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Reperforming The John Cage experiences

Alexandra Niemi
University of Iowa

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REPERFORMING *THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES*

by

Alexandra Niemi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Comparative Literature-
Translation
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2014

Thesis Supervisors: Professor Christopher Merrill
Adjunct Professor Russell S. Valentino

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts
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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Finding

Vincent Tholomé's book *The John Cage Experiences* turns the famous and perplexing composer into a poetic experiment. The result is a hybrid: a collection of theatrical poems that twists biographical facts, then marches calmly toward a daily newspaper to consider its potential for making beautiful music. The figure of John Cage stands stoically and haphazardly in the middle, possibly driving through Arizona or contending with a black hole in his head. The book relates its characters and readers by presenting the shared experience of the gloriously banal: "This is the way we say things. In fact. We ask ourselves a lot of things on the subject of John Cage a man like everyone else meaning like you and me like you and me." In this text, any person can embody John Cage in his confrontations with turning off a lamp or buying a vacuum cleaner. It's in this surprising encounter with the mundane that *The John Cage Experiences* stands out, poking fun at concepts of greatness and fame. My discovery of Tholomé's work took place on an equally ordinary stage in the University of Iowa library, checked out with a large stack of poetry books from all over francophonie. A French poetry blog had dropped Tholomé's name as a subscriber to the "aggravation aesthetic of the 90s" and, being unsure what that entailed, I had tentatively searched for him. I was immediately struck by the presentation of the book: chunks of dense text strewn with periods and liling italicized stage directions. Even before I had read a word, it was nothing at all like the other books I had pulled from the shelves. But the reading experience was the opposite of the text's appearance. It wasn't dense at all, but provided a kind of quirky lightheartedness that also spoke to the complexities of performance and fame.

Tholomé was one of the first Belgian poets I had read. Most of my education on literature in French, even when I studied in Switzerland, had centered around writers from France. When I began researching Tholomé and other poets from Belgium, I was dismayed to see how many interesting writers had been overlooked. The history of Belgian poetry in French, which I talk about a bit below, revealed a complicated relationship to France that I had never explored in depth. Tholomé himself identifies strongly with being Belgian versus being lumped in with French writers. When I asked him about the biographical aspects of *The John Cage Experiences*, he said:

Other facts or “real” characters are present: the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cage, Merce Cunningham... The “noises” that John Cage integrates into his music... The “instructions” to the reader that refer to lectures given by Cage... Basically, yes, there are allusions to Cage here and there... for the rest: invention, pure invention... You know, I am Belgian and as a Belgian there is a propensity to invent, to go elsewhere, to not remain *stricto sensu* with two feet in factual reality... Being Belgian is not the same as being French (Tholomé).

The Belgian poetic tradition reflects this sense of invention. I ultimately chose to translate *The John Cage Experiences* for this inventiveness and Tholomé’s deftly shattered images that play with the reader’s sense of performance and reality.

Vincent Tholomé and his Influences

Vincent Tholomé is a writer and performer, born in Belgium in the 1960s. “The golden sixties,” he says, “though he is not a golden boy” (Bela). Tholomé has written over a dozen collections of poetry. *The John Cage Experiences*, published by Le Clou dans le fer in 2007, won the Prix Triennal de Poésie de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles in 2011. He is a member of several bands, such as Big band de littératures féroces, (kwad), Troupe poétique nomade and Trio Wyrd with fellow artists Maja Jantar and

Sebastian Dicenaire. Trio Wyrð adapted his book *Kirjubaejarklaustur* for performance and radio, garnering a Prix special du jury from Berlin's Europa Festival (Joyland).

Tholomé's projects reflect a fluid approach to poetry and its potential for performance.

One of the first things that drew me to his writing was this sense of the effects his text could have on a live audience. Though poetry is often read aloud, straddling a line between music and written word, I'd never seen the connection drawn out so explicitly in a written text. The stage directions and calls for sound outside of the words on the page strike up a conversation about the potential for pairing both movement and improvisation with poetry. In an interview conducted by Jan Baetens, Tholomé states the following about his theories on improvisation in a literary context:

I love collective projects... We don't always know what to say. Something that, personally, we've never done, will emerge from that. From the experience. All true art is experimental. Meaning: open the world, reopen what was closed. It's not just a question of new forms. It's most of all a state of mind. Of curiosity. Of pleasure in testing things. Working with improvisers has taught me that: the taste of putting everything back on the table... To follow paths that you wouldn't follow spontaneously. I asked myself how does one find, in writing, this grain of salt? (Baetens 210)

For Tholomé, improvisation stems from a sense of curiosity, of pleasure in finding an unexpected route through a sea of literary opportunities. This element of curiosity about the world at large also reflects the theories of John Cage, who looked to the sounds of the material world for inspiration. The playful aspects in Tholomé's work rest in a conceptual juxtaposition of potentials: potential sound, potential performance and potential reading experience.

Tholomé's own journey to writing reflects the sense of playfulness and curiosity in his work. After exchanging a few emails with him in early 2014, he kindly allowed me to interview him. I asked Tholomé about the beginnings of his career and he told me

that he'd reached thirty and writing was an unachieved dream, something he had wanted to try as a young adult and never managed to do. To find a source of inspiration, Tholomé and a group of friends with similar ambitions started a review called *ttc*. Through this review, he encountered many different types of writing and formulated a direction for his own work. The review is no longer in existence, but Tholomé has stated that he owes the beginnings of his writing career to his work on the review.

Outside of his work at *ttc*, Tholomé's early influences were Jean-Pierre Verheggen and Eugène Savitzkaya, two contemporary Belgian poets. Verheggen's poetry feels more like a parody of poetry with a playful spirit that one could easily trace in Tholomé. In her essay on Verheggen, Jean-Marie Klinkenberg describes a history of francophone literature in Belgium fraught with insecurity about the French language and the country's relationship to France. Tholomé himself describes the act of writing as a Belgian as being "on the margins" (Baetens 209). This insecurity, according to Klinkenberg, led to two general reactions in French-language Belgian literature: purism and rebellious overwriting. The first seeks to create a type of neoclassical verse, similar to the French tradition, with structured, regular versification. The second entails a more experimental approach, like writing in archaisms (De Coster), irregular syntactical structures (Elskamp), and even multilingual texts (Piqueray). These two directions were not always mutually exclusive and Verheggen, in a way, draws from both, using "a duplicitous language: the formula designates on one hand the known and in both senses of the term, the common, and, on the other, the languages of a unique individual, while summarizing the intellectual universe full of the affectation of certain restricted circles" (Klinkenberg 30). Verheggen attempts to undermine poetic norms while simultaneously playing into

them, a clear connection to Tholomé's own experiments with form. As we can see in the following example, Verheggen keeps a fairly regular soundscape paired with an ordinary subject. In his book *Sodom and Grammar (Sodome et Grammaire)*, Verheggen explores the fruit salad as art object. Below are the French and an English version of the poem:

Poème pour réussir une bonne salade de fruits
(jolie ! jolie!)

Les bananes — les bananes sans os! —
proviendront des républiques bananières
où on aura établi de bons réseaux
et les kiwis, des pentes du Kiwimandjaro
d'où on ramènera également les blancs d'œufs battus en
neige !

Les mangues — excellentes les mangues ! —
de Manguechester, en France
où on en mange surtout aux 24 heures du Mangue,
24 heures de suite !

On s'approvisionnera en cerises
tantôt sur l'allegâto, tantôt sur le staggâto !
(cela dépendra tantôt du pianiste,
tantôt du piano, il faut le comprendre !).

Les fraises seront de Vaud, en Suisse romande
— la fraise du Vaud est excellente ! —
(on les préférera d'ailleurs à celles du Kosovo,
il faut garder cette exigence !) et les mûres
viendront de l'oreille même de la maîtresse de maison
si elle écoute bien nos recommandations !

Quant aux noix, on aura le choix
entre celles de Pékan, de Pékin ou des vergers
du péquenot voisin ! (30-1)

Poem for making a successful fruit salad
(Lovely! Lovely!)

The bananas — the boneless bananas! —
will be a product of the banana republics
where secure trusty networks abound
and the kiwis, from the slopes of Kiwimandjaro
where we'll find beaten egg-whites of snow!
The mangoes — such excellent mangoes! —
from Mangchester, in France
where we eat above all mango 24 hours a day Mango,

24 hours straight!
 We will stock up on cherries
 now on the legato, now on the staccato!
 (this will depend now on the pianist,
 now on the piano, it must be understood!).
 The strawberries will be from Vaud, in French-speaking Switzerland
 — the Vaudois strawberry is really first-rate! —
 (anyway we'll prefer them to the ones from Kosovo,
 standards must be met!) and the blackberries
 will come from the very ear of the mansion's mistress
 if she listens closely to our recommendations!
 As for the nuts, we will have our pick
 between fisher, Peking and orchard
 of our country bumpkin neighbor!

The lightheartedness of Verheggen along with his propensity to rhyme illustrates some of the Belgian literary tendencies described by Klinkenberg. It's also worth noting that, though he's penned over twenty volumes of poetry, only one of them has been translated into English. The difficulty with translating Verheggen lies with his offhanded soundplay. The rhymes are dropped casually and have a comic effect. Casual humor is also one of the more challenging elements to translate in *The John Cage Experiences*. Tholomé's work has a similar relationship to play mixed with restrictive elements, recalling the Oulipo writers, a French-dominated movement, whom he claims as a direct influence. Tholomé, however, draws from a different bank of formal tendencies, creating more of an altered prose-poetic style than Verheggen.

Eugène Savitzkaya is a well-known Belgian writer whose prose poetry has a clear influence on Tholomé. Savitzkaya has written in several genres, but his prose poems have a feeling of simple starkness that I think speaks to some of the darker moments in *The John Cage Experiences*, particularly the instances where the narrator speaks of Mrs. Cage's hopelessness in the face of her marriage, or the black hole in John Cage's head: "John cage. A man. Like anyone. Like you and me. Thinks john cage. From his black

hole. From the hole he has. Like anyone. In the head. Somewhere.” This concept of a hole in the head that is common to humanity and its condition echoes the concept of masks in Savitzkaya’s work. Here are some examples from *Rules of Solitude*, translated by Gian Lombardo:

It’s possible that instead of possessing a single face that we all bear an assortment of masks. And it seems that’s why we’re so different from one another. Sometimes the very slightest bruising of our stock face is enough to expose the most intimate and venerable silhouette from our skin – our hidden and essential portrait, the genuine inhabitant.

I carry inside me, as always, very precious, my skull. With the utmost care I conceal this death’s head well. But it’s also what appears in sharpest relief in stark daylight. Such a glimpse is the sole roadblock on the path of the infinite.

No face is new. They’re all revealed one day or another until they’re bleached by sun, consumed by a night they perfume, enumerated in the same way as they’ve always been, beaten and stunted. Praise be their persistence! Hurrah until death! (3-7)

The idea that we all possess “a single face” speaks to Tholomé’s representation of John Cage as inhabitable by any human or reader. Savitzkaya states that “no face is new” just as John Cage represents no transcendent example of humanity in his fame, but is thrust again and again into mundane battles, even ones that he loses: “Then after taking the

vacuum out of its box john cage's wife will say that he is insanely stupid." The concept of masks and holes in the head that everyone shares also proposes a fluid sense of self — one that has an essential quality, but possesses the ability to inhabit different qualities and respond to the environment surrounding the self, in a sort of modernist sense. The other curious thing that Savitzkaya exhibits is the cross between experimentation and purism described earlier — his poetry is spare to the point of reaching towards a philosophical minimalism, while simultaneously subverting poetic norms in its simplicity. There is very little ornamentation in *Rules of Solitude*, even the idea that the poem is putting forth a set of "rules" suggests a list of faceless, anonymous principles. Tholomé's work, while playful, also possesses a certain starkness in its presentation, guided by rules that stop and start the reader: "Another time. Much later. John cage will wonder which hands dismantled his red and chrome race car. For what purpose. For example. Will they have recycled the car body. How many children will swing inside its Michelin tires." The dismantling of the car represents a new phase of its existence — though the Cage narrator still views it as intrinsically his race car. The punctuation provides a level of regimentation that reflects the concept of "rules" put forward by Savitzkaya, along with a mirrored concept of self.

The final influential figure that I will explore in detail here is French poet Christophe Tarkos. Tholomé has claimed that Tarkos was the writer whom he felt gave him the ability to write:

He was our age and he showed us that it was possible to write. That the preceding generation had not said everything. That we had "the right" to return to a certain simplicity. To "intellectualize" writing less. Personally, reading Tarkos was, for me, like finally receiving permission to write (Tholomé).

Within the French poetic context, Tarkos breaks with a resurgence of neoclassical and lyrical styles. Along with several other poets published by Al Dante such as Christophe Fiat, Nathalie Quintane, and Charles Pennequin, Tarkos formed one of the main groups that set the aesthetic tone of French poetry in the 1990s (Colin 64). He is also greatly influenced by improvisation: He and Tholomé even gave a few performances together before Tarkos' death. Renaud Ego enunciates the following about the qualities of Tarkos' work:

His diversity and his prolixity – this last being the operating and exploratory condition of the first – nevertheless integrates certain regularities: a semantic minimalism; a materialist bias in the choice of objects or situations on which the poems develop; a work on the creation and organization of writing functioning along the principles of repetition and variation born of permutations and displacements in every sense of the elements that compose them... this poetry owes a lot to the sense of improvisation and scenic performance which Christophe Tarkos practices remarkably (155).

The sense of simplicity and repetition described in Tarkos' work along with the sense of improvisation could also be applied to Tholomé. There is even a rapport between the visual elements of Tholomé's poetry and Tarkos' work, as in the following excerpt from his poem "important to think":

It's important to think, to think like that, to think because thinking has a meaning, there is that and there is thinking, thinking like that, all alone, in the air, it's important to think, to think like that. Important to think, to think like that, hovering in the air.

The thought that should go faster than its own drowsiness, than the poultice of the floors and walls, faster than the succession of each station, faster than the white round clouds, pulverized, sleeps.

The cars circulate in the streets. The sun passes on the cloud in the sky of Zuydcoote. The series of names on road map n° 510 forms a memory. The sun passes perhaps on a cloud in the sky of

Zuycoot. The name of the streets, the car's papers.
 The neighborhood trains, I systematically used the
 words torrents and waterfalls, don't belong to me,
 one day I discover the names

Quaëdypre Crochte
 Socx Bissezeele
 Wulverdinghe Arnèke
 Wormhout
 Spreuwkoot Koksijde
 Bambecque
 Oostvleteren
 Zuytpeene Wip. (162)

In this poem, we see a similar dedication to repetition and the importance of ordinary objects, like a road map. Tholomé's work also places special emphasis on place names, with "Arizona" and "New York City" and other locations meriting the only capital letters in his book (that don't come directly after a period). Tholomé's piece has a similar incantatory quality, though it forges this quality through punctuating discreet units of a grammatically complete sentence, whereas Tarkos does not follow any particular sentence structure.

The John Cage Experiences shows a particular dedication to exploring different poetic processes. Tholomé describes the book as a departure from his other works in its use of what he coins a "dream catcher," a mechanism or game that forces the author to surprise himself, allowing the process to lead him towards things he would not otherwise have done. He is largely inspired by the readings and performances he gives, following the tradition of improvisation outlined above. "Dream catchers" he sees as being similar to partners in an improvisational routine who provide unexpected elements that can be integrated or rejected from the performance. In *The John Cage Experiences*, these dream catchers were provided through the structuring elements, such as using John Cage's concept of "chance operations." The influence of John Cage can be felt not only in the

obvious, though sometimes misleading, use of his name, but also in the mechanisms used to create the poems. The following section will discuss John Cage and how his theories inform Tholomé's work.

John Cage: An Intermittent Biography

John Cage's influence on Tholomé's work extends beyond his role as the central character in this poetic, theatrical, biographical hybrid. Tholomé states on the back of *The John Cage Experiences* that his goal is "To write a text – one text – where chance will intervene not as a theme, but as a structural element, necessary to the composition." For this reason, I will explore the life and work of John Cage in more depth to demonstrate the poetic implications for his theories of chance operations and how they correlate with the poetic structures in *The John Cage Experiences*.

John Cage was born on September 5, 1912 to the reportedly eccentric family of John Milton Cage Sr. and Lucretia "Crete" Harvey. His father worked as a minister who also moonlighted as an inventor. One of his most famous creations, a gasoline-powered submarine, gave off excessive bubbles, but managed to stay underwater for a solid thirteen hours. Unfortunately, due to the bubbles, it was not a success. Because of John Sr.'s occasional pioneering failures, the Cage family often found itself bankrupted and uprooted, so John Jr. moved constantly throughout his childhood. Cage described his mother as chronically depressed, contributing to an unhappy home life. John Jr. wasn't a popular child and threw himself into his schoolwork, eventually graduating from high school as valedictorian. His subsequent career at Pomona College, however, only lasted a couple of years, ending in his disillusionment with the educational system and a

penchant for answering essay exams with long, Gertrude Stein-like poems. He left for Europe, hoping to pursue something along the lines of painting, poetry or music. Cage spent most of his time in Paris studying everything from fifteenth-century Gothic architecture to poetry – an early indication of his expansive intellect and polymathy (Nicholls 12). After his return from Europe, he was still unsure of the type of art he wished to pursue, until he met composer Arnold Schoenberg.

Schoenberg, an impenetrable figure who often discouraged his students from actually pursuing music, was one of the great minds of musical composition in the first half of the twentieth century and has influenced many musicians, composers and theorists, including Theodor Adorno and Glenn Gould. Despite his reticence to take on a mentoring role, he must have seen something in Cage, allegedly agreeing to teach him for free in return for a promise from Cage that he dedicate his life to music. This was the moment that John Cage attributes to his choice of life-path: though he wrote widely throughout his life, he is mostly known as a composer.

Tholomé's narrative strangely excises the "great minds" that influenced Cage as it plays with the narrative of the composer's life, or rather a snippet of his life that focuses only on the year 1935, something like the kernel of a poetic Bildungsroman. It's around the Schoenberg period of Cage's life that *The John Cage Experiences* introduces us to the composer. When Tholomé's John Cage first appears, he's racing through the deserts of Arizona, fatefully crashing into the woman he will marry. It's true that before his lifelong partnership with Merce Cunningham, John Cage was married to a woman named Xenia Andreevna Kashevaroff. The couple did in fact marry in Yuma, Arizona on June 7th of 1935, but their meeting was not a romantic desert collision as painted in *The John*

Cage Experiences. Kashevaroff was a student at Reed College, one of six daughters of a Russian Orthodox Priest from Juneau, Alaska. She wandered into a Crete's (Cage's mother's) non-profit arts-and-crafts shop where John Cage was working at the time. The composer has stated definitively that for him it was "love at first sight on [his] part, not on hers." In fact, he allegedly proposed to her over a dinner that didn't take place in Arizona at all and which resulted in a dubious response from Kashevaroff. *The John Cage Experiences* interestingly takes place largely in the perspective of Kashevaroff, though she goes unnamed throughout the entire book, referred to only as "Mrs. Cage." Her comments are also always in retrospect, the product of an interview that takes place some unidentified number of years after the actual time of events. The narrator even gives Mrs. Cage the final word in the book:

Mrs. Cage says later. In her living room. To Merce C. To take him definitively out of my life. Him. John Cage. A tender and charming man. An exemplary father. Mrs. Cage says now. An old woman now. In New York City. 3rd floor. However she is still allergic. She says. To truck exhaust for example. For example. Mrs. Cage says. When she hears a. Yes. Truck in the street. I'm turning up the radio a bit. I'm turning up Louis Armstrong a bit. Mrs. Cage says. Thinking and rethinking always of him. John. Her husband. As well as the other. Merce. Missing a gear and failing to suppress the motor. Before even the first turn. Before even the first turn. The first turn to the right. Or the left. She doesn't know anymore. I don't know anymore. Mrs. Cage says. After 18 minutes. Or 4'33". Of silence. Yes. That's it. She says. That's my whole life. She says. That's my whole life with John. John Cage. A nice man. Truly. Truly. She says.

Time in this narrative becomes a fluid space, occupying either 18 minutes or 4'33" (an explicit nod to Cage's theories on silence). Mrs. Cage acts as a sort of missing link in the development of John Cage as a seminal figure. She isn't Schoenberg; she is the purveyor of ordinary experiences, something that Cage explicitly draws on for his work.

There is also a telling biographical shift in placing Xenia at the center of Cage's experience in New York. Cage did move to New York to study with Schoenberg and others, but Xenia did not actually accompany him. The couple spent most of their time in California with Cage's parents and on Hazel Dreis' Santa Monica estate where Xenia apprenticed as a bookbinder. They also remained married until 1945 (Nicholls 31), unlike the end of *The John Cage Experiences*, which suggests an ambiguous 1935 departure on Cage's part with Merce Cunningham, a year that includes events that originally took place over a decade. Tholomé's work takes key figures from Cage's romantic life and central places, but everything is reordered and recontextualized. The focus mostly rests on sensorial, experiential interests, following Cage's views on the importance of surrendering to the conventional: "There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear" (Cage 8). This philosophical claim doesn't rest on theoretical greatness, and the structure of Tholomé's book reflects an undermining of greatness in his characterization of the key players in John Cage's development as an artist. Tholomé also gives little credence to human names, which, as with the example of "mrs. cage" above, aren't capitalized. Only places, environments are worthy of a capital letter, furthering the idea that inspiration does not draw from contact with greatness, with Schoenbergs, but with daily atmospheres that often go unconsidered.

Just as the book creates a funhouse mirror version of John Cage's 1935, so its structure also recalls Cage's later compositional influences in slightly distorted form. In *Silence*, Cage performs his concepts of sound through his lectures and writings, comprised of theoretical discourses punctuated by personal anecdotes. Many of the

essays are formatted to illustrate silence with textual acrobatics and white space to convey the character of his pieces. This experimental textual formatting seems to inspire, or at least is echoed in, Tholomé's text as a poetic device. For comparison's sake, here is an excerpt from Cage's essay "Composition as Process:"

This is a lecture on changes that have taken place in my composition means, with particular reference to what, a decade ago, I termed "structure" and "method." By "structure" was meant the division of a whole into parts; by "method," the note-to-note procedure. Both structure and method (and also

"material"—the sounds and silences of a composition)

were, it seemed to me then, the proper concern of the mind (as opposed to the heart) (one's ideas of order as opposed to one's spontaneous actions); whereas the two last

of these, namely method and material, together with form (the morphology of a continuity) were equally the proper concern of the heart. Composition, then, I viewed, ten years ago, as an activity integrating the opposites, the rational and the irrational, bringing about, i-

deally, a freely moving continuity within a strict division of parts, the sounds, their combination and succession being either logically related or arbitrarily chosen. ¶The strict division of parts, the structure, was a function of the duration aspect of sound, since,

(Cage 18)

While the sentences in this essay have a distinctively dry, academic style, the layout of the text gives it an almost poetic quality. The large gap in column two gives a visual cue for silence with the words broken up in such a way that they almost become autonomous objects. The autonomy of individual sounds has an anesthetizing effect on the text, forcing the reader to forge a different emotional reaction than she would with a text that meets certain expectations of presentation. With regards to emotion Cage states: "Emotion takes place in the person who has it. And sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly" (10). The stopping and starting quality diffuses the text in a way, forcing the reader to engender an emotional experience from the text through the sounds of the words and their silences in discreet units. This structure also gives the reader space to experience the outside reading

environment by preventing the ability to become fully absorbed in the text. Tholomé achieves a similar effect through his use of punctuation and textual presentation:

In 1935. John cage regularly drives around in the Arizona desert inside a red and chrome race car. He regularly caresses the hot steering wheel with his hand when he crosses the hot and truly boiling Arizona desert at top speed. In 1935. In the Arizona desert. John cage raises tons of dust when he goes by. When. In 1935. John cage. In the desert of Arizona. Hears the purring

(here john cage or his equivalent rolls the race car on the table or the floor 5 times)

By strewing periods throughout the text, each clause becomes equalized. The stage directions also appear mid-thought, stopping the flow of the text. The absence of commas in the bulk of the text (with a few exceptions in the italicized stage directions) render grammatically subordinate clauses unsubordinated. Each period draws attention to an individual unit from the entire landscape of the piece, subverting expectations of how each phrase would function in a traditional sentence. Tholomé highlights words like “When.” and “In 1935.” He insists on a rhythm that constantly stops the reader.

Tholomé describes his formal technique as inspired by Cage’s concept of “chance operations,” informed by his explorations of the *I Ching*. Marc G. Jensen describes Cage’s initial foray into chance operations as an exploration in ordered chaos:

With his watershed work the *Music of Changes* (1951), Cage first used chance operations to organise material from pre-composed charts, as a means to construct the final aesthetic surface of the piece in a way that bypassed a reliance on his aesthetic judgment. In this way, deliberately selected compositional materials and rules governing their use are manipulated by random input to create a musical continuity that was intended to be free from the dictates of taste or memory (97-8).

Cage organized his compositions and his writings, as in the above example from *Silence*, according to rules “manipulated by random input” in order to free his works from artistic

norms. If we look toward the *I Ching*, the source of Cage's chance operations, we can see the theoretical root of this view on aesthetics and Tholomé's treatment of John Cage as a poetic figure.

The *I Ching* is the oldest book of divination, composed of 64 sets of six lines called hexagrams. According to Jensen, "the book is intended to produce a detailed examination of the present moment" (98) and "reproduce the tendencies of the universe, which is an embrace of randomness that conceals a hidden order resonating only at a universal level" (102). Lou Harrison first introduced Cage to the *I Ching* in 1943 while Cage was working at the Cornish School, though he did not start fully merging his own compositional charts with the *I Ching* until 1950. His methods were extremely complex:

Sixty-four-cell (8x8) charts, or grids, were prepared for all aspects of the music – sonority, duration, and dynamics- and for each notated gesture it was consequently necessary for Cage to consult the *I Ching*, by thrice tossing coins or yarrow sticks to identify a particular hexagram. The charts of sonorities contained equal amounts of sound and silence; those for duration contained sixty-four separate values, some of which were highly irrational; and the dynamic charts were constructed to allow the continuation of existing dynamics as well as the introduction of new ones (Nicholls 54).

This method of composition became John Cage's primary manner of writing music after 1951. The implications create a very structured, but arbitrary, foundation for music or, as Jensen describes it, "an artistic expression of chaos theory" where "predictability and randomness [coexist] in systems that display both tendencies simultaneously" (100).

Tholomé explained his methodology when I interviewed him, saying that he used two dice and chose 6 concrete elements (characters, natural objects) assigned to numbers one through six. If, for example, a two is rolled, that section of the book will talk about that element. The number of descriptive and action phrases were also determined by throwing dice, creating a schema to fulfill when writing the text. This method directly

recalls the *I Ching* and the Cagean concept of chance operations. Tholomé's work also calls on the reader/performer for interpretation, to participate in the construction of the text. As the play progresses, the instructions for John Cage or his equivalent become less and less specific: “(after all it's the job of john cage or his equivalent to see).” The performer at once inhabits John Cage, or might as well be John Cage, or might be the reader, or one of many readers (as we see in other directions, there can be a proliferation of John Cage's). Tholomé uses chance not only as a tool for forming the text, but as a poetic device to incorporate an active role for the reader. This active role emphasizes participation in interpreting a text as well as highlighting the ability to improvise a text in a performative sense.

Conveying a Sense of Speaking

The punctuation and presentation of *The John Cage Experiences* initially gave me an impression of formality. I was uncertain about the type of poetics appearing before my eyes and quickly realized that, despite the unique presentation of the text and the repetition, the foundation of the text was actually idiomatic, straightforward sentences. The challenge then became recreating this undercurrent of spoken language, while reproducing the incantatory rhythms of the poetry in French. When I first presented this text to the translation workshop, everyone expressed general bewilderment. The discussion turned away from the mechanics of the translation to questions of interpretation: What did this text mean? Why was there a black hole in John Cage's head? Why were the names of people in lower-case? One person commented that she was confused to find herself laughing in the middle of a café while reading the text

because she thought something that looked so dense at first glance shouldn't elicit that type of reaction. I decided then that I needed to highlight the humor more to give the piece a cohesive voice despite the unnatural punctuation. To do this, I focused on peppering the text with slightly dated idioms that would reflect the French and also create an air of "spokenness" from another era. One example comes up in the first section on the red and chrome race car when the future Mrs. Cage celebrates her luck at finding John in the desert: "Indeed what a neat guy this john cage is thinks the future mrs. john cage. Thank god I dug up a gem. The kind my mother dreamed about in her time." By allowing the text to flow in and out of these kinds of expressions, "neat" and "gem" being somewhat antiquated, I attempted to give voice to the characters in the few moments where they are allowed to speak or we have a glimpse of their internal monologues. Another example comes in the last section, where Mrs. Cage's cousin is "cutting the peach," (*se fendre la pêche*) an expression which means to have a good time. She is also preparing food in the scene, so I wanted to keep the pun in the English. I decided to change it to "cutting it up" which harkens back to the expression "to cut the rug," or dance a lot, along with the expression "to cut someone up" or make somebody laugh: "Apart from a certain cousin of course. Well. Literally cutting it up in front of merce c." In this sense, the text is a bit domesticated. Distancing elements, such as the punctuation, are already integral to the structuring of the text and creating more ambiguity in the language would generate unnecessary confusion. The structure and experimental nature of the text is a type of defamiliarization in and of itself: as striking in French as it is in English.

I also wanted the language of the stage directions to reflect a stilted formality that slowly breaks down throughout the text. I could have naturalized the language more, but I thought that the contrast between an extremely formal voice mixed with random interjections would bring across the idea that the rules exerted on the text by chance and the author are in fact a ruse, changeable at any time: “*(as the experience takes place the person accompanying john cage or his equivalent will distill his repertoire as he hears it into moments of silence yes why not).*” The juxtaposition of “distill” and “why not” calls the importance of the stage directions into question. The idea of rules in the construction of the text is at once important and arbitrary and, as the voice of regimentation in the book, I wanted to drive the stage directions to reflect this. The text itself has almost a feeling of being incomplete in this way. One workshop participant described it as feeling like the treatment of a film, illustrating the potential actions that the characters can complete without fully detailing every scene.

Conclusion

When I first started translating *The John Cage Experiences*, I’d been pondering readings from a course on problems in modern poetry. Every week we went through careful pairings of poetry and theory, reading Baudelaire and Cixous and any number of texts that were not written in English originally. The course was specifically on affect theory and I began to see the theoretical texts we read as a language in and of itself that was translated into poetry and vice versa. Any type of text could speak on affect, but these texts were always inherently different. *The John Cage Experiences* is also this type of intersection. The biography of John Cage is unwritten to illustrate the poetic potentials

of his chance elements and the poetry itself is inlaid with the theory of chance operation. Poetry and theory engage in dialogue with each other in Tholomé's book — in the punctuation, the stage directions, the inexactness of the text's representation of fact.

The process of translating this intersection adds another layer — another language on top of several facets that are already conversing. The problems of modern poetry are relevant in suggesting that the difference between poetry and theory is mostly affect. To make something that is poetry in one language become poetry in another, affect has to be translated before anything else. *The John Cage Experiences* are muted in this regard — they are waiting for the final player, the performer, to bring the real or imagined trials of John Cage into being. The text itself is a conduit, a nexus. It is itself a place where translation happens.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

8 Solos, Duos or Trios (with Things)

Vincent Tholomé

Translated by Alexandra Niemi

*to éric jaques
maja jantar
and,
of course,
sebastian dicenaire*

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

The red (and chrome) race car *(for the entire experience, John Cage or his equivalent will drive one of those little race cars with a mechanical motor you recharge by rolling the wheels rapidly backwards several times in a row on a table or maybe even the ground)*

In 1935. John cage regularly drives around in the Arizona desert inside a red and chrome race car. He regularly caresses the hot steering wheel with his hand when he crosses the hot and truly boiling Arizona desert at top speed. In 1935. In the Arizona desert. John cage raises tons of dust when he goes by. When. In 1935. John cage. In the desert of Arizona. Hears the purring

(here john cage or his equivalent rolls the race car on the table or the floor 5 times)

motor of his race car. He loses his train of thought and. Truly. Loses himself in his

(here john cage or his equivalent rolls the race car on the table or the floor 2 times)

black hole. John cage says. Later. John cage says later. In 1935. John cage has a red and chrome race car bought secondhand for less than \$200. He also possesses an equally large and beautiful hole in his head. So that. Each time each time. In the Arizona desert. Taking off at top speed. Raising tons of dust as he goes by. The red and chrome race car loses john cage in his thoughts inside of his black hole. It must be said. Inside his race car. The

(in fact john cage or his equivalent can wait before rolling his race car, whatever he wants, but he should do it 4 times, on the table, on his hand or on the floor to wind up the mechanical motor)

heat of the desert does not eat away at john cage. The heat of the Arizona desert does not redden his fingers. Neither john cage nor the windows inside of the race car frost or liquefy. Truly. The Arizona heat. The stifling heat of the Arizona desert. Has quite a bit of trouble reaching inside the race car. The air conditioning in john cage's red and chrome race car. In 1935. Is amazing. So the heat gives up. Anyone other than john cage in the Arizona desert would fall asleep at the wheel crossing the arid plains. Anyone. Even john cage. Would have. By force of rubbing shoulders with the Arizona steppes in 1935 like john cage. A strong internal experience. Maybe. Instead of being in a red and chrome race car. John cage would feel the impact of the heat more

(roll on the table, surely, but on the whole table or only one part of it, on the whole floor or only a part of it? in any case roll 1 time)

on a horse. Maybe on a horse john cage wouldn't ask himself questions about the meaning of life or the meaning of a black hole in his head. Luckily john cage is in a red and chrome race car crossing through one of the vast and scorched Arizona plains at top speed. The tons of swirling dust sting the car body. After these summer crossings end an auto body mechanic will cover the beautiful race car in anti-corrosive. It's in autumn that john cage

(in any case roll on his hand 2 times)

tends to the body of his race car. While waiting for. Summer. John cage plays you could say at chasing the dusts of the desert. While waiting. He manages to clear the way for the routes of every municipality in Arizona. That would be a neat job he thinks in 1935. However. Soon. In one or two minutes something will happen that is inconceivable to john cage. In such a way that he will meet the strong heat of the Arizona desert. In such a way that he will almost die of dehydration he says. In one or two minutes john cage's beautiful red car will in effect make the acquaintance of a blue metal car. At a crossroads. In one or two minutes john cage's red and chrome race car will end its days on the great plains of Arizona. However. The death of his race car will not affect john cage. All business john cage will not even turn around one last time. When he travels the route by foot. On the carcass of his race car. He will be so busy lending a hand to the beautiful driver of the blue metal car. He will be so busy

(in any case roll without winding up the mechanical motor and do it 2 times)

employing his beautiful charming smile. Later. Yes. He'll think of his red and chrome race car. Later he'll unquestionably miss his red and chrome race car. Meanwhile. John cage and the beautiful driver of the blue metal car need to get somewhere by foot. Meanwhile. They do not stay as close to each other as they would on the vast plains of Mongolia. However. Even though they do not stay as close to each other as they would on the vast plains of Mongolia. The heat does not separate them for all that. Indeed what a neat guy this john cage is thinks the future mrs. john cage. Thank god I dug up a gem. The kind my mother dreamed about in her time. Thinks the future mrs. john cage. Another time. Much later. John cage will wonder which hands dismantled his red and chrome race car. For what purpose. For example. Will they have recycled the car body. How many children will swing inside its Michelin tires. Or

Goodyear. Most likely Goodyear. Probably Goodyear. Supposing that. In 1935. Goodyear tires. Or Michelin. Or Michelin. Exist. Are circulated around the world like in Arizona. Like in Arizona. Millions of vehicles. Millions of race cars. Red and chrome. But I don't know. That I don't know. I don't remember. John cage. Thinks later. The composer. John cage thinks thinking of his red race car. John cage thinks wondering which generator his power diesel engine is a part of. Will chickens have laid eggs on its seats. Etc. Etc. Things like that. Things like that in john cage's head. In john cage's black hole. The composer. Incapable. In 1935. Like later on for that matter. Of crashing into a woman. All the same she ruined his race car. We haven't forgotten. We haven't. I know a lot of fathers. John cage will say. I know a lot of fathers that would have cleaned it up. Oh well. He says. Oh well. Now the red race car is stripped down. And he john cage must live the rest of his days with that. His dearest. He says. Later. His dearest. What a life.

(in any case, push the race car to see if it will go by itself and do it 4 times)

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

The hotel room (*during the duration of the experience john cage or his equivalent will stretch his arm desperately toward a bedside lamp that is real and illuminated but nevertheless unreachable*)

We ask ourselves what goes on in John Cage's head. We also ask ourselves what he thinks about. After walking many many kilometers. In 1935. In the Arizona desert. John Cage. And the future Mrs. Cage. The fiancée of Mr. Cage. A superb woman. Certainly. At that point in time. In a baby doll nightdress. Well. They arrive at a hotel. They take a room in a hotel. With a bed. One bed. For two. Wow. It's. Yes. Sex. It's. Yes. Very hot. Very hot between John Cage and the future Mrs. Cage. But. After a frugal meal. And even though it's very hot very sexy between John Cage and the future Mrs. Cage. We ask ourselves why John Cage. Once in his

(John Cage or his equivalent meaning anybody, you or me, stretches an arm desperately towards a bedside lamp that is real and illuminated, and if the rendering of the experience is done sitting down, at the far end of the table)

bed. After his ablutions. Once the covers are pulled tightly up to his armpits. Stretches his right arm out desperately to turn off the hotel bedside lamp. We ask ourselves why John Cage. Comfortably stretched out on his bed. In pale blue pajamas for example something very ugly very astonishingly old-fashioned. Doesn't just ask his future wife who's still awake at this hour. Still in the middle of the night. As for her. The ablutions. To turn off the hotel bedside lamp when she comes soon. In 5 minutes. Max. To

(the effort that it costs to stretch out an arm is clearly visible on the face of John Cage or his equivalent, anyway we see it if the rendering of the experience is done sitting down... if the rendering of the experience takes place lying down, all the effort will be visible in the body of John Cage or his equivalent writhing desperately to reach this damn lamp)

sleep. To join in fact her. Yes. Fiancé. This is the way we say things. In fact. We ask ourselves a lot of things on the subject of John Cage a man like everyone else meaning like you and me like you and me. It appears looking as we do here in detail at John Cage's reasons for being and for acting that there is in John Cage's head like in

(if everything takes place lying down, the body of John Cage or his equivalent should render the effort without moving too much, John Cage's experience being as mental as it is physical)

anybody's head a black hole. Well. Then. Meaning. We notice for example how carefully John Cage smoothed the sheets and the blanket so that John Cage is now in his hotel room perfectly ensconced in a creaseless sarcophagus. The

(here, for a little variety, attempt 2 quick punches in the direction of the lamp)

wallpaper in the room is tearing at the rate of 1 mm per year. Once the drapes are drawn. They don't let in a single sound from the street. Not a single tire screech for example. Not a single drinking song bellowed by a drunkard. So that. We

(a small jump towards the lamp and that's it)

can say that. In the hotel room. John cage and the future mrs. cage. Human beings. All the same. Like you and me. Like you and me. Well. They live yes as if in the shadow of an experience. They live an experience withdrawn from the world. So that. Everything that happens in shadow. Everything that happens in the hotel room. Well. Yes. Assumes. John cage thinks. Suddenly nervous. A considerable importance. So that. John cage thinks. Suddenly nervous. There is some of that. Of this experience. Something of. Yes. Well. To get out of it. Without a doubt. Without a doubt. John cage thinks. The composer. The

(take care separating the words and gestures, to let each live in turn and have a space where it can stretch out easily, thinks john cage or his equivalent)

musician. So that. She. The future mrs. cage. A superb woman. That goes without saying. Passes. Phew. Very sexy. Very sexy. By the foot of the bed in a baby doll nightdress. She is vigorously pulling her hair from a brush when john cage sees her pass by the foot of the bed. She even hums a popular tune. And why not something by louis armstrong. It is 1935. All the same. All the same. She still has things to do in the bathroom. Thinks john cage. The composer. When his future. His. Yes. Already. Already. Promised. Vigorously. Passing by the foot of the bed. She pounds the ground.

(barely moving here)

Literally. Her feet are bare and she is hammering the ground. While the future mrs. cage returns to the bathroom. While john cage is wrapped tightly in the sheets and. Desperately. Stretches his arm. The left or the right. Not so important in the end. Not so important. In view of. Yes. Reaching the hotel bedside lamp. In fact its switch. Then turning it off. A clump of hair flies

(here move the hand once and then that's it)

gracefully into the trash. The wool threads of the full carpet stand up straight. The wallpaper continues to tear. A truck outside backs into a streetlamp. It can't be heard from the room. It could be guessed from the dimming of the electric bulb's light but John cage. Absorbed in his thoughts. And in his actions as well. It must be said. Does not notice. No. So that. Yes. John cage's life in the hotel room is now a dearest future wife doing something bad but what at the bathroom sink. The wallpaper tears imperceptibly in the upper right corner of the room. The feeling of being the object of an experience but what kind. So that. Once a future Mrs. cage has finished with the bathroom. Once a future Mrs. cage. Very sexy. In a baby doll nightdress. In a baby doll nightdress. Carefully closes the bathroom door. Once the heels of the future Mrs. cage circle the bed. So

(And so here John cage or his equivalent gets up from the chair or stands up, goes and turns off the lamp that has been illuminated throughout the entire experience then comes back to either sit in the chair or lie down on the ground, concluding the experience)

that. Now. The future Mrs. cage. Superb. Really hot. In a baby doll nightdress. She disturbs the bed's careful organization. The smooth sheets without a single crease. She. Yes. John cage thinks. Oui. Slides under the. Yes. Oui. Sheets. Like it was nothing. Like it was nothing. Thinks John cage. Who observes her. Without saying anything. From his sarcophagus. From the cozy nest concocted in his bed. Slides yes maybe under the sheets maybe without turning off. Without turning off. The. Yes. Bedside lamp. Unattainable. Out of John cage's. Reach. Unless with a superhuman. Effort. On his part. By him. John cage. A man. Like anyone. Like you and me. Thinks John cage. From his black hole. From the hole he has. Like anyone. In his head. Somewhere. He thinks. Obligated as he is to get up. To leave the bed. Just to turn off. All the same. All the same. John cage will think. In old-fashioned pajamas. She exaggerates. She exaggerates. That's all. That's all that there is to say. That's all there is to say about John cage. That's all that there is to say about John cage at the hotel. About the beautiful and terrible experience. Very hot. Very sexy. Of John cage at the hotel. In 1935. In Arizona. He will specify. Nothing to add. Later. Much later. Yes.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

The acme store *(at the moment of the experience john cage or his equivalent will sit on a wooden chair and remain silent and immobile throughout the experience while a walk-on does the commentary)*

(the experience begins with john cage or his equivalent, meaning anybody, man or woman, in fact even a child, sitting on a simple wooden chair, with a straight back and why not hands flat on their thighs)

In 1935. After some crazy hot sexy nights in a hotel in Arizona. Mr. john cage marries mrs. john cage. In 1935 on the corner of john cage's street there is an acme store selling vacuum cleaners. In 1935 mrs. john cage moves to a new apartment in New York City. The fact is that mrs. cage. The wife of mr. cage. Does not move alone to an apartment in New York City. To be honest. Some machines already run in the apartment of mr. and mrs. cage but not a vacuum cleaner. The fact is that

(as will be the case throughout the entire experience, the commentary is interrupted, leaving just john cage or his equivalent sitting immobile and silent on his chair, remember, a simple wooden chair)

when he returns alone in 1935 to the acme store john cage means to buy a machine. John cage's wife stayed home alone in john cage's apartment and plays with her machines. An electric stove equipped with buttons. A coffeemaker with a dial. The wife of john cage maintains good relations with her machines but unfortunately not with washing machines or with vacuum cleaners. So the wife of john cage sends john cage in 1935 to buy something. A machine. A washing machine at the acme store. So when john cage enters the acme store he thinks he says firmly washing machine. However he says once in the acme store a strange thing happens to john cage. Even though john cage is as ready as anybody to make

(in this experience, the problem will be to let the silence run for a sufficiently long time so that it establishes itself, maybe the solution would be to determine its length by chance, by throwing dice for example)

his request the fact is that john cage has a lack. We say that the tongue of john cage passes through a black hole. We remember that john cage has like anybody like you and me a black hole in his head. The essential

(it goes without saying that these lengths will be determined before the experience, before john cage or his equivalent takes their spot on the wooden chair, sitting up straight and, why, with hands placed flat on the thighs, yes)

experience of john cage in 1935 at the acme store rests on the fact that john cage's tongue passes through his black hole. So as to. Ensure. The essential of john cage's experience at the acme store

takes place in silence. Even if we easily find different models of push-button washing machines in the corners of the acme store in 1935. Even if it's easy for john cage to formulate his request. It's that john cage. The composer. A man of noise. Of sound. And lyrics. Like anybody. Anybody. And so. It's that john cage. And so. Yes. And so. He doesn't know why. He has never known why. The fact is that. In 1935. At the acme store. He literally lets himself make. So that. Even though john

(however we shouldn't use more than two dice, we shouldn't throw a length of time greater than 12 seconds or less than 2 seconds)

cage has not yet formulated any request and will not formulate any request. They. Someone. Presents him with for want of anything better a vacuum. The man in question. They. Someone. Shows him its features. Literally mind-blowing. Literally mind-blowing. John cage will say. Later. At home. To his wife. About a vacuum. They tell him to what extent he can go fast and anywhere. They prove to him by a + b the advantage of having no lever or pedal. Then we spend a lot of time waiting for. John cage himself. To produce an opinion. A

(maybe we should be careful to ensure that two similar lengths do not follow one another)

desire. A need. Then there is a discomfort before his silence. In fact there is a discomfort before the fact that john cage's tongue may be. Well. Literally in his black hole. In fact nobody knows how to see it. In fact we suspect an attack or a degeneration. In fact we continue more or less as if it were nothing. A speck of dust. In the acme store in 1935. Floats in a ray of light. An unknown insect lands on the window. They start up the air conditioning. They wear the acme store uniform. The majority of the clients come in couples. This year. Mr. and mrs. john cage have acquired an electric stove equipped with buttons and a coffeemaker with a dial. In 1935 mr. and mrs. john cage like everybody want. And possess. More and more. A miniscule scratch in the parquet floor. Oh well. Abruptly john cage's head

(with the experience in progress, it's most natural to follow the duration of the lengths by the crocodile method, 1 crocodile equals 1 second, 2 crocodiles equals 2 seconds, etc. so that, during the silence, the walk-on of john cage or his equivalent mentally and slowly recites the number of crocodiles drawn at random then she or he begins the commentary again once the counting is finished)

enters. In his memory. When. Later. John cage will evoke the experience produced in 1935 in the acme store on the corner john cage will think of it. Then john cage takes out his credit card. Then is seen in the street with a vacuum box under his arm. Then after taking the vacuum out of its box john cage's wife will say that he is insanely stupid. That's all. That's all that this astonishing experience produced for john cage in the acme store on the corner. In 1935. Forever. A landmark year for john cage. A year rich in experiences. A year no longer without a washing machine.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

Minnesota forests (*during this experience john cage or his equivalent will in some way tackle forces undoubtedly invisible but real that govern his personal universe he will have to get a good mic*)

In 1935. When they are completely moved in. The young cage couple decides to have a good time in Minnesota. In 1935. We hear louis armstrong on the american radio. We hear it in Minnesota like we do everywhere else in the country. We would hear it loudly in mr. and mrs. cage's vehicle if mr. and mrs. cage's vehicle were. In 1935. In Minnesota. Equipped with a radio. The fact remains that john cage is. In 1935. In a car. In Minnesota. The fact remains that he and mrs. cage cruise side by side. He isn't wearing a seatbelt. In 1935 indeed. It rarely occurs to john cage. Composer. To wear a seatbelt. On the other hand it often occurs. In 1935. To mrs. cage to drive the car. Great. Well it's 1935. Well we are with john cage. Sitting side by side in a car with his wife. He has

(let's say that john cage or his equivalent has a table and that he has small objects of no importance on that table)

opened the passenger-side window. He's opened the window on his side. And in 1935 while john cage. Passenger-side. Inhales the Minnesota air. Mrs. cage. His wife. Shifts to second gear. Then with a jolt avoids a chicken nest in the clay. Mrs. cage. A superb woman. She pushes her sunglasses back up with her finger. She does it while john cage. Her husband. A superb man as well yes. It must be said. Well. Let's say he has something running through his mind. He has a louis armstrong tune stuck in his head. Maybe he hears it on the radio. Maybe if he has a car radio he hears

(over the course of the experience chance john cage or his equivalent will make the inaudible become audible through the mic at intervals determined by chance)

it on the radio but that I don't know. I don't know if mr. and mrs. cage's car. In 1935. Is equipped with a car radio. I don't know either if cars. Even american ones. In 1935. Are already. Equipped. With car radios. I don't know. I don't know. Very well if. It is. Let's say it's likely that. In his car. In Minnesota. In 1935. John cage. The composer. Probably has a louis armstrong tune stuck in his head rather than playing on the radio. In his car. While mrs. cage. His wife. Veers slightly to the right. In the woods. The dense and fresh forest of Minnesota. And. While she does it. While john cage has nothing but a louis armstrong tune in his head. While he thinks nothing at all of this thing. The hole amassing for some

(he will then delicately brush for example a feather to make the deafening sound of the different filaments of which it is composed heard)

time now in his head. It must be said that. For some time. In 1935. The composer john cage. Has had a hole in his head. A black hole that absorbs him. Because the fact is that. In 1935. A black hole is eating away at john cage. It does so without his wife knowing. That's why. That's why. In 1935. Just after his marriage. John cage. The composer. Frowns. That's why. It must be said that. Just after the marriage. The relations between mr. and mrs. cage are not always in good standing. But here. In Minnesota. John cage takes advantage. Oh yes. Oh yes. And. While john cage takes advantage of the forests. Of Minnesota. In the car. Something unexpected. Another experience. A new experience. Comes over john cage. In a minute it will even force mrs. cage to stop the car. That will even oblige mrs. cage. A

(he will hit a miniscule pebble with a toothpick etc. all the kinds of things that john cage or his equivalent will take great care to determine before the experience)

superb woman. Even after. Even a long time after. Looking under the nose of john cage. Her husband. With great attention. In fact probably with disgust and attention but let's just say with attention. Let's just say with attention. We don't get into details. We don't get into details. So that. The rest of the way. To Minnesota. She'll worry quietly about john cage. Her husband. So that. At night. On the stopover. At john cage's friend's house. At the house of a Minnesota friend. She'll have the worst night of her life. I'll have the worst night of my life. She will say. Mrs. cage will say. The wife of john cage. The composer. But later. Much later. In New York City. In a 3rd floor apartment. In front of the photograph where we see john cage. The composer. In Minnesota. At a friend's house. His hand curiously placed on his face. In fact his hand is in the exact place where something. One day.

(of course as in all the john cage experiences john cage may be alone or two or three for example one takes charge of the text the others of the inaudible sounds)

A thing from Minnesota. Entered john cage's car while mrs. was driving. It was in 1935. Says mrs. Mrs. cage. We were in the woods of Minnesota. Yes we were breathing the fresh air of the Minnesota forests. That's what. That's exactly what. When a thing from Minnesota flew in through john cage's. Wide open. Passenger-side. Window. And hit john cage under his nose. Though. It left no trace on john cage's face. Though. It marked john cage profoundly. It was a black thing. Light. Very hard. She says. Mrs. cage says. Much later. It hit john cage under his

nose. Then it must have gone off again. Let's say it went off. There. We're off again. She says. Mrs. cage says. While she offers chocolate chip

(while the experience is in process the roles can naturally be exchanged there is no permanent position in the john cage experiences)

cookies from the acme store on the corner. All the same. When her now old and gnarled fingers have. Some difficulty. Tearing then unwrapping the cellophane. She decides to get up and use a pair of scissors. John cage's. John cage's. From. Precisely. 1935. When. A young married couple. Mr. and mrs. cage visited the acme store on the corner once. They needed

(that way the inaudible may take place at the same time as the text as well as the silences or even intervene only in the blanks by choice truly by choice)

a pair of scissors. They needed to cut some strings. They were setting up in New York City. They took things out of boxes. Like anyone. Like you and me. Like you and me mr. and mrs. cage. They will buy them later. A little after john cage's black hole. Forgotten for some time. In New York City. In the apartment. On the 3rd floor. In an acme box. Not yet unwrapped. One way or another leaves its hiding place. In one way or another it always found its path. Mrs. cage. Says later. Quite a bit later. Picked the thread back up somewhere. Invisible. Uncuttable. She adds. Uncuttable. She insists. Binding it to john

(the number of inaudible interventions being determined haphazardly but not more than 8)

cage. To john cage's mind. To our misfortune. She concludes. Yes to our misfortune. Truly. Truly. Another cookie? Another cookie? No? Really? Really? Goodbye. Goodbye. She says again. Mrs. cage does. Finally cutting the radio. Cutting it short with incisive turns. Fiery. And yet so joyous. Mrs. cage says. Of louis armstrong. The jazzman. The trumpet player. Not her husband. A sick man. Truly.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

Mrs. cage's corset (at the time of this experience john cage or his equivalent will place the following, or any other comparable, objects one by one, a pair of scissors and something like a packet containing an object carefully wrapped in paper and string)

Once. In 1935 of course. Of course. John cage goes into his living room. Another time. In 1935. Always. Always. The same day maybe even why not. Let's say. Yes the same day. That simplifies things. That simplifies things. John cage. Always him. Always him. He goes into his living room. Let's say he organizes something. Let's say he organizes the silver. There. That's it. I know john cage well. That's exactly his style. One day. Once. In 1935. In his living room. His new apartment. He organizes. In his new apartment. The silver. So well that. So well that. By chance. By chance. He

(the number of strings surrounding the package is determined by throwing dice, it will vary between 6 and 18)

walks in front of the mirror. Dusty. It must be said. It must be said. In the living room. Yes. It's a new apartment. John cage. And mrs. cage. And mrs cage. Let's not forget mrs cage. They're moving in. It's the first time that john cage. And mrs cage. Move in. It's the first time. Like others. Like others before them. That mr. and mrs. cage have ever lived together. And. While mrs. cage pursues. The dishes. In the kitchen. In a dish tub. John. Her dear and tender one. Organizes the silver. The knives and the forks already rewashed. Rejuvenated. He goes into the living room and. While nothing would predict. John cage. In New York City. In the new apartment. It's definitely 1935. It's not the immediate

(during the entire experience john cage or his equivalent will interrupt his tale will cut the 6 to 18 strings surrounding the package that will have been placed on the floor or on the table one by one with the help of a pair of scissors intended for this effect)

post-war. We're in full economic crisis. A young couple. The cages. Move in. John goes into the living room and. By chance. By pure coincidence. He looks at himself in the living room mirror. Just like that. In passing. And. While mr. cage. Sizes everything up. Feeling in great shape today. He's 23 years old. He just got married. He lives with mrs. cage. A superb and voluptuous girl. She's 23 years old. She's doing the dishes in the kitchen in a dish tub. She's doing the silver. The knives and the forks that john cage. Her husband. Is organizing in the living room. Abruptly mr. cage goes blurry in the glass. A standing mirror in the living room. Well.

(after removing the strings that surround the package john cage or his equivalent will attempt to remove from the aforementioned the paper which wraps it)

Thinks John Cage. If it goes on like that I'll be able to take the bus for free. John Cage thinks. John Cage actually thinks. The composer. At 23. While. All the same. All the same. His reflection is obviously blurry. He sees himself disappear in the mirror. This is a drama that

(I don't know what object the package will contain)

plays out in the mirror. He will say. Later. In the immediate post-war era. When he revisits this experience one evening. Real. He'll say. Experienced here. In the living room. It does the job. Once disappeared. Once becoming completely blurry in the mirror. To take off one's shirt and pants. John Cage. Thinks then. At the time. 1935. His shoes socks and underwear. And to make a little organized pile of them in the room then go out into the street. You can take the bus naked without paying. It's possible and simple. Thinks John Cage then. At the age of 23. Immersed in his experience. Immersed in his experience. In search. It must be said. At the time. Of many ways to save money. He will say. Later. Amused.

(it could be that the object contained in the package has an incontestably sexual connotation as the title of the experience seems to indicate nothing though could oblige John Cage or his equivalent to opt for this route)

Truly. Truly. Beaming. In the face of. Ah well. Such stupid. Behavior. He will say. Immediate post-war. Two knives and three forks. Totally indifferent. Totally indifferent to. You must call a spade a spade. Living drama. In 1935. John Cage. The knives and forks are waiting tranquilly in his hands to finish the day. Indeed the year. In the cabinet. A family jewel. An old-fashioned wooden thing. They gleam. They smell good and clean. The Marseille soap. Mrs. Cage. In 35. But later as well. All her life in fact. Mrs. Cage. A superb woman at the time. And generous. Loving. Loving. She uses Marseille soap in flakes for the wash and the

(but why shouldn't it contain a superb Marseille soap or any other object symbolizing the domestic order common from time to time in every household)

dishes. She saves money on the wash and the dishes. She searches. At the time. Like John Cage. For ways to save money. A young household. So John Cage remains immobile for a short time. So. First of all. John Cage thinks. Naturally. Naturally. He says. He will talk. Later. Immediate post-war. Of the pecuniary. Advantages. That he could. Maybe. Yes. Draw from the

situation. He says. Before thinking he should see a doctor. All the same. Before realizing the drama of the situation.

(in fact the choice of the wrapped object is left up to john cage or his equivalent)

Well all the same. Before panicking like an idiot. All the same. All the same. So. It's decided. John cage. In 1935. 23 years old. Will go and see a doctor. He thinks. He is now organizing the silverware. The fine silver. It's from his wife's side. He organizes the knives and the forks in the cabinet. He says nothing to his wife. Mrs. cage. About the experience. Strange all the same. That he's having today. One day. 1935. In the living room. New York City. He says I'm going to take a walk. And he leaves. Leaving his wife. Mrs. cage. A model

(once unwrapped john cage or his equivalent will place the contents of the package in plain sight not hesitating for example to put the wrapping paper and the 6 to 18 strings in his pocket)

wife. Truly. Truly. She makes cakes like nobody else. She's superb and sweet. She wears acme corsets. They fit mrs. cage's upper body perfectly. Truly. We could believe that. Someone. One day. Somewhere. Let's say mr. acme. Let's say one day somewhere one time mr. acme thinks about mrs. cage. Maybe he doesn't know her. There's little chance of him knowing her. The fact is though that he's thinking about mrs. cage. He's thinking in fact of a woman's upper body. Doesn't matter which. He thinks of what it is. For him. A woman's upper body. He doesn't know it but in doing so he's thinking of mrs. cage. A real woman. A woman. For mr. cage. Like for mr. acme. Ideal. Superb and sweet. There it's been said. Superb and sweet. All at the same time. A woman that mr. cage. John cage. The celebrated composer of the immediate post-war era. Still little known. In 1935. In the grip of. In 1935. All sorts of experiences. Just like. A black hole in his head. A black hole making him blurry in

(once the unwrapped object is displayed john cage or his equivalent can scratch his nose or light a cigarette or do nothing what's important is that he observes the object with all of the respect and attention required)

the glass. Wants absolutely not to worry. So much. At the time. John cage will say later. I was persuaded that it was nothing. That what was happening was nothing. A passing virus. A tenacious microbe inherited from the opposite landing. The neighbors from the opposite landing. A family of 5 children. Something is always running from their noses. Something yellow is always running

from their noses. I can't imagine seeing the neighbors' kids from the opposite landing without something yellow running from their noses. Every time I remember the neighbors' kids from the opposite landing. John cage will say. John cage will say later. I remember something yellow running from their noses. That's how it is. That's how it is thinks john cage. In 1935. On the way now. On foot. To the doctor. A guy named williams. A specialist in orthorhinosomething. A good guy. Almost a friend. John cage will say. Wearing a snug somber coat. A scarf around his mouth. Nose in the wind.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

A doctor's visit (during his experience in the waiting room at the doctor's office john cage or his equivalent will sit equipped with a newspaper that he'll manipulate here and there during the experience itself)

It's 1935. We're at doctor williams' office. Here we have a cousin of mrs. cage visiting doctor williams. A curly-haired cousin of mrs. cage. A cousin from New York City. At this time in her life she goes. To the doctor on average 3 times per week. The good doctor williams. He has an office in john cage's neighborhood. He is also john cage's doctor. When john cage. Decides. One day. To go to the doctor due to. Say. Due to something that isn't right. We suppose a black hole in his head. There. That's it. One day john cage notices that he has a black hole in his head. He

*(it would be appropriate in fact to put some sort of choreographed dance or musical theater number at the center where john cage or his equivalent will first be seen manipulating the newspaper as it happens the way anyone would by turning the pages
jesus)*

then decides to go to doctor williams' office. First to the waiting room. A small thing 10 square meters. There are 5 chairs 1 table with magazines and newspapers. There is. John cage will say. John cage will say later. All that's needed for distracting oneself. John cage will say. The composer. A man like you and me. He sits one day in doctor williams' waiting room. He greets mrs. cage's cousin with a kiss on the cheek. Then he sits right next to her in doctor williams' waiting room. While 3 other clients read magazines. They are waiting to go into the doctor's office. The good doctor williams' office. And. While john cage mechanically. Just to have something in his hands. Just to have something in his hands. Takes a. Yes why not. Newspaper. Doctor williams. Well. Enters the waiting room and greets

(then gradually throughout the experience between silences arbitrary or determined by chance john cage or his equivalent will add the noises of heels clacking on the floor and the newspaper rustling)

everyone. And asks whose turn it is. And goes back into the office with the person who said that it's his or her turn. This time it's a little old woman. She has trouble walking. She has a sore on her leg. She came to change the bandage. She came to have her leg bandaged. She came to have her leg-sore disinfected and bandaged. Disinfected and then bandaged by doctor williams. The good doctor. And. Meanwhile. In the waiting room the conversation between john cage and mrs. cage's cousin subsides. Meanwhile. Suddenly john cage plays with the newspaper. Suddenly. Without anyone expecting it. Without anyone expecting it. There is a black hole in john cage's head. He's

acting up. He's. Let's say acting up. So that. John cage.
Composer. Suddenly. In 1935. With a newspaper

(in fact john cage or his equivalent could also get up from the chair and why not do a dance step while manipulating the newspaper)

in hand. In a New York City doctor's waiting room. Discovers the musical possibilities. Mind-blowing to say the least. Of a simple newspaper. Thick of course. Thick of course. But. All the same. Like. Like no other. So that. So that. We quickly perceive. In the waiting room. That something. We don't know what. In 1935 we don't know what. To say the least. Perturbs john cage. Not a piece of news from the newspaper. Mrs. cage's cousin will say. I know it's strange but I owe it to myself to tell you. I can't not tell you. My dear. Mrs. cage's cousin

(a rhythmic structure mixing papers rustling newspaper tearing feet clacking bodies moving may little by little appear to stop to begin again more and more frenetically)

will say. To mrs. cage. In person. In person. But something coming from the newspaper itself as if. Well. As if. Something from the newspaper itself. Suddenly. Absorbed john cage. Your husband. Your husband. All the same. Mrs. cage's cousin. Will say. Later. To her cousin mrs. cage. In a cafe on 5th avenue. So. In the waiting room. Well. There's something like a chill that circulates between the clients. In fact a black hole. While doctor williams. Well. Calls the next client into his office. A little old man with bushy eyebrows. Suffers from a tumor in his left hip. He limps as he enters doctor williams'. Office. And. Even though the entry of doctor williams could have. At least. Drawn the attention of john cage. The composer. The man literally fascinated. Truly. By. Say. The great musical potential of the newspaper. To the point that. Nothing. Not even the entry of doctor williams into the waiting room. Not even the entry of doctor williams coming. Judiciously. Say judiciously. To break. Say. The atmosphere. The climate in the waiting room. The dirty climate. Established. Unknowingly. Unknowingly I tell you. By john cage in person. The individual suffering. In 1935. From a black hole in his head. To the point that he must

(in fact it would be funny if there were 2 or 3 of john cage or his equivalent so that a game of charades of looks of relationships could then take place)

go. Without mrs. cage knowing. To doctor williams' office. Inopportunately also the doctor of one of mrs. cage's cousins. A curly-haired blonde. Here on this day for one of her 3 weekly

visits at doctor williams' office. Maybe she's secretly in love with doctor williams. I think she's secretly in love with doctor williams. John cage will say. The man who. Apparently. Apparently. When he remains in the waiting room alone with the curly-haired blonde

(after all it's the job of john cage or his equivalent to see)

cousin from New York City. Didn't even notice doctor williams' arrival then the doctor's departure accompanied this time by a housewife and her sniffling and coughing daughter. She's 5 years old. She's wearing thigh-high white stockings. She must have whooping cough. She doesn't notice mr. cage. The strange little game of mr. cage. Now alone in the waiting room. Now alone with me. The cousin says. Later. To mrs. cage. In front of a hot chocolate. Somewhere in an upscale 5th avenue cafe. She calls her cousin just after her doctor's visit. She calls mr. and mrs. cage's apartment. It's mrs. cage who answers. She sets up a meeting with her in the afternoon. Somewhere on 5th avenue. In an upscale cafe. She doesn't hesitate to tell mrs. cage how strange she found the behavior of mr. cage. This morning. In doctor williams' waiting room. A newspaper in hand. She says it in front of a hot chocolate. Served here in big high straight mugs. Served here with a lot of milky foam. It's the meeting place of choice for mrs. cage and her cousin. Here they can keep. In 1935. Their hats on their heads. And. In effect. They keep them on. So that. When doctor williams leaves the waiting room accompanied by mrs. cage's cousin. Well. John cage remains alone in the waiting room.

(yes to each their own according to their knowledge in fact according to their level of comfort etc. yes truly)

Alone continuing this singular and magnificent truly magnificent experience that. For about an hour. He now attempts. So. John cage. Exhausted. Literally. Physically. By the intense concentration that this uh well type of experience needs. Well. Ended with. Say. Leaving his black hole. Leaving his black hole. And. And exiting the room. So that's what was germinating. John cage says to himself. Once outside. Once back in the street. It was just that. Nothing. Truly nothing to worry about. John cage says to himself. Carrying a magazine with him. And 2 or 3 newspapers. Impatient to get home. A New York City apartment. His experiences. Fortunately he didn't see the doctor. The good doctor williams. What would he have said to him. Fortunately he was right not to worry mrs. cage. Fortunately I was right not to

worry mrs. cage. John cage says to himself again. Going back home. 3rd floor. At a brisk pace.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

An inappropriate gesture (*we see in this experience john cage or his equivalent
punctuating the anecdote with simple and daily gestures*)

In 1935. In New York City. John cage makes another big decision. He makes it in his living room. He makes it among his guests. Essentially friends. Some family. Mrs. cage's cousin for example. Yes. The curly-haired blonde. Yes. Mrs. cage's best friend. They get hot chocolate together on 5th avenue sometimes. But right now they're chattering about everything and nothing in the kitchen. In mrs. cage's kitchen. While mr. cage. John. Her husband. The composer. Does the serving in the living room. It's. Yes. Almost time for aperitifs. The guests. The friends. The family members. Occupy all of mr. and mrs. cage's available chairs. Savor the petits fours. So that no one. In John cage's living room. Could've imagined that. Here. Today. At the hour of

(in fact for this experience it might be particularly suitable for someone to accompany john cage or his equivalent)

aperitifs. And petits fours. And petits fours. In 1935. Right now something essential is in play for john cage. The composer. In his living room. A man. Already. Loving experimentation. Creation. Invention. In spite of his age. His very young age. 23 at the time. No more. No more. Mrs. cage will say later. Much later. Years later. And. While something essential is in play in the living room for john cage. For the future of john cage. Mrs. cage's cousin. Mrs. cage's best friend. A first-class chatterbox. Blonde and curly-haired. Is kindly. Peeling. Some potatoes in the kitchen. With mrs. cage. So that. At the beginning of the affair. At the beginning of this unique. And capital. Capital. Experience. Well. Nobody. Whether busy in the kitchen. Whether clinking glasses. And savoring. Joyously.

(the person accompanying john cage or his equivalent will have prepared beforehand that's to say before the experience begins built a repertoire of some simple daily gestures)

Joyously in the living room. Notices that. Standing. To the right of merce c. Loyal friend. John cage has a bottle in his hand. And. Let's say. He takes something like a. Yes. Certain. Break. So much. All of a sudden. Something. At least. At least. Hits him. Hard. All of a sudden. John cage. All of a sudden. In 1935. Dead plant stock-still in a living room. Truly truly. Realizes that. Well. Today. He didn't do ----,----. While. Everyday. Everyday. Truly. John cage. The composer. Spontaneously. Doesn't stop doing ----,----. Whether in the metro. Or in the acme store. Regardless. Regardless. It comes all by itself. It comes all by itself. Truly. Truly.

(as the experience takes place the person accompanying john cage or his equivalent will distill his repertoire as he hears it into moments of silence yes why not)

As a consequence. John cage. The composer. Will. Have to. Within 2 minutes 30 seconds. Isolate himself. Somewhere. Anywhere. I was thinking anywhere. He will say. John cage will say but later. Much later. I was thinking in the bedroom or the bathroom. So much so that. Within 2 minutes to 2 minutes and 30 seconds. John cage. In an incomprehensible way. In an incomprehensible way. And. To be honest. Crude. Crude. Well. He'll have left. Friends and family. In the living room. High and dry. And leave. Alone. Searching for a. Let's say. Place. Where. He'll be able to discreetly. Yes. Unburden himself. Yes. In any case do ----,----. Without. Anyone. Friend or family. Noticing. Because once john cage begins

(as for john cage or his equivalent when he manages to ----,---- there will be a simple and daily gesture to accomplish in the style of passing the index finger beneath the nose and why not passing the index finger beneath the nose heck in the background)

----,----. It turns out john cage cannot ----,---- stop himself anymore. So that ----,----. It would be very embarrassing. For john cage. And his wife as well. Mrs. cage. That on a day such as this. Between the petit fours and. Let's put on the cream of asparagus. Let's put on the cream of asparagus. Someone. A friend. Merce c for example. Or a cousin from New York City. Blonde. Chatty and curly-haired. Notices that. Well. Decidedly. Decidedly. Good old john. Good old john. Well. Decidedly. Is not firing on all cylinders at this point in time. John cage thinks

(however it's possible for the experience be performed solo)

then. So john cage gets a move-on. So he leaves it to merce c to pass petit fours around. I'm leaving it to you to pass the petits fours around merce. He says. I'm also leaving you the bottle. He says. Already leaving the living room. Already elsewhere in fact. Already elsewhere. At the very least in the bedroom. At best in the bathroom. At best in the bathroom. He thinks going to relieve himself. Yes well there you go. The cousin from New York City will say later. The cousin from New York City will say later to mrs. cage. Her best friend. Her

(it's possible that john cage or his equivalent should pass his index finger beneath his nose alone)

best friend. The cousin from New York City will say quietly later to Mrs. Cage in the kitchen. We can't see the future. We cannot be sure of anything. Not John Cage. Not you or me. She will say to her cousin. Mrs. Cage. A woman suddenly intrigued. And to be honest panicked. Panicked to be honest. So that. The instant he leaves the living room and hurries to the bathroom. Well. To be honest. John Cage will not be alone. Someone. A cousin from New York City. While Merce C ensures perfect service in the living room. Will perceive ----,---- John Cage. The instant ----,----. He opens the door to the bathroom. So that.

(one can therefore imagine John Cage or his equivalent passing his index finger under his nose in place of the repertory of his accompanist)

So that. She'll only be able to rush into the kitchen. She'll only be able to say everything to Mrs. Cage. Her cousin. Juliennig vegetables. Her best friend. A cordon bleu. A cordon bleu when it comes to the preparation of malt balls. A woman she's thought however. For awhile. For awhile. To be badly. Let's say. Married. Badly married. Let's say badly married. There I said it. There I said it. I'm sorry. She says. But I had to tell you. I'm sorry but. There it is. Someone had to tell you one of these days. Someone had to open your eyes one of these days. Etc. Etc. She says again. She says again. While. In the bathroom. John Cage -- --,---- realizes he just quietly made a huge decision in the living room. He ----,---- didn't turn on the lamp. He ----,---- doesn't know of course that. Someone. A cousin. The worst cousin in all of New York City.

(he will announce in advance the instant he manages to ----,---- the repertoire of John Cage or his equivalent which could in effect be nothing but very simple clear or at the very least not too ambiguous)

He ----,---- her. At the very least. Startled in ----,----. Let's say. An unfortunate position. An unfortunate position yes. So that. So that. While the friends. And family. Apart from a certain cousin. Apart from a certain cousin of course. Well. Literally cutting it up in front of Merce C. Merce C's tomfoolery. Serving like a professional. Serving the petit fours and the aperitifs like a professional. The 2 together. All at once please. All at once. Wow. While. In the kitchen. A cousin won't stop trashing him to his wife. John Cage. In the bathroom. Lamp off. Realizes that. A little while ago. Since the living room. He's decided that. This whole thing that's been bothering him. This whole matter of irrepressible ----,----. In fact this whole thing with the black hole.

Because the fact is that he. John cage. In 1935. Has. Like anyone else. A black hole in his

(unless he combines two gestures one for punctuating the experience one reserved for the points in the speech on the subject of ----,---- it's really the responsibility of john cage or his equivalent to see but my mind is made up)

head. Well. All that. Well. Makes up. He says. He decides. A part of his deepest self and there is. Therefore. No reason to. Worry. Or. Or. To go see a doctor. For example. To go see a doctor for example because. Suddenly. There is something irrepressible. To do. An inappropriate. For example. Gesture. Or what have you. Or what have you. John cage thinks. Suddenly very calm. Relaxed. And to be honest delighted. Yes. Why not. Why not. In 1935. In the bathroom. In his apartment. In New York City. The day of mr. and mrs. cage's housewarming party. It was in june or september. It was in 1935. I don't know anymore. I don't know anymore. Mrs. cage will say later. When she serves another cup of tea. Just before presenting a small platter of malt balls. A small platter of her famous malt balls. John cage's favorite candy. John cage's favorite candy. Wow. Served here in their original recipe. Wow. All the same. All the same. What luxury. What luxury. Truly. Truly.

THE JOHN CAGE EXPERIENCES

Three instructions (to be followed to the letter) *(during this experience we will see john cage or his equivalent armed with an erector set old blueprints or an instruction manual to be followed supposedly to the letter)*

Once. At the end of his street. In New York City. It's freezing and. John cage. John cage. Yes. That's it the. The composer. Yes. John cage takes stock. We see him near a truck. We see him taking stock. To verify the contents of a truck and take stock. While. From his apartment. On the 3rd floor. Mrs. cage. A real spring chicken. Despite the fact that. At last. It must be said. Despite the fact that. At last. It must be said. She actually has a child. She actually has a child in her arms. She actually had in. 1935. A child. She has her child in her arms. She watches john cage. Her husband. Take stock. To verify the contents of a truck. Great. So. He walks around a truck 36 times. He has a list and a pencil in his hands. It's a rattletrap with a wooden dumping bed. And. While john cage verifies the contents of his truck. Because that's what item 1 on the list john cage has in his

(First john cage or his equivalent will have taken care to open the box take out the spanners and the adjustable spanners as well as the blueprints he will have placed them in the right order on the table or on the floor)

hands says to do. Because item 1 on the list says. To verify the contents of the truck. While item 2 says. To give the tires a few good kicks. And that he must. First. Go through item 1. Go through item 1 before. Well. Quite naturally. Quite naturally. Moving on to item 2. And. While mr. cage is all business. All business. Mrs. cage. Has gone out into the frost. Onto the balcony. On the 3rd floor. She has her child in her arms. She went out onto the balcony. With the child. Despite the cold. Despite the cold. She says. Later. In her living room. 30 or 40 years later. Or maybe a century. We don't know. We don't know. The fact remains that. In 35. 1935. She's on the balcony and watching john cage

(it doesn't matter if during the experience john cage or his equivalent follows the instructions of the blueprint to the letter, actually making the crane or the car or the boat whose blueprint he will seem to be following is not in effect the goal of the experience)

be all business. And. Suffice it to say. Then. In 35. On the balcony. She doesn't expect. Deep down. Much more from marriage. That's a fact. That's a fact. She says. Later. Without bitterness. Without bitterness. Truly. Truly. She says. While john cage. Methodical. Methodical. Is on item 2 of his list. She says. So that one could say that the old trick. The cousin's old trick. Because. In 1935. In New York City. Well. Mrs. cage has a cousin. Mrs. cage sees a cousin regularly. 5th avenue. In a café. And. While mrs. cage parks. She doesn't know what to do anymore. It must be said. At home things are worse than

(put together some metal pieces any which way with the help of nuts and bolts basically make something with these disparate pieces that's it that's what john cage or his equivalent will get down to working on)

ever. It must be said. Mr. cage is methodical. It must be said. So. So. Mrs. cage parks. So there's still the cousin's old trick. A baby. She says. Later. 30. 40 years later. Or a century. Or a century. So that everything doesn't work. There. In 1935. When john cage walks around a truck and takes stock. John cage doesn't have a second to lose. So that john cage doesn't lose another second. So that mrs. cage. Who all the same doesn't expect anything more. Or. At the very least. Not much more. Not much more. Notices. Behind her window. On the 3rd floor. Well. Notices. Well. That her cousin's trick. That her cousin's old. Worn out. Trick. Just simply doesn't work. Just simply doesn't work. She'll say. Later. In her living room. In New York. New York City. So that she can go open the french door to the balcony. And wave a white handkerchief from the balcony. Well. Mr. cage. The illustrious john cage. Does not raise his head. Absorbed entirely in his task. Entirely

(we will then see in the experience john cage or his equivalent make whatever thing following an instruction manual or working drawing to the letter)

absorbed in fulfilling item 2 of a list. He wrote it up with me. Says merce c. Merce c says later. John cage's best friend. John cage's best friend. Possesses. In 35. A truck. He asks. John cage. His best friend. In 35. To load up a truck. To give him a hand for a bit. To give me a hand for a bit. He says. Later. In a 5th avenue. 5th avenue. Café. He puts sugar in his coffee with his left hand while stirring a spoon counterclockwise with his right hand. He has large brown stains on his hands. At this time. Much later. 30. Or 40. Or 50 years later. Merce c. John cage. And mrs. cage. And also mrs. cage. Yes. Are quite old. So that. In 1935. Merce c. At the wheel of a

(as in the other experiences of john cage this experience will alternate subject to it being read or played solo between story action and silence)

race car. A broken down truck with a wooden dumping bed. Says merce c. Waiting patiently for john cage. Waiting patiently for john. John cage. To arrive at item 3 of his list. To open the passenger-side door and take a seat next to merce c. Merce c says. Laughing. Much later. In a café. While his hands. The left and right. Yes. It's curious. Move all by themselves. Without.

Merce c. John cage's best friend. Intervening. As if. One day.
Merce c will be there. He

*(on the other hand in a duo or trio or quartet one can arrange themselves as they wish
provided that there is dead time in the telling)*

will die. And as for his hands. They could well. Continue living.
If they wished. If they don't want to end. Don't want to end at the
same time as merce c. How curious. How curious. Yes. And.
While john cage. 1935. Soon finishes with item 2 on his list. He.
Merce c. Drums a stupid thing on the steering wheel. Nor does
john cage notice mrs. cage. And junior. Mr. cage junior. Let's
not forget. Let's not forget mr. cage junior. Also on the balcony.
All the same. All the same. In his mother's arms. He doesn't
wave a white handkerchief. So he should. In my opinion. He
should. At this time. 1935. Sleep. Rest somewhere between the
shoulder and the neck of his mother. So his father. A good guy.
Named john cage. Gets to item 3 of his list. Opens the door.
Below. In the street. In front of the building. But on the other
side of the road. Of a truck. A rattletrap with a wooden

*(as in the other experiences the duration of story silence and action can be chosen at
random)*

dumping bed. It belongs to merce c. We don't know where he
acquired it. He acquired it to drive. To get himself. Merce c says
later. Merce c. John cage's best friend. To. Yes. Ha ha. He goes.
Laughing. California. In the frost. In the frost. Ha ha. He goes.
Merce c goes. The clown. The happy man. Of 1935. While mr.
cage gets in the passenger-side of the truck. And leaves it to.
Merce c. To start the vehicle. To drive the vehicle. A truck with a
wooden dumping bed. To California. To Los Angeles. At least.
At least. While. John cage. Leaves it mostly.

(a simple pair of dice can do the trick)

Mrs. cage says later. In her living room. To merce c. To take him
definitively out of my life. Him. John cage. A tender and
charming man. An exemplary father. Mrs. cage says now. An old
woman now. In New York City. 3rd floor. However she is still
allergic. She says. To truck exhaust for example. For example.
Mrs. cage says. When she hears a. Yes. Truck in the street. I'm
turning up the radio a bit. I'm turning up louis armstrong a bit.
Mrs. cage says. Thinking and rethinking always of him. John.
Her husband. As well as the other. Merce. Missing a gear and
failing to suppress the motor. Before even the first turn. Before

even the first turn. The first turn to the right. Or the left. She doesn't know anymore. I don't know anymore. Mrs. cage says. After 18 minutes. Or 4'33". Of silence. Yes. That's it. She says. That's my whole life. She says. That's my whole life with john. John cage. A nice man. Truly. Truly. She says.

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