



## The Horizons of Joseph

*Joseph stood barefooted on the ground; he looked at the distance where water kissed travellers on boats.*



*Joseph often spoke to himself as expressing his multiple personalities. To the outside it seemed somewhat like an internal conflict, of few characters embodied in one.*

Ever since I remember my father, he was moving around with a truck and burial paraphernalia at the back. We lived in a town in the vicinity of Cork and this was my dad's job – grave-digging and burying our community members – a task that included also the transportation of the deceased. I grew up in it. I went through adolescence with the knowledge on burial rule and thus became accustomed to the sight, the smell, the routine. It followed me most of my life, and so did my homosexuality.

When I was 16 I was at home together with my girlfriend, and we were waiting for my father to come and drive us to the park. We waited for about an hour, after which we decided not to wait anymore and walk to the park that was about few kilometers away. It was twilight. My girlfriend and I were walking. Not many cars passed us by, on a road leading from a small town in Ireland to – basically anywhere outside of it. At the horizon the sun switched off. I often felt that the horizon – a point so distant from me, was as elusive as my desires. I therefore thought it was a fiction. I felt that I would never arrive at the horizon; Never arrive at my desires. Never, will they, arrive to me either.

At dusk, lights were pulsing for us from a vehicle that rushed in our direction. It stopped and a man popped out and said; "I am sorry Joseph for not turning up on time like I promised, but I still have one last work to do. Hop on you both and I will take you with me, and later drop you at the park."

That night, Abigail and me sat in the car watching my father preparing to bury someone. That someone was Danny Pa. Danny Pa. didn't have a wife, nor children, nor parents or siblings. He had no relatives anywhere. He was a loner, a traveller, and an inspiration to many. I hated the thought that Danny Pa. was about to be crunched together with his grand stories, rendered into silence by father's routine of digging, pressing a body into a hole, and covering... Covering...

Abigail seemed to me impatient. Honestly, I think she was a bit shocked. I looked at her eyes that suggested she thought of 'the lucrative profession my father had made for himself'. To cut the thread of her thought, I suggested it might go faster if we went and assisted on the task. So the three of us stood inside the pit, as we prepared Danny Pa's grave. With shovels and spades we first dug and then pressed him in, covered, and pressed the earth on top when we were done. When he was done.

Much later in life, it occurred to me that that day, the three of us did not only bury this dear traveller, but that we also closed the lid on something alien to me. Together – my father, my girlfriend, and me had also buried my inability to determine my own sexuality. Let me explain.

We are born with little access to a sovereign straightness, which pressures men to go on brave tasks and fulfil themselves by first – fulfilling a nation. Straightness is an indispensable thing, which even if happily negated, means to negate a society that one is also part of.

It is reciprocal.

Nothing is thoughtful in habituating the covering and pressing of a routine of codes and behaviors on people.

If I could do something thoughtful, I would go on my own brave journey to somewhere unknown and seek an unknown tribe. As I find them I should set my research and sit hours every day to watch them. I would utilize every ethnographic tool at my disposal, to learn about their customs, lives, and their deaths. I would have each of my reports ordered flawlessly. When time is ripe, I would offer a translation of them, in a book titled –  
New Ireland.



New Ireland

The people found here are clean. They wash themselves in the river few times a day. One becomes greatly accustomed to the act of blending in nature – become transparent as water, as camouflaged as animals between plants. When walking here, it is hard to distinct what is human, what is rock. The residents here pay more respect to nature, and so with the passing of time and seasons, I begin to notice little celebrations taking place on the shore. At first I observe these only from the distance, not to act churlishly. I see hands in the air, and a flock of birds reacting with excitement. The whole event seems so silent. Then closer. Again, winter or summer, day and day, closer I come by. The hands raised up, the people are muted by a flock of roaring birds going up and down. Closer and closer I learn about the nature of these celebrations. I learn that this is nothing but a funeral procession of a deceased member of the tribe. The people here are clean and pay respect to the creation. No person is buried in the ground, nor burnt and scattered as ash in the air or dropped into the sea, as they make a shared effort to maintain the creation uncontaminated. No. No bury. What they do is much more creative than seen on television, and is executed much more with belief than with courage. Here, every dead person is butchered – sliced into pieces with the wave and landing of a utility that has a somewhat axe appeal. The rough remains are then chopped into smaller pieces by a utility that resembles a long machete. In a festive celebration the tribe gathers. Children and adults all together stand in day light, as they toss and lob human flesh to the birds. Toddlers who try to imitate members of the clan, are confronted with the weight of human pieces – rests of internal organs, muscles, bones. At their disposal, arrive their brothers and sisters who mince the chunks with their 'rock against rock' technique.

Here and there one spots a toddler chewing on limbs and fingers – a derivative of the uncontrollable need to put everything in their mouths, to pacify the pain of teething. And so it happened that on one occasion, one toddler was left unattended, chewed on some flab, choked and died. All the men around were so absorbed in the celebration that they did not notice the drama. In the midst of the celebration the toddler's corpse was found, and then soon with no further hesitation chopped, and sliced. The body was small enough, and a few chops were sufficient to have it tossed at the flying creeps. New Ireland. Unlike Ireland.

Here man strictly maintains the order found in the circle of life: man eats bird, bird eats man.

Messy habits, but with time I feel at home and grow accustomed to this routine of stabbing, chopping and lobbing pieces of flesh to flocks of birds.

*In New Ireland he sought for what he had lost. His memory deterred  
and so was mine.*



*In New Ireland, page 206, his remark seems insignificant, yet indicative of the danger that passed on him:*

This is a past I am describing to you as a future.  
Now it is clear, as every desire I had. Have. Or yet to have.  
You people. Few people. You are the new other.



*And so one day, chased out and tired, he had arrived to shore. In his hands rested the manuscript. He looked underneath him. There was silence and sound in his head – of hits and pauses of shovels and spades.*



*He would bury 'New Ireland' and thus he would save it.  
Maybe one day someone will find it, bind it and publish it for him.*

*As he thought he was saved, he noticed the presence of the tribe,  
which he gladly negated.*

*He then had realized that he was born many times, here and there  
– where he had gone on a travel, which spurred from the pursuit  
to kill and bury any other sovereignty, including that of his own  
desires.*



*Here and there. That evening. Or not.*

*He began a search for a new place that was to be based on a memory  
of an old home, and on an idea of a journey that advanced on him  
by the acquaintance he had once made with a man who led his life  
across the seas and who moved between suns that blinded him, but  
which never made him discouraged. Like all old fools, he was also  
deceived by a horizon, and another one, and another one that had  
deceived him.*

The Horizons of Joseph, is a performance piece presented at the end of NDSM residency, Amsterdam.

Inspired by true facts and from and from a conversation with actor Joseph Kearny.

This publication evokes the residues of the work and its process, in effort to make the ephemeral things such as words, sounds and choreography, prevail.

- Performance -

Performance:	<b>Joseph Kearny</b>
Concept:	<b>R'm Aharoni</b>
Conversed with:	<b>Juan Duque</b>
Text:	<b>R'm Aharoni</b>
Music:	<b>Diego Soifer</b>

- Publication -

Text & Design:	<b>R'm Aharoni</b>
Photography:	<b>Juan Duque</b>
Editor:	<b>Sam De Vocht</b>

Made possible with the generous help of the Flemish Community:



