

Road Memoir : libretto

EPISODE #7 : "The Bus"

The Investigator (spoken) :

So I phoned in sick, downloaded half a dozen maps, cleared the kitchen table and started to piece together her journey from the fragments of her story. I wanted to make sure that it was going to lead where I thought it would.

Cross-referencing texts and contacts from her phone I narrowed down her close friends and family to a few names and, tracing their polling records, I found what I thought must be the cottage. I couldn't trace the route she took over those first "5 or 6 days on foot" but I knew her destination, just 40 miles from her city home. Hoping my U.N. security clearance would see me through the road blocks, I set off.

The Woman (sung) :

It doesn't matter
Which side it was.
Doesn't matter
Which side
Felt they had
Something to fear
From old men,
Mothers and children.

We were trapped
Inside the bus
When the firing started.
Caged.
Like dumb animals.
Helpless.
Unable to avoid
The depressing
Inevitability of
Our own deaths.

Should have kept
Off the roads.
Should have stayed
In the trees.
Move by night.
Stay hidden.

But the guy in the yellow vest
At the soup kitchen
Spoke of a bus.

Taking refugees,
Every couple of days,
West.
Away from the fighting.
To a safe place,
A no fire zone,
Somewhere where they
Could eat and sleep
And be safe.

And I'm just so tired of walking.
Just so tired of not knowing
Where it is that I'm going.
Just so tired of chaos.
And the longing to feel safe.

And I'm not on my knees
Begging for their mercies
But if I could somehow
Make them see, I'm not
Some revolutionary.
I don't belong
With these refugees.
I'm just a normal person.
I didn't choose to be this...
Don't deserve to be this...
To be this...
To be here.

The Investigator (spoken) :

The quiet of that small, hidden valley, hung motionless in the air. Stood as she had described it - after a shaded bend at the end of a lane, a lane overgrown now through lack of use - the cottage had been burnt down since she left, its roof collapsed in. I circled it, finding myself, for the first time, in her footsteps. Peering in the blackened windows, imagining her inside, trapped between the pages of history unsure what the story held next for her.

The Woman (sung) :

So I fell in line.
And when the bus came
Up I climbed.
Sat by the window.
Slept and dreamed
For hours probably.
Only to be woken
When the firing began.

I crawled to the door.
Over bodies,

Through blood
And broken glass.
The air exploding
With noise about me.
And someone
Pulling me out.
Someone
Dragging me out.
Away from the screaming.
Away from the carnage.
Away from death.