs from the male in that speakers affect it differently*

**SNOWSTORM**

*Women feel physical pleasure from this music*

**ORANGINA**

*I had this terrible dream that I was dancing all wrong*

**BLIZZARD**

*You dance and you dance and there's no point to it*

**SNOWSTORM**

*Except that it feels great*

**ORANGINA**

Will you teach me how?

**BLIZZARD**

Just stand in front of the mirror and dance

**SNOWSTORM**

You have to make friends with your body. Your own. Since you've been given a body, you might as well live in harmony with it. It's so cool to be able to glide across the floor

**BLIZZARD**

I used to have a great body. I wanted to be a bodybuilder and compete in competitions with the Arnold Schwarzenegger technique. No anabolic steroids. I loved looking at myself in the mirror. I looked like that statue of Apollo

**SNOWSTORM**

It's hard to move well if you don't love yourself

**BLIZZARD**

And if you don't like the way you are when you dance

**ORANGINA**

When I dance at least I stop thinking

**BLIZZARD**

So what is it you think about all the time?

**ORANGINA**

I'm constantly haunted by thoughts that maybe I'm not living right

*Snowstorm's knee accidentally comes to rest against Orangina's knee. She pulls her leg away.*

*The Lexus catches up with the Alpha-Romeo and begins to pass it. Orangina's knee falls against Snowstorm's knee. Blizzard sees this in the rear-view mirror and Orangina tries to pull away. As the car turns Orangina falls over into Snowstorm's lap.*

**BLIZZARD**

(Smiling) Are we lacking excitement in our lives?

**SNOWSTORM**

Excitement can appear only when you don't expect it. When you chill out and just live, boldly, putting nothing into parentheses

*The Alpha-Romeo. Maniac, Snowflake and Lenochka.*

**MANIAC**

The most exhilarating moment in my life was when my brother took me up in a supersonic jet. Now that was something.

**SNOWFLAKE**

Wasn't it scary?

**MANIAC**

It was thrilling. It made me want to sing. But everything inside me was all churned upside down as if I was no longer me and my body wasn't mine. The only thought I had in my mind was - God, I hope I don't barf

**SNOWFLAKE**

And you call that the most exhilarating moment in your life?

**MANIAC**

Nothing can compare to it

**LENOCHKA**

Music sometimes does that to me

**MANIAC**

There was this time when I had just returned from a BASE jumping competition and it was my mother's birthday. She asked me to bring over a video of it to show the guests. So I do. And this one guy comes up to me and he asks, "Why do you do this?"

**SNOWFLAKE**

Really

**LENOCHKA**

Why do you?

**MANIAC**

Well, this is what I say to him: "See, when I come right to the edge and I look down from the top of a cliff or a skyscraper with my toes hanging over, my heart stops and my breath stops and I think - now I'm going to go and jump

**SNOWFLAKE**

Why would you do that?

**MANIAC**

That's just what he asked me

**LENOCHKA**

Adrenalin rushes, the psychological wounds of childhood and inferiority complexes all take on extreme forms

**MANIAC**

I wondered about it myself for a long time. Everybody has dreams of a material kind, hopes to achieve material prosperity. But why do you live? Take a step out there on the edge and you instantly understand why

*The Lexus is caught in a traffic jam.*

**BLIZZARD**

This world is so chaotic and futile, you have to know how to distance yourself from it. There are so many things to do in life that you waste all your energy on everything at once instead of focusing on one specific thing. But life was granted to us so we could extract the maximum enjoyment from it. Comfort is the true fetish of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So when you fall in love you have to do it with comfort in mind. You have to be relaxed together.

**ORANGINA**

Every person strives for harmony in life

**SNOWSTORM**

Or at least for inner tranquility

**BLIZZARD**

The Japanese know the secret of love. It's comfort. I dream of having a Japanese woman

**SNOWSTORM**

Me, I like plump women with glasses and a young kid

**ORANGINA**

Every woman in the world wants to lose weight

*The Alfa-Romeo. Also stuck in a traffic jam.*

**MANIAC**

Look around at people. Why do you think they jump? Because the most awesome high a person can get is to rise above his own self. Lenochka, conquer that wild beast in you that arises from savage fear! The sensation you get when you jump is like turning somersaults

**LENOCHKA**

Where did you learn to do that?

**MANIAC**

I used to be really fat and I weighed 300 pounds. Blizzard and I started taking private lessons in acrobatics. We wanted to fly freely and sublimely. And I lost weight.

**SNOWFLAKE**

How many times have you jumped?

**MANIAC**

I'd guess about 80

**LENOCHKA**

You're kidding?

**MANIAC**

Oh, that's no big deal

**SNOWFLAKE**

Some countries have banned it as suicidal

**MANIAC**

Every person who jumps from four different objects gets his own number. Maybe I'll get my own number soon. By the time I get to 835...

**LENOCHKA**

Orangina lives in apartment number 835

**MANIAC**

Maybe 834

**LENOCHKA**

No, Blizzard lives in 834

**SNOWFLAKE**

You mean they're neighbors already? I didn't know that



**LENOCHKA**

Everything everywhere has numbers on it

**MANIAC**

Then maybe it's something else

**SNOWFLAKE**

There are so many sick people in the world

**LENOCHKA**

Is it true you don't have a safety chute?

**MANIAC**

No safety chute and no insurance

**SNOWFLAKE**

You must have some philosophy about that

**MANIAC**

My philosophy is that, sooner or later, all of us will be  
smashed to death against a cliff

**SNOWFLAKE**

Isn't that lovely

**LENOCHKA**

Are you a good BASE jumper?

**MANIAC**

A good BASE jumper is a live BASE jumper

**SNOWFLAKE**

He's crazy. Did you know that even his hands glow in the dark?

**LENOCHKA**

Yeah, he shows that to everyone

**MANIAC**

Blizzard and I once got drunk on champagne and we did a two-way  
jump

**LENOCHKA**

Together?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I'd never jump

**MANIAC**

What about with me?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Not in your dreams

**MANIAC**

Snowflake, I'm beginning to wonder if you're a conformist at heart

**SNOWFLAKE**

Is that so bad?

**LENOCHKA**

You don't have any principles at all

**MANIAC**

You think I don't have any principles? Man, it's you that doesn't have any principles

**LENOCHKA**

Yes, I don't have any principles, but that's because I get new ones every day. We live in an accelerated age. Everything is speeding up

**MANIAC**

Speeding up for some, slowing down for others

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's all so confusing

*The street. Bushy-Tail rides a tram car. Looks out the window.*

*Maniac's apartment. An enormous amount of people in constant, chaotic motion. Smoke. Music. Someone's dancing. Someone isn't. Someone's watching a DVD. The girls are changing clothes, pulling new things out of bags, brushing their hair, rebrushing their hair, putting on make-up, redoing their make-up. Bushy-Tail enters, looks around, takes off her coat. Nobody pays her any attention. Bushy-Tail, on the contrary, misses nothing. She's transfixed by everything she sees, her eyes open wide as she looks for a familiar face in the crowd. She recognizes Blizzard, then Orangina and sees Maniac, Snowflake and Lenchka in various places. She*

*listens carefully to the conversations going on around her.*

**BLIZZARD**

*(In the bathroom, shaving his head bald)* I'm in a mood like roulette - betting on red but the ball doesn't fall

**ORANGINA**

*(Photographing the process)* You have really sharp mood swings, up and down, up and down

**BLIZZARD**

Is it that obvious?

**ORANGINA**

It's really irritating

**MANIAC**

*(On his telephone)* Six feet? How much is it from the blast pipe to the blister fairing? Wow -

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(On her phone)* You're so cool about your decision it's absurd

**SNOWSTORM**

*(Leafing through a magazine, going into the bathroom)* Would you do me a tattoo?

**BLIZZARD**

I've been wanting to do one for a year

**SNOWSTORM**

Me for three

**SNOWFLAKE**

Maybe you're ready but I'm not

**MANIAC**

Federal? Then that's clear

**SNOWSTORM**

What ideas do you have?

**BLIZZARD**

I dream about these ideas - birds, patterns, dragons

**SNOWFLAKE**

Just because you want to isn't enough. Nothing can come of nothing

**MANIAC**

All right-all right. But where's the guarantee they don't decide at the last minute that some cosmonaut would be better?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Well, you can think so if you want to

**MANIAC**

What can I say, man? You're cool

**LENOCHKA**

*(On her phone)* Listen, I can't spend my whole life in the process of creating this thing

**BLIZZARD**

*(In the bathroom)* I had this dream about Vladimir Vysotsky. I had that dream and I said - that's it! I'll do Vyotsky's profile on my chest!

**MANIAC**

No, I can't say as I'm ready for that. That came out of the blue

**SNOWSTORM**

You gonna do Marina Vlady on your back?

**BLIZZARD**

Yeah, I already set aside a hundred dollars

**MANIAC**

How much you need? 60 thou? Yeah, I got it, I hear what you said

**SNOWFLAKE**

No, I'm not depressed. I've got too much to do, to be depressed. I'll give you a call if that happens

**MANIAC**

Can you put that in an email? Get it off to me today

**LENOCHKA**

You can redo it 60 times over but it still isn't going to be right! Everybody's so damn smart. Did you think I was going to go slit my wrists in the bathtub?

**MANIAC**

Those fighter jets are his? Holy shit! (*Laughs hysterically.*)

**SNOWFLAKE**

A woman can't only give with her body. She has to give with her head, too

**LENOCHKA**

If you like it, dig it. If you don't, get over and get on with it!

**MANIAC**

Is he offering anything under the table?

**BLIZZARD**

(*In the bathroom*) Is that a nice skull?

**SNOWSTORM**

You want a skull tattoo?

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's the eternal problem - the battle of reason and feeling

**MANIAC**

So what you're saying is basically everything revolves around these fighter jets

**SNOWFLAKE**

I have no idea what to do

**MANIAC**

All right, okay. There's people waiting here

**BLIZZARD**

This tattoo drove me wild

**MANIAC**

Our project was accepted on the federal level. The President just signed off on it

**BLIZZARD**

That's hot shit

**MANIAC**

It's perfectly logical

**SNOWSTORM**

What's the project?

**MANIAC**

It's secret

**BLIZZARD**

Then you'll read about it tomorrow in the papers

**SNOWFLAKE**

Are you going off into space?

**MANIAC**

Unlike you, when I go, I'll go on travel orders

*The six walk along the street with Bushy-Tail. They duck into a night club of some sort, passing by a long line. Neon lights flicker as they pass through face-control. Lenchka shows signs of nervousness, Snowflake keeps talking on her phone. Strobe lights, a bar, the dance floor, bathrooms, sofas, pillows, the bar, dance floor, bathrooms, the street - and so it goes until morning. Orangina photographs Bushy-Tail.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(On her phone)* Are we talking about the ideal man? All men say it doesn't happen like that

**LENOCHKA**

*(To Bushy-Tail)* You show too much of your personal self in your facial expressions

**SNOWFLAKE**

"Just like that," as Assol said in *Scarlet Sails*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What do you mean?

**ORANGINA**

Signs of a good upbringing

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Is that bad?

**LENOCHKA**

It could cause problems. But it might not

**BLIZZARD**

*(Looking at himself in the mirror)* I've already tried on a coupla different kinds of crosses. I didn't want anything ostentatious, nothing with gold chains, you know

**MANIAC**

Well, that one's just right

**SNOWFLAKE**

I always sit and cry when I watch that film. God, I love it

**MANIAC**

Are you macho?

**BLIZZARD**

Macho sometimes. You gotta always be ready. I can turn on the tough-guy

**SNOWFLAKE**

Over 35, smart. No, I don't admit the possibility of a man without brains

**BLIZZARD**

Sometimes I'm as soft as a baby's kiss

**LENOCHKA**

*(Looking at Bushy-Tail)* A whole utopia of feminine innocence and female infantility

**BLIZZARD**

I'm a prince. Really. In fact.

**MANIAC**

Weak, jumpy and jaded

**LENOCHKA**

You have to awaken men's pity. You know? But as a child, not as a woman. Make them want to feed you, put you to bed, kiss you tenderly on the forehead and rub iodine on your banged-up knees

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Why?

**LENOCHKA**

That's what all women want

**BLIZZARD**

And men

**MANIAC**

Everybody wants back in the womb

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Yesterday a couple got married at our church. They were really young. They were all surrounded by little kids and then all the old women ran up to congratulate them. It was really beautiful

**MANIAC**

A woman's imagination is excited by a prince on a white horse and a wedding with fleurs d'orange at 20, at 30 and at 60

**LENOCHKA**

Which is entirely natural

**MANIAC**

*(Sniffing the air)* And howling winds blow the sands of Morocco past our faces

**BUSHY-TAIL**

It smells just like autumn leaves

**LENOCHKA**

Only don't start smoking here

**SNOWFLAKE**

If you smoke next to her you are liable to be blinded by a flash of bright light. You can be injured or burned

**MANIAC**

I've finally figured it out. I'm going to be a homosexual

**LENOCHKA**

Why do you say that?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Don't accept sin into your heart

**MANIAC**

You're not going to be jealous of men, are you?

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(In Maniac's direction)* Only don't be obsessive about it



**BLIZZARD**

We'll just try it on for size

*Volodya's apartment. The alarm clock rings. Volodya gets up, washes, does his exercises. Turns on the iron, irons his shirt and his pants, checking the folds on his pants leg.*

*The street. Maniac, Snowstorm and Blizzard. They smoke. It's snowing. It's cold. Snowstorm has stripped off his shirt, baring his breast to the elements. Steam rises from his body.*

**MANIAC**

*(Clapping Blizzard on his bald head)* Looks good on you. You're the man

**BLIZZARD**

That's not what's important

**SNOWSTORM**

What's important for you?

**BLIZZARD**

I myself don't know. *(Looks over his life line.)* The funniest thing about it is - my life line really does break off. It used to be really long and all normal, but now it's like there's this white spot all over my palm

**MANIAC**

Oh, screw that

**SNOWSTORM**

Go wash your hands

**BLIZZARD**

Easy for you to say

**SNOWSTORM**

Nobody's got a guarantee

**BLIZZARD**

You've gotta be ready for death at any moment

**MANIAC**

Now that's my warrior, that's my samurai

**BLIZZARD**

What if Lenchka's a sorceress? She's got a really heavy eye

**MANIAC**

Have you ever noticed her eyes are different colors?

**SNOWSTORM**

Like David Bowie

**BLIZZARD**

Come on, get off it. It's time to get back to the grindstone  
(*Heads back in the other direction.*)

**MANIAC**

Only please don't be late

**BLIZZARD**

(*Digs through Snowflake's purse, spritzes on her perfume*) I'm  
going to make one more strategic move

**SNOWFLAKE**

Just don't drown yourself in that stuff

**ORANGINA**

Who are you doing that for?

**BLIZZARD**

I have an interview

**SNOWFLAKE**

Be careful. Never say what you really think

**BLIZZARD**

Why not?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Because everything changes so fast

**BLIZZARD**

(*He's all dressed. Tosses keys to Snowstorm*) I'll be back around  
10 or 12. (*To Orangina.*) Will you get Snowstorm back to my  
place?

**ORANGINA**

All right.

**MANIAC**

Lemme give you a kiss on the forehead

**SNOWSTORM**

Come on, let's hit it!

**BLIZZARD**

This is called taking a leap into reality

**PART TWO**

**AWE**

*Blizzard walks out onto the street. Breathes in the fresh air. Claps himself on the pockets and realizes he forgot his cell phone. Thinks. Decides not to go back. Pulls eye drops out of his pocket and releases drops into his eyes. Wipes off the tears and goes looking for his car. He vaguely remembers where he parked it. Puts on his Gucci sunglasses and checks out the people walking by, hurrying to work in the morning. He smiles at everyone, delights at a simple sunbeam as if he were a paragon of virtue who loves all people and nature too. Big, fat snowflakes hit him in the face.*

**BLIZZARD**

We live in a very severe country. Wherever nature has beauty, it's a severe beauty. Very severe. If there is friendship, it's severe. Too. Our people are genuine heroes who live - by living their lives. They are very severe people, I would say they are severe in the extreme. Their life journeys - are very severe. And exalted. No sentimentality. No indulgences. People here have always had hard lives. The guy who founded Moscow. And the guy who founded St. Petersburg. (*Smokes. Thinks.*) Want me to tell you a story about my life? A real, severe life story. A tale of grief, despair, manic-depressive psychosis, sin, debilitating passions and addictions that have come to us from infernal hell itself. Write it down, give people a chance to read it, a tale of weakness and strength, of tears, my heart, fears, love, Adam and Eve, warmth and cold, black and white. I'll tell you what real whiteness is; when a man no longer sees his own arms and legs, when the whiteness blinds his eyes and he goes blind, goes blind forever. In order to die right here and be reborn. Pure and innocent. Like the white, newly driven snow.

*Blizzard is covered in snow. He comes out of his reverie but can't find his car. He has no idea where he left it. Keeps looking, finally finds it. Standing next to his Lexus is Volodya. He carefully looks over the license plate then carefully looks over Blizzard.*

**VOLODYA**

This your Lexus?

**BLIZZARD**

Yes

**VOLODYA**

(Shows his badge) May I see your ID?

**BLIZZARD**

Sure. My pleasure

**VOLODYA**

(Looking over Blizzard's ID) Open up your trunk

*Blizzard opens his trunk.*

*Orangina, Lenochka, Snowflake, Maniac and Snowstorm with Bushy-Tail. They lie around on rugs and pillows, drink tea from China tea cups and smoke a hookah. The girls' bared shoulders sparkle with glitter, Snowstorm's head lies on Orangina's stomach, she combs his long locks with her fingers.*

**ORANGINA**

No matter what you say I'm always the man in relationships. I always make the decisions because men are weak, regardless of how physically imposing they might be

**LENOCHKA**

They're all a bunch of unflappable wolves

**SNOWFLAKE**

They are utter babes

**LENOCHKA**

They play with their toys and think they are the center of the universe

**ORANGINA**

A man is a babe is a babe is a babe and then, suddenly, he's an old geezer

**SNOWFLAKE**

They are incurably infantile

**LENOCHKA**

No, I don't need men at all. I can't even think about men any more

**SNOWFLAKE**

Men should not be thought about at all

**BUSHY-TAIL**

What's that supposed to mean?

**SNOWFLAKE**

You have to play with them. If you think they are thinking, think again - they are thinking something else entirely

**LENOCHKA**

Or they aren't thinking at all

**SNOWFLAKE**

A man is not susceptible to being remade. You've got to take him in the bag he comes in and then just put him where you need him

**ORANGINA**

On the other hand, how can you do without a man?

**SNOWFLAKE**

You can become a lesbian

**LENOCHKA**

You can give yourself up to total nihilism

**SNOWFLAKE**

But that's carrying it too far

*Lenochka's phone rings but she doesn't answer it.*

**MANIAC**

Husband?

**LENOCHKA**

He's no husband. He's a cad. A maniac.

**SNOWFLAKE**

How many times have I warned you? Don't ever admit anything. We deny everything.

**LENOCHKA**

But he's the one who said only the truth can save our relationship (*Cries.*)

**ORANGINA**

Lenochka - fresh air and fresh fruit

**SNOWFLAKE**

Here, I can give you a pill

**LENOCHKA**

What is it?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Why can't a person just have a regular pill, a tranquilizer?

**LENOCHKA**

Will it help?

**SNOWFLAKE**

In twenty minutes

**MANIAC**

(*To Bushy-Tail*) People suffer from a lack of understanding of their own sexuality and by the age of 30 they lose their mind incontrovertibly

**SNOWFLAKE**

Every person thinks in his or her own box

**MANIAC**

A hotbed of psychic ailments

**LENOCHKA**

A global failure to communicate

**MANIAC**

This is horrible, what they're saying here. Just horrible

**ORANGINA**

It's incontestable

**MANIAC**

A bunch of old wives' tales and laundromat philosophy. A gaggle of amateurs!

**BUSHY-TAIL**

*(Distracted, looking out the window)* They predicted it would snow by late morning and, sure enough, it began snowing late in the morning.

**SNOWFLAKE**

Snow white white

**ORANGINA**

As white as white can be

**LENOCHKA**

I have the sensation we are flying upwards

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Where I come from in Siberia nobody ever clears the snow away. They just clear out narrow passages. The snow drifts stand higher than a person's head. And people there don't walk like they do here. There they kind of shuffle their feet. Because they are used to spending so much time walking on ice. It's always cold and dark and people light fires and they don't ever complain to anyone. That's because they think it's like that the whole world over. Life there's hard.

*The street. Volodya and Blizzard stand by the Lexus. Volodya looks through the trunk. Blizzard looks at his watch and at Volodya. He clearly has begun to be nervous.*

**VOLODYA**

You can close it now

*Blizzard closes the trunk.*

Take off your glasses

*Blizzard takes off his sun glasses. They stare each other in the eye.*

*(Putting Blizzard's ID into his pocket.)* You're coming with me down to the station.

*They go.*

*Lenochka, Maniac, Snowflake, Orangina, Bushy-Tail and Snowstorm. They meandered and danced and talked but they never got tired. Finally they begin collecting*



*their things, putting on their coats, paying the bill,  
looking at their watches.*

**MANIAC**

(*To the girls*) Want some candy?

**LENOCHKA**

Is it good?

**ORANGINA**

The colored ones taste better than the solids

**MANIAC**

(*Studying the wrapper*) The colored ones are more interesting

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's all chemicals and nothing else

**MANIAC**

What is benzoate nitrate?

**ORANGINA**

What is modified starch?

**SNOWSTORM**

Just what I wanted

**LENOCHKA**

The first time I ever ate these things I nearly gagged on all the sugar, I just gagged on it

**MANIAC**

And if you leave them out a little bit then they really get like rubber

**SNOWSTORM**

I had these friends who were taking some concoction for bodybuilding and they mixed something else in there, too. You'd drink that stuff and, man, you'd instantly love everybody, 'cause everybody was suddenly so smart and so cool

**SNOWFLAKE**

Try drinking that alone

**LENOCHKA**

I can't do it

**MANIAC**

I did and I threw up

**SNOWSTORM**

Everybody throws up at first

**MANIAC**

Basically, there is no reason to love people

**LENOCHKA**

Yeah, but you have to

**MANIAC**

By nature people are vile and greedy

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I love people, though

**ORANGINA**

Those are your rose-colored glasses talking

**MANIAC**

My friends would take those tranquilizers they give cats before taking them on a trip. Turns out those things are really strong psychotropics

**SNOWFLAKE**

Man, what people won't take

**LENOCHKA**

And why, is what I want to know

**ORANGINA**

I read about this one guy who specially raised jellyfish in an aquarium and then he'd dry them and eat them

**SNOWSTORM**

This other guy would catch scorpions, rip off their tails, dry them and smoke them

**LENOCHKA**

The historical record shows that there were people who ate nothing but clay

**SNOWFLAKE**

Or nothing at all

**LENOCHKA**

I've read that clay is teeming with life

**MANIAC**

Everything is teeming with life

**ORANGINA**

I used to eat dirt when I was a kid. To win bets

**MANIAC**

I still do that all the time

**SNOWSTORM**

We're all of us all just the same

*The police station. Blizzard is being searched. They unzip his pants and search down his underwear. They pull out a small packet, call over witnesses, run tests, take fingerprints, collect a urine sample - in short, they found drugs.*

**BLIZZARD**

(For the hundredth time) I'm a musician. I'm not an addict. I'm a good guy. I don't deal. It's for my own personal use. I bought it off an Armenian. I'll give you a written pledge not to leave town

**VOLODYA**

A musician you say

**BLIZZARD**

I'm just a DJ

**VOLODYA**

A DJ you say

**BLIZZARD**

Well, a VJ, actually

**VOLODYA**

(Sighs) A VJ

**BLIZZARD**

If you let me go I swear I'll never do it again

**VOLODYA**

But maybe you will

**BLIZZARD**

No, I won't. I mean, I don't know if I will or I won't. But I don't want to

**VOLODYA**

We're going to have to search you

**BLIZZARD**

I don't have anything on me

**VOLODYA**

You know for sure you don't?

**BLIZZARD**

*(Thinks)* For sure

**VOLODYA**

If you don't then maybe I'll let you go

*Maniac's apartment. Snowflake and Maniac enter and walk around. They lie down on the bed without taking off their coats or shoes. They are very far from each other. And silent. Snowflake closes her eyes, it's like she's already asleep. Maniac gets up, turns on the television.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(Opening her eyes)* Oh God, only not that

**MANIAC**

*(Turns off the television)* What then?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Well do something. You're the jaded one. You know what to do in moments like this. You have such intelligent eyes *(Smiles. Begins to laugh.)*

**MANIAC**

It's cold. Listen, it's cold in here *(Wraps himself in a blanket and walks around the room.)*

**SNOWFLAKE**

Want something to drink?

**MANIAC**

No

**SNOWFLAKE**

Eat?

**MANIAC**

No

*Cell phones ring. Maniac gathers them up and turns them off.*

*I'm just not ready to communicate with anyone right now (Walks around, looks through the compact discs and picks one. Turns on some music.)*

**SNOWFLAKE**

Oh, that's nice. That's nice

*Maniac lies on the bed. They both lie on the bed listening to music. Silence.*

**MANIAC**

Transcendental meditation. Quasi-physical state

*Snowflake smiles, eyes closed.*

Almost like we're floating. Such clear thoughts. And so noble. Next to that all these body movements don't mean a thing.

**SNOWFLAKE**

More illusions

**MANIAC**

It's been like that for ages. People have known that forever. Our feeble minds can't get a grasp

**SNOWFLAKE**

Beethoven?

**MANIAC**

Beethoven

**SNOWFLAKE**

He's so good

*They lie there listening to Beethoven.*

*Blizzard and Volodya riding in a police car. They look at each other.*

**BLIZZARD**

What's your name?

**VOLODYA**

Volodya

**BLIZZARD**

How old are you?

**VOLODYA**

Twenty-five

**BLIZZARD**

Say, Volodya, why did you single me out?

**VOLODYA**

Your eyes

*They look each other in the eyes.*

**BLIZZARD**

I've seen you somewhere, but I don't remember where

**VOLODYA**

Your face is familiar, too, for some reason

**BLIZZARD**

Maybe on TV?

**VOLODYA**

I don't watch TV

**BLIZZARD**

Why not?

**VOLODYA**

Why should I?

*The street. Orangina and Snowstorm get out of a taxi, go up the stairs, get into the elevator. Their bodies frequently touch - knees, hands - but it's always by accident. This continues to embarrass Orangina as they approach her apartment. Orangina is in the full bloom*

*of a crush. She blushes constantly. Snowstorm is sweeping her, sweeping her, sweeping her off her feet.*

**SNOWSTORM**

I once rented an apartment next to St. Isaac's Cathedral. We dropped a couple of tabs. Basically, popped one or two tabs too many. I headed into the shower but it turned out to be a window. I wasn't used to the place, you know. Fortunately it was on the first floor. I busted out the window and I'm walking around naked, dripping blood. I went out on the square and struck up a conversation with God. We had a long talk there that day.

**ORANGINA**

And then what?

**SNOWSTORM**

What else? They locked me up.

**ORANGINA**

So what did God have to say?

**SNOWSTORM**

You ought to knock that shit off, Snowstorm.

*They're silent. Orangina continues to blush from embarrassment.*

You know what was drawn on those tabs?

**ORANGINA**

What?

**SNOWSTORM**

Milli Vanilli

**ORANGINA**

Oh get off it!

**SNOWSTORM**

It's true. There was this one time they came up to me after a concert and they said, "Listen, Snowstorm, explain psychedelic trances to us and how to become psychedelic trance stars. We want to know."

**ORANGINA**

And what did you say?

**SNOWSTORM**

Listen up, dudes. The job's already taken.

**ORANGINA**

By you?

**SNOWSTORM**

You'll see that soon enough.

*Orangina stands in front of apt. No. 835. Snowstorm pulls out his keys and opens apt. No. 834. Puts down his yellow suitcase. Orangina is nervous, she fumbles with her keys. Snowstorm helps her open the door. Orangina is embarrassed, she doesn't know whether to invite Snowstorm in with her or not. They aren't finding it easy to part, even though she doesn't know what to say.*

Remember that guy we were drinking with yesterday?

**ORANGINA**

Which one was that?

**SNOWSTORM**

The one with AIDS.

**ORANGINA**

No, I don't.

**SNOWSTORM**

I drank vodka out of his beer mug. I only realized later I shouldn't have done that.

**ORANGINA**

I could have been a lot worse

**SNOWSTORM**

This is no laughing matter

**ORANGINA**

God forbid

**SNOWSTORM**

I probably ought to have a blood test

**ORANGINA**

It's too early for that



**SNOWSTORM**

Maybe I can still be cured?

**ORANGINA**

Your sample will blow people away

**SNOWSTORM**

They'll turn it over to the cops. The chemical make-up of my blood is irreversibly altered

**ORANGINA**

And your brain

**SNOWSTORM**

Yeah. I've got to clean up. Start working out

**ORANGINA**

Take vitamins

**SNOWSTORM**

What if they have additives or something?

**ORANGINA**

Hallucenogenics

**SNOWSTORM**

Exactly

**ORANGINA**

Suffering fortifies the soul

**SNOWSTORM**

I'm a sinner. I don't like suffering

*Bushy-Tail's apartment. Bushy-Tails walks about her apartment in a long night-shirt reminiscing about the evening spent with her new friends.*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

It's like I was thrust into a new country where nothing has names yet. Or somebody invited me into a fairy-tale, a real magic kingdom

*Volodya and Blizzard stand before the door of Apt. 834.*

**VOLODYA**

This yours?

**BLIZZARD**

Yes.

*Volodya approaches Apt. 835. Music is heard coming from there. Volodya rings the doorbell. Orangina opens the door. Blizzard is rather surprised to see Snowstorm.*

**VOLODYA**

(*Showing his badge*) Police. I need two witnesses

**ORANGINA**

Where?

**VOLODYA**

Here

**ORANGINA**

What happened?

**VOLODYA**

I have to conduct a search

*Orangina, Snowstorm, Blizzard and Volodya enter Apt. 834.*

(*Walking about the apartment.*) Let's get to it

*Maniac's apartment. Maniac and Snowflake are still lying on the bed with their eyes open.*

**MANIAC**

You sleeping?

**SNOWFLAKE**

You can sleep in this state?

*They are silent.*

**MANIAC**

Somebody told me you went to confession

**SNOWFLAKE**

Yeah

**MANIAC**

What did you confess?

**SNOWFLAKE**

My passionate desire to be liked and to entice and embarrass others. My penchant for listening to narcotic music, for wild dancing, for provocative, voluptuous feelings and for spiritual and psychological obscurantism

**MANIAC**

Did you explain that that's your job?

**SNOWFLAKE**

And lots, lots, lots more

**MANIAC**

And how do you feel now? Did you like it?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I counted off every man I've been with for the last six months. I remembered every one of their names

**MANIAC**

They all ought to assemble right here in this room. And hold their silence. With this music playing

**SNOWFLAKE**

They're all wonderful. I loved every one of them

**MANIAC**

But the fact is - there are a lot of them and only one of you

**SNOWFLAKE**

He told me you assimilate into yourself all the people your partners have slept with

**MANIAC**

You know what telegony is?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Something to do with television?

**MANIAC**

You're better off not knowing

*They are silent.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

I miss being bold and spontaneous like I used to be

**MANIAC**

Purse-mascara-lipstick-shoes?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Well, something like that

**MANIAC**

What else did he say?

**SNOWFLAKE**

He said a lot and I cried a lot and I was so confused, the whole room was swimming in tears

**MANIAC**

What was to cry about?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I cried because I was so sad, from a sensation of being absolutely alone and abandoned in the world, a complete vacuum, shame, repentance, cold, horror and repulsion

**MANIAC**

Women are such pious people

**SNOWFLAKE**

And then he says, "Forget your dream of yourself. God is a jealous God." And my tears dried up. They dried up instantly. And I say, "What did you say? Forget my dream of myself? How do you do that!?"

*Blizzard's apartment. Volodya opens and closes desk drawers and closet drawers. He looks everything over at length. Blizzard's entire life is pulled out for everyone to see. Condoms rain down, CDs, vinyl records, guitars, clothing, a synthesizer and miles of cords tumble out and roll on the floor. Speakers, cognac and whiskey bottles, cigarettes, incense, business cards, photos of Blizzard with Alla Pugachyova and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and a photo of a ballerina. Volodya picks up the photo of the ballerina in his hands, looks it over at length. Puts it back in its place. Volodya sees a yellow suitcase. Approaches it. Snowstorm buries his face in his hands. Volodya*

*opens the case. From it he removes a towel (puts it on the table), three books (puts them on the table one by one), 200 vinyl records (looks them over carefully), 40 rubles (puts the money on the table). Picks up the books. Leafs through them.*

**VOLODYA**

Mikhail Chekhov. Anna Akhmatova. Shakespeare.

*A small packet of tablets lies in the Shakespeare volume. Blizzard looks at Snowstorm, Snowstorm at Blizzard.*

Wait a minute.

*All sit quietly. All are silent.*

**BLIZZARD**

Okay. If I throw all that stuff out the window right now he'll never prove I ever possessed it. These guys will back me up. So I go like this... *(Slowly reaches for the tablets.)*

**VOLODYA**

In your place. Sit still.

**BLIZZARD**

I have a face like a monkey. I've got the shakes. Oh my fucking God I'm in shock.

*Blizzard leaps up, grabs the packet off the table, opens the window and tries to throw the tablets out the window. They fall on the windowsill and bounce all over the floor. Volodya shoves Blizzard back onto the sofa, pulls his revolver and points it at Blizzard's head.*

**VOLODYA**

What are you doing? Why would you do that? You want a buzz, drink vodka. What is wrong with you junkies? You smoke yourself into oblivion and then you're at each other's throats

*Removes his belt and ties Blizzard's hands with it. Gathers the tablets off the floor, counts them and carefully puts them back on the table.*

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen,

eighteen, nineteen, twenty... twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight... twenty-nine, thirty... one... thirty-two... thirty-three

*Maniac's apartment. Maniac and Snowflake.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

There's a golden Buddha in your window

**MANIAC**

That's a Buddhist cathedral

**SNOWFLAKE**

I thought it was a restaurant

**MANIAC**

You see nothing but restaurants

**SNOWFLAKE**

Do you go there?

**MANIAC**

That's all we need now is Buddhism

**SNOWFLAKE**

Ooh, look! I can see him sitting there! Is that why you rented this apartment?

**MANIAC**

Naw, I thought it was a restaurant at first, too

*They are silent.*

You know, someday I'm going to slip some crushed glass in your food. I'll make you a milkshake for breakfast and I'll slip crushed glass in there. And then I'll freeze you up in a block of ice.

**SNOWFLAKE**

I'm fasting right now. I can't have milk.

**MANIAC**

You're fasting, are you?

*They are silent.*

I should probably fast, too. I'm so totally lacking in energy.

*Blizzard's apartment.*

**BLIZZARD**

Don't tie my hands. I won't do it again. (*To the witnesses.*)  
Would you guys step out, please.

*Orangina and Snowstorm leave. Volodya unties  
Blizzard's hands.*

(*Pulling out a \$100 bill*) Volodya, please. Take this and don't do what you were going to do. You want me to, I'll get down on my knees. I don't have anything more today, but I'll get more tomorrow. I'm a famous musician. I can get a lot of money.

**VOLODYA**

No deal. I couldn't care less what you're trying to say to me. Put on your coat. I'm locking you up. You can take off your shoestrings right now.

**BLIZZARD**

I'm taking off my shoestrings. I'm putting on long-sleeve sailor's shirt. My raspberry red velvet pants. And my beret on my head. (*Blizzard wants to put on a record.*) And all this shake, rattle and roll -

**VOLODYA**

What are you doing?

**BLIZZARD**

I just want to put on some music

**VOLODYA**

How come you let me down? Why did you lie to me like that?

**BLIZZARD**

(*Smiling blissfully*) Forgive me.

*The witnesses return and leave the door open. Blizzard sees that the door to Orangina's apartment is open, too. As is the door to the balcony. Blizzard suddenly races across to Orangina's apartment and throws himself off her balcony.*

*He falls downward as if flying. As if in slow-motion his entire life flashes before his eyes. Blizzards*

*thinks he is flying and, as honest, sad, exhausted and utterly free as he now is, he never wants to return to earth again. Free of everything and believing only in God, he is a true saint, a true freak.*

*Maniac's apartment. The following conversation occurs simultaneously to Blizzard's flight.*

**MANIAC**

There are certain sensations that make you super-aware. And you ride along on them like you're surfing, skimming over the surface, never sinking below the surface, never stopping

**SNOWFLAKE**

I used to skim over the surface, too

**MANIAC**

And now?

**SNOWFLAKE**

I don't skim now

**MANIAC**

Why not?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Because you can't skim over the surface all the time

**MANIAC**

Yeah, you've got to shake things up. You've gotta jump and fall, too

**SNOWFLAKE**

And jump back up again

**MANIAC**

There's nothing to skimming over the surface

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's really supercool

**MANIAC**

But it's pointless if you do it all the time

*Blizzard flies, doing somersaults in the air.*



**SNOWFLAKE**

Where do you fall when you jump?

**MANIAC**

Doesn't make a bit of difference. It's the action itself that has meaning, of course. But you can't attach meaning to it  
(*Smiles.*)

**SNOWFLAKE**

Do you have a goal?

**MANIAC**

Everybody has a goal. Even if you have no idea what it is, you still have one nonetheless. But if you don't define it yourself, somebody else will do it for you. Whoever comes up with the best definition

*Blizzard flies. A dog walking on the street sees him flying, raises up his head and watches in amazement. Somewhere in the distance his owner calls:*

**VOICE**

Yo-Yo! Yo-Yo! Yo-Yo!

**MANIAC**

You want to relay a message of some kind, you want to have some impact

**SNOWFLAKE**

Why's that?

**MANIAC**

To fill in the world void. Don't you want to?

**SNOWFLAKE**

Me? No. I already lost my optimism, my youthful sincerity, my faith in people, my ability to think sober thoughts, to properly evaluate situations, to love my brother and orient myself in space

*Blizzard flies and the dog's eyes grow bigger and bigger.*

The only thought that ever comes to me when I wake up in the morning hours is to commit suicide. But now I can't even do that.

### MANIAC

Why not?

### SNOWFLAKE

Because you can't do that

*Orangina's apartment. Snowstorm, Blizzard and Orangina stand just as they had been standing, as though not a second has passed and, indeed, nothing has happened. Volodya runs out onto the balcony; a visceral, bloodcurdling scream is heard. Orangina's eyes go dark and she falls in a faint.*

### VOICE

Yo-Yo! Yo-Yo! Yo-Yo!

*On the ground beneath the balcony a dog lies dead in a pool of blood.*

*Blizzard runs down one street, another, a third, covered in Yo-Yo's blood. He runs past red walls, fences, houses of some kind, and indeterminate people. The red ball of the sun, slipping beneath the horizon, reflects in his eyes. Blizzard runs to meet it, faster, faster, in order to reach out to it, to touch it with his hand, to catch it before it hides. It seems to him that he succeeds, that he made it in time.*

*Having reached the horizon, he slips down below the earth, not thinking, asking why or whether this leads anywhere. He goes down, down, down, passing trains resounding in his head. He races into the first open door he sees, pushes his way through a crowd into a corner, sits down in an empty spot, closes his eyes, takes the beret off his head, wipes off his red, wet face, smearing it with blood. He is riding somewhere, racing somewhere on this train so as to have time to think what he should do next in order to catch his breath and get hold of himself.*

*Snowstorm reads a poem to Bushy-Tail.*

### SNOWSTORM

There once lived a boy, a timid genius, who lived on the back lot of life

His daddy drank, his momma stank - the family was like that  
But the boy was a romantic. He escaped life in dreams

Smelling his bubblegum wrapper he would fly away  
From the wrong side of town and the back lot of life  
To a light, quiet, cozy world, a land of starry dreams  
And this timid little boy swore one day he would leave the  
back lot of life,  
Jump on the trolley of dreams and ride away forever

*Blizzard in the subway. Eyes closed, as if in a  
trance, Blizzard thinks Vladimir Vysotsky and Marina  
Vlady are smiling at him from a black-and-white  
photograph. A cry is heard in a dream, as if it has no  
connection to reality. But the cry gets louder and  
louder. Blizzard thinks someone his shouting at him:  
"Atten-shun! Atten-shun!"*

*Blizzard opens his eyes. A soldier stands over him,  
screaming at him as if in a horror film.*

**SOLDIER**

Atten-shun!

**BLIZZARD**

(Making to leave) Attention what?

**SOLDIER**

Atten-shun!

**BLIZZARD**

(Tired of smiling) I'm out here. This is my stop.

*Blizzard looks around. The entire subway car is filled  
with bald, young men, new army recruits, just like  
himself.*

**SOLDIER**

Atten-shun!

*The doors open. Blizzard runs out, two soldiers  
following in hot pursuit.*

*Street, walls, fences: déjà vu.*

*Somewhere very near, one or two streets over,  
Snowflake is walking and people are turning to look at  
her. They point at her, but she ceased noticing this  
long ago.*

**SNOWFLAKE**

The street is dirty. People try as they may, laying out white rugs beneath their feet. But everything is pointless in this city. Everything is pointless.

*The soldiers catch up with Blizzard, a fight starts. Blizzard falls. They kick him viciously in the sides and stomach. He has stopped putting up a fight. Lies limply on the asphalt. Blood trickles out his mouth. The soldiers leave. Blizzard wipes off the blood with his hand, his hands are all bloody. He smiles exhaustedly. Gets up.*

*Volodya stands in front of Blizzard.*

**BLIZZARD**

What are you, Volodya, James Bond or something?

*Volodya hand-cuffs Blizzard.*

**VOLODYA**

You can't run from yourself

*They get into a police car.*

**BLIZZARD**

I don't understand anything at all. I'm screwed now. I'm already on two years parole. What is happening. Why? I must have a concussion. I'm sick to my stomach. They're probably going to put me in prison. What about my job? What about everything? What about my dreams? My Lord, how did this happen to me? A complete and total breakdown. What I'd really like is to wrap myself in a blanket and go to sleep. So that when I wake up, all of this will be yesterday and not today

*Blizzard looks at his bloody hand, sliced in the fight. His lifeline has now been extended. He closes his eyes and slips into an indifferent sleep.*

*The Office. Maniac, Snowflake, Lenchka and Snowstorm. Blizzard's face has been replaced everywhere by Snowstorm's.*

**MANIAC**

We all stand neck-deep in darkness. The only difference is that some of us look in the direction of the light. Others look to the dark

**SNOWFLAKE**

(On the phone) Forty days without sex?!

**LENOCHKA**

That's unfeasible

**MANIAC**

Like during the war. You huddle under a flag and defenders appear at your side. You know who you're fighting for and against. With the whites or the reds. For good or for evil

**SNOWSTORM**

Most of the time I spend in the space between black and white. It's rather gray, of course, but at least there's movement. I know who's sleeping with who. I know who does what where when and why and I appreciate every one of them equally

**MANIAC**

It's nothing more than a mask

**SNOWFLAKE**

Fifty?!

**LENOCHKA**

Strange

**SNOWFLAKE**

I don't think that's my style

**SNOWSTORM**

I don't use masks at all. I win people over with my extreme sincerity. I achieve results by means of the utmost candor. Basically, I never hide a thing. I don't fear my emotions

**MANIAC**

I lead a double life.

**LENOCHKA**

Really?

**MANIAC**

I keep my manias and phobias in check. And I've got those babies up the ying-yang. Both manias and phobias

**SNOWFLAKE**

I didn't know that; that you can't. I realize that doesn't justify me

**SNOWSTORM**

Hey you phobias of mine, you manias, you late anxieties and early fears

**SNOWFLAKE**

It's just I'm a very emotional person

**LENOCHKA**

I confessed for three days

**MANIAC**

I did two

**LENOCHKA**

And he looked me so hard in the eyes, with that same kind of insolence I have when I'm showing off, and he had this two-faced smile

**MANIAC**

He can't be two-faced

**SNOWSTORM**

You don't even have the right to look him in the eye

**MANIAC**

You're supposed to lower your gaze

**SNOWSTORM**

At least bow your head

**SNOWFLAKE**

This weather is oppressive

**LENOCHKA**

And he says, "At least bow your head."

**SNOWFLAKE**

I'm sick and tired of this black-and-white film

**MANIAC**

All this Adam and Eve and the apple

**LENOCHKA**

I mean it wasn't us that picked it

**SNOWSTORM**

Well, it's time to pay up now

**SNOWFLAKE**

Could it be because I spent so much time on tranquilizers?!

**MANIAC**

That's all really useful when you have to define all your shortcomings

**LENOCHKA**

You know what you're supposed to do but you don't do it

**ORANGINA**

After that it's a matter of will power

**MANIAC**

You've got to make sense of your will power

**SNOWSTORM**

See if you have any or not

**LENOCHKA**

I don't

**SNOWFLAKE**

Whenever it's cold my mood and character go sour

**SNOWSTORM**

We are really lucky we live in a climate like this

**MANIAC**

It helps calm us, calm our flesh

**LENOCHKA**

Which is almost impossible to do in the more southerly countries

**SNOWFLAKE**

*(Hangs up the phone. Sighs)* Maybe we ought to fly somewhere, huh? Like Bali

**MANIAC**

It's a good idea, though

*The jail cell.*

### **BLIZZARD**

I've changed lately. I haven't exactly figured out how yet. All my thoughts on it are still at loose ends. Basically everybody just goes along paying no attention to where they're going. What the hell is the meaning of life? Career? Fame? Money? I mean, in my mind I know that's not what's important. But what is important - I don't know. But I think about it. Why? Because that's what everybody talks about. And I know there is love.

*Blizzard thinks about Orangina. Orangina walks down the street, as beautiful as a character from a Bergman movie. Men look her in the eye and watch her pass; she lowers her eyelashes.*

### **ORANGINA**

When will I achieve perfection? When will this sin leave me? When will I quit having all these voluptuous dreams? When will I quit dreaming? When will I become more pure spiritually? When? Lord, purify me of all this filth. Lord, absolve me of my youthful sins.

*The bar at a café. The television is on, showing the BCH news with the sound turned off. The star presenter Snowflake (no longer smiling) reports on a war. Volodya looks her over carefully, drinks beer, chews pistachios.*

### **VOLODYA**

The only thing I can't figure out is why people wage war. Man, they're always at war... For what? Why? Money? Principles? I don't get it. I mean, with Hitler it made sense. But what's this going on now? Man, live and let live. I just really don't know. I don't get this politics. I mean, have these people never felt pain or something?

*"BCH" station identification and an ad for "Eternity is Ahead! Infinity is no Limit!" Bushy-Tail appears on screen, says something and smiles. She is framed by the words "Icon of the Season." Volodya turns on the sound.*

### **BUSHY-TAIL**

In the Far North we have icicles like you've never seen here. Our icicles flow off the roof over the windows and it's like the houses are encased in ice. Icicles like that are really dangerous. If an icicle like that falls on your head, it's all over.



*"BCH" station identification and an ad for "No Fear in Love."*

**VOLODYA**

What a stupid death

*Snowstorm and Orangina drink coffee at the next table. Orangina wears a black dress and has a pure expression on her face. She wears no make-up and her hair is pulled back simply. She holds a big Book.*

**SNOWSTORM**

Look, I have everything. I've achieved everything I wanted to achieve. What is there for me to ask of God? I don't know. I have everything I've ever wanted. You see my eyes?

**ORANGINA**

You have blue, blue eyes

**SNOWSTORM**

Look into my retinas. What do you see there? Do you even see a hint of sorrow?

**ORANGINA**

No, there's no sorrow in them

**SNOWSTORM**

What about fear?

**ORANGINA**

No, there's no fear in them

**SNOWSTORM**

Love?

**ORANGINA**

No

**SNOWSTORM**

Come on, look closer. What do you see there?

**ORANGINA**

There's nothing there at all

**SNOWSTORM**

I even bought the exact car I wanted to have

**ORANGINA**

What kind?

**SNOWSTORM**

A Peugeot. Convertible.

*Jail cell. A sunbeam comes through the window and hits  
Blizzard right on the crown of the head.*

**BLIZZARD**

But love turned out to be something else altogether. Not connected to what I wanted to have. I had hope, I lived in constant expectation of something. But it turns out love is bound up only with whatever you hope to give. You can count on requited love only if fortune smiles on you. But I understand now that's not essential. It's as if my tears help me thaw out. I always prayed and I always pray. I've begun to believe in God. When I was born I was such a beautiful baby and then stuff got in the way. My head got chock full of filth and I set off down the wrong road -

*The café. Snowstorm looks at Orangina. Tears run down Orangina's cheeks.*

**SNOWSTORM**

You're beautiful. Laid-back and deliberate. I love watching you bring a cigarette up to your mouth

**ORANGINA**

I simply cannot quit smoking

**SNOWSTORM**

There's a dreaminess in your eyes

**ORANGINA**

Oh, I can't listen to that anymore

**SNOWSTORM**

And indifference. To everything happening this very moment

**ORANGINA**

*(Puts out her cigarette)* In order to quit smoking you just have to not smoke

**SNOWSTORM**

What are you reading?

**ORANGINA**

A new book

**SNOWSTORM**

I had one like that

**ORANGINA**

I don't read fiction at all anymore

**SNOWSTORM**

*(Taking a call on his cell)* Hello. I'm mainstream. Yes, I currently am in demand as never before. *(Looks at his image on the television.)* Your call has confirmed that once again

*Jail cell.*

**BLIZZARD**

It's like my heart iced over and turned to stone. It's numb, but that's normal, they say. They say that's natural. It happens to 94 percent of human beings. Now, of course, I realize I have never loved anyone, that all I ever had was a nagging desire for everyone to love and admire me. I wanted to find that one person who would love me. It's like I was preparing myself as a gift for someone. I tanned myself in a salon. I love nothing but my own body, never even guessing that love was passing me by at that very moment. We shared nothing but temporary physical pleasures, which we all mistakenly call by one and the same name

*Lenochka, Maniac and Snowflake enter the café and take off their coats. The girls kiss Orangina, take off their coats and other items, taking more and more and more clothing off.*

**LENOCHKA**

After that I immediately went and had a glass of wine. Then I went and indulged in the seven deadly sins

**SNOWFLAKE**

How was that?

**LENOCHKA**

In my thoughts, I mean

**MANIAC**

I went out and immediately lit up

**ORANGINA**

When you smoke, your prayers do not reach God

**LENOCHKA**

Why's that?

**ORANGINA**

Because they cling to the earth like smoke

**SNOWFLAKE**

Angels come flying when you make the sign of the cross

**MANIAC**

And when you swear they fly away

**SNOWFLAKE**

A very bad hangover and deep depression

**LENOCHKA**

You'd think somebody could at least call, some guy of some sort

**ORANGINA**

You're off limits. You're married

**SNOWFLAKE**

Two men told me they love me today

**MANIAC**

And you want more, don't you?

**LENOCHKA**

*(Nods towards Orangina)* Can somebody get her out of her trance?

**ORANGINA**

I downed a vodka and it had no effect at all. Stone cold sober

**LENOCHKA**

How can you possibly drink vodka?

**SNOWFLAKE**

You can't

**MANIAC**

Vodka? There ain't nothin' better

**SNOWFLAKE**

God, what I didn't drink yesterday

*They all look over the menu.*

Green tea? **SNOWSTORM**

Jasmine **LENOCHKA**

And Coca-Cola **ORANGINA**

I drank whiskey and martinis yesterday **SNOWFLAKE**

They even have parmesan carpaccio with mushrooms **LENOCHKA**

Parmesan is a no-no **MANIAC**

I don't eat mushrooms **SNOWSTORM**

Why not? **LENOCHKA**

They make me want to vomit **SNOWSTORM**

They remind him of other mushrooms that he can't eat anymore **MANIAC**

People who have ingested a lot of mushrooms usually can't even talk about it **LENOCHKA**

Let alone eat them **SNOWFLAKE**

I know **MANIAC**

Is fish out, too? **LENOCHKA**

**ORANGINA**

Out

**SNOWSTORM**

I don't eat broccoli and I don't eat carrots and I don't eat sauerkraut

**MANIAC**

It's easy for me, I'm a vegetarian. I don't even touch meat

**ORANGINA**

I absolutely love carrots

**SNOWFLAKE**

You've lost weight

**ORANGINA**

Ten pounds in a week. I keep getting skinnier and skinnier

**LENOCHKA**

There's something criminal about that

**MANIAC**

You just have a complex about it

**SNOWSTORM**

But a nun's habit would become you

**LENOCHKA**

What about me?

**MANIAC**

You too

**SNOWFLAKE**

And me?

**ORANGINA**

It would become anyone

**LENOCHKA**

And a salad

**SNOWFLAKE**

How about shrimp?

**MANIAC**

That's cheating then

**LENOCHKA**

Can't have café glacé

**SNOWFLAKE**

Should I have a martini?

**MANIAC**

Against the rules

**LENOCHKA**

But you know, there's something to that - abstaining for forty days

**SNOWFLAKE**

Fifty

**MANIAC**

(Closing the menu) Okay, that's it. Mineral water and black bread for everybody.

**SNOWFLAKE**

Only let's not be fanatics about it.

*The street. Snowstorm leaves the café.*

**SNOWSTORM**

Today I'm so frivolous,  
Gracious and careless.  
Melancholically dissatisfied with everything  
I sail to meet my fate at midstream

*Bushy-Tail comes walking down the street, leading a dog on a leash. She carries a glossy magazine with her photo on the cover.*

*Snowstorm heads toward her; stops by his new car.*

Hey

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I didn't recognize you right away in that cap

**SNOWSTORM**

That's a pretty coat you've got. You remember that movie *A Man and a Woman*?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

No

**SNOWSTORM**

He's a race car driver and she goes around in this coat

**BUSHY-TAIL**

How're you doin'?

**SNOWSTORM**

I want to buy myself a T-shirt. I want to print a prayer on the back for everybody to read. I'll write, "Lord, thank You, Lord, for all the beautiful things You have given me."

**BUSHY-TAIL**

That's cool

**SNOWSTORM**

*(Looking at the dog)* That's a pretty dog. Boy or girl?

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Boy

**SNOWSTORM**

Yeah... Women are more sexy than men, of course

**BUSHY-TAIL**

I don't know about that -

**SNOWSTORM**

Men are more horny, but they're not as sexy

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Animals are smarter than we are

**SNOWSTORM**

They don't get hung up thinking

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Yeah

**SNOWSTORM**

I love animals. Like Churchill



**BUSHY-TAIL**

Me too. Like Bridget Bardot

**SNOWSTORM**

*(Leads Bushy-Tail over to his car. Opens the door for her)* If I was an animal I'd be a bear. That's the perfect lifestyle. You sleep half the year.

*Volodya comes out of the café. Looks around. Looks at his watch. Looks at Bushy-Tail, Snowstorm, the Peugeot.*

**BUSHY-TAIL**

Those little bear cubs are so cute -

**SNOWSTORM**

Basically, you've got to love each other and be cool about it. Main thing is that nobody start a war

*Volodya sees Bushy-Tail get into the Peugeot convertible. He takes out his pen and writes down the license plate.*

*He stands and watches the car disappear into the distance as if he has gone blind and deaf and keeps going over something in his mind that he experienced long ago.*

**VOLODYA**

Bones lay in the ground  
Gloom covers the earth  
Everything there was between us  
Has drowned in my heart

*The café.*

**LENOCHKA**

*(To Orangina)* When are you coming back to work?

**ORANGINA**

I'm not

**LENOCHKA**

Why?

**ORANGINA**

Do you really want to keep doing all this?

**LENOCHKA**

*(Thinks)* Well, yes

**SNOWFLAKE**

Of course we do

**MANIAC**

As if there were any other choice -

*Kissing, Bushy-Tail and Snowstorm race down the road at a break-neck speed.*

*Blizzard in his jail cell. He's drawing a tattoo on his shoulder - the face of Jesus Christ in a crown of thorns.*

*Dressed in a space suit, Maniac slips an engagement ring on Snowflake's finger.*

*Snowflake in a rose dress, peonies in her hair.*

*Lenochka is pregnant, she rubs her big belly.*

*Orangina in a nun's habit.*

*Volodya still stands there by the café.*

*With a horrendous crash a huge chunk of ice crashes to the ground just inches from him.*

*Volodya lifts his head.*

*The sun is warm.*

*Snow is melting.*

*Spring has come.*

**THE END**

*"Flying" may not be staged, performed, read or recorded in any fashion whatsoever without the express permission of the author and the translator.*

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