

IN ORGANIC
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OVER BLACK

We hear eight measures of a cardinal's song.

A car alarm sings.

We hear both of these songs together, overlapping, suffocating each other.

This persists for sixteen measures.

EXT- WOODS - DAY

Through the shape of binoculars we follow the outline of cardinal hop across tree tops. We hear it's song again.

IRIS (V.O.)

One.

We hear a click. The view through the binoculars goes blurry and out of focus.

IRIS (V.O)

Or two.

We hear another click. The binoculars focus and the image is clear. They follow the cardinal and hear its song.

IRIS (V.O) (CONT'D)

One.

The binoculars increase magnification: We see the cardinal up close. It cocks its head back and forth. As the cardinal opens it's beak to sing, we hear the song of a car alarm.

IRIS (V.O) (CONT'D)

Or two.

The image of the cardinal cuts to a red car in grass. We hear the cardinal's song.

The binoculars decrease magnification: the car appears far away.

IRIS (V.O) (CONT'D)

One.

The binoculars go in and out of focus.

IRIS (V.O) (CONT'D)

Or two.

We cut from binoculars to a single lens. We see the classic image of the little red house in the grassy field.

We hear the songs of the cardinal and the car alarm overlap again. The lens pulls the image of the red house closer and closer until all we can see is red.

INT. EYE DOCTOR - DAY

A a black room suffocated with intense medical technology. We hear the beeps and hums of machinery. We hear slow, heavy breathing. A surveillance camera in the corner with a steady red glowing light.

We study a biological chart for an Eye, labeled.

We see ZOLA, a black woman in her mid 20s. Zola's desires are often impassioned, obsessive, and perverse. She is anal retentive. Zola has blonde hair and matching eyebrows; she resembles something of another world, something uncanny.

Zola is looking through a phoropter. Beat.

We see the room now through the phoropter. The breathing grows faster and louder.

The phoropter jerks its view around the room violently, it cannot soothe itself. The breath is in panic. We hear the sound of a heart monitor crescendo, until flatlining.

The phoropter stops moving. Everything goes black.

Beat.

OVER BLACK

We hear the flatline beep; it sustains.

IRIS (V.O)

Oh, sorry.

INT. EYE DOCTOR - DAY

The flat line persists. The eye doctor, IRIS, mid 30s, is standing in the center of the room. She looks down at her cellphone, jamming a button. The flatline silences.

IRIS

That's my... ringtone.

Zola is silent behind the phoropter. They sit still and robotic.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Doctor joke.

Iris walks over to Zola, removing the phoropter from her face. Zola blinks a couple of times, regaining liveliness. She stretches her limbs, cracking a few bones.

ZOLA

Wow.

Zola cracks her neck.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

That felt like being in the matrix.

Iris laughs.

IRIS

You know, you are not the first person to say that.

Iris looks over some papers. She looks at Zola. She looks back at the papers.

IRIS (CONT'D)

So you said you've been having what feels like nerve pain?

ZOLA

Mhm.

IRIS

Any trouble with vision?

ZOLA

Vision, yes?

IRIS

Alright I'm going to test your eyesight again.

Iris hands Zola an Occluder. Zola places the occluder on her **right** eye.

Iris walks towards the reaching chart.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Can you read for me?

Iris moves down the chart.

ZOLA

E, F..P T Z, O

IRIS
Okay now here?

She moves lower on the chart.

ZOLA
D, F... F? Again... Uh.. Q Z O?

Iris stares.

IRIS
Okay, let's switch.

Zola switches eyes. When she does this, we hear the sound of electricity start and stop. She looks around startled.

Iris points to the same part of the chart.

ZOLA
Um...

Iris moves to another letter.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Uhhhhh

Iris looks concerned. She moves up in the chart.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Ummm... A 3?

IRIS
No.

Zola removes the occluder from her left eye.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Alright. I'm gonna give you some sodium fluorescein.

Iris reaches for a small vial filled with yellow liquid.

She tilts Zola back in the chair.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Open.

Iris gently drops the yellow liquid into Zola's eyes. Zola does not wince once. Her eyes appear yellow.

IRIS (CONT'D)
If you'd come over here, I just want to test your eye pressure.

Iris gestures to a tonometer. Zola is intimidated by this machinery, she heads over with hesitance. Iris cleans the head and chin rest with a towelette. She gestures for Zola to place her head.

Zola follows these instructions.

Iris starts up the tonometer.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Okay so I'm just gonna check your eye pressure you might feel a little something on your eyelashes, okay, but just breathe, relax.

Iris and Zola share an inhale and exhale together. Iris starts the machine. The hum is quiet, steady. Zola exhales.

IRIS (CONT'D)

So, what do you do?

ZOLA

...I'm a filmmaker.

IRIS

Oh that's interesting. You seem like the kind of person who'd have an eye for art.

The machine jerks, squirting out sounds of electricity. Zola winces at these sounds. The tonometer's blue light flickers. Zola winces again.

IRIS (CONT'D)

(sternly)

Don't move.

Zola sits still rigidly. Her eyes widen. The blue light flickers.

ZOLA

I've actually got a screening of a film, later today.

Iris is silent, focused.

Through a lens we see blue lights dancing and flickering amongst themselves. We hear the scratching of the machine, the sounds are not organic to the tonometer, but more like a garbage disposal amplified and echoed, or loud welding.

Zola jolts.

IRIS
DON'T MOVE.

ZOLA
AH!

Zola's body jolts back onto the floor. The tonometer wails sounding like a machinic-infant. It sounds monstrous and violent.

Zola holds her palms against her eyes, she rocks back and forth. Iris turns the machine off. She kneels beside Zola.

IRIS
Let me see, let me see.

Zola stops rocking. She slowly brings her palms away from her face. Her eyes are closed.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Open.

Zola opens her right eye. It looks normal. Iris relaxes. Zola opens her left eye— it is red and bloody; popped blood vessels.

We see the room almost 360 **through the surveillance camera**. Zola is alone, she cries on the floor into her hands.

We see Zola's face up close through the camera. It looks as if she's standing directly in front of the camera in the room. She stares blankly at us, with her bloody eye. She looks left, she looks right. She looks up. She looks down. She crosses her eyes, she uncrosses them. She points at us.

We are back in the room with Zola and Iris again. Zola is sitting patiently in a chair. Iris reads papers again, but she is mostly pretending.

IRIS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to break this to you, on such a big day— with your screening and all— but, it appears you may or may not have early onset Glaucoma. We'll need to do more testing

Zola looks sickly. She looks left, she looks right. She frantically places her palms over her eyes.

Iris's voice sounds warped as if filtered through a machine.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Glaucoma is a disease that damages the optic nerve.
(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)

The optic nerve is what connects your eye to your brain. It functions almost as a lens, sending light to be interpreted as image... It can often lead to loss of vision and total blindness but there are ways to slow down-

CUT TO:

EXT - Cemetery - DAY

We see a cemetery covered in fog. There are geese grazing on the grass.

We watch the geese graze, for a long while.

A BLACK KNIGHT rides a white horse across the fields. He holds a black flag embedded with a white flower.

We see the Knight's skeleton hand grasp the flag.

We watch the Knight ride off into the fog.

We watch the geese graze again, for a long while.

We see a cloaked figure appear through the fog. They hold a camera with a glowing light . We cannot see their face under the darkness of the cloak.

We watch the geese graze again.

The cloaked figure moves slowly across the cemetery.

The cloaked figure holds the glowing light towards the sky. They pull their hood back, revealing themselves to be Zola.

Zola walks past the grazing geese.

The geese and their goslings follow after Zola's light.

Zola stops.

We hover over her shoulder to see what she is looking at:

Two twigs lay on moss- they shape themselves like a cross.

Zola brings their camera towards the twigs, the light shines on them.

Zola takes video of the cross. This footage is again improvised.

Following this image, we see the footage that was improvised layered over the image of Zola standing with the glowing light from the camera.

Zola looks through the viewfinder as the cross footage fades over her.

Zola bends over digging underneath the cross. She finds film strips buried in the dirt with white flowers.

Zola begins to cry. She removes her cloak, she is wearing a long dress with flowers.

We watch Zola wrap the flowers and film in her cloak— she throws them over her shoulder.

We hear the sound of a horse galloping. The horse comes to a stop. It is the Black Knight. Zola looks up slowly towards the Knight. We his shadow cover her face.

We see the Black Knight looking down on Zola.

We see the horse's eyes.

We see Zola's eyes.

We see the Black Knight's skeleton hand reach out to Zola.

Zola understands what this means. She bows her head, handing the wrapped flowers and film to the Black Knight.

The Black Knight rides off through the fog, we study this image for a long while.

We hear the sound of retching, gagging. We see Zola again, with her hand in her mouth.

She throws up onto the grass. We see the contents of her throw up:

Cut up particles of film. Zola looks up— the sun has come out.

We see the sun.

We hear the sound of film rolling in a projector.

We hear the sound of applause.

CUT TO:

INT - THEATER - DAY

Credits roll across the sun.

We see the audience clap. Zola looks around, thanking everyone. She smiles, but it fades quickly.

We see the light glowing from the projector.

EXT - SIDEWALK - DAY

We see the light from the sun.

Zola stands outside the theater rolling a joint. She licks it sealed. We watch her light it.

Two women, MARY and JUNE, walk out the theater past Zola, murmuring to themselves. They hold hands.

Zola overhears them.

JUNE

How'd you like the film?

MARY

You know, I really didn't get it.
And it felt kinda nonlinear.

Zola interrupts their conversation.

ZOLA

It is nonlinear.

She flicks ash onto the ground, inhaling the joint as if to scratch an itch.

JUNE

Oh hey, you were *in* that film.

Zola nods. She exhales.

ZOLA

I *made* that film.

Mary shuffles, shifting weight.

MARY

I'm sorry... It was.. Just kind of
confusing to me.

Mary laughs a little, looking at June for assurance.

ZOLA

How was it confusing?

Zola inhales her cigarette, trying to appear nonchalant. She chokes, and coughs into her hand. She gestures an apology. Mary and June assure her it's alright.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

You were confused?

Zola motions to June.

JUNE

Oh, no, my girlfriend, Mary was confused.

Mary laughs out of nervousness, Zola feels attacked by this.

ZOLA

What-what didn't you get about it?

Mary looks at June. She looks back at Zola. She is hesitant as she speaks.

MARY

It just didn't feel like a normal movie.

ZOLA

What's a normal movie?

Mary laughs looking at June again. Zola exhales smoke towards Mary. Mary wags it out her face.

MARY

Well you know, like, it has a clear beginning middle and end.

ZOLA

(to herself)

Clear beginning middle and end...

Mary and June shuffle awkwardly, signaling to each other whether or not they should leave.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

You knew when the movie started, didn't you?

MARY

Well, yes.

ZOLA

And you knew when it ended?

MARY

Yes, but-

ZOLA

And then in between the time of knowing the film had started, and knowing the film had ended... You must have knew that was the middle, that in between the beginning of the film, and the end of the film, right?

Mary stares at Zola. June wraps her arm around Mary. They sigh out of sync. Zola grows increasingly neurotic and irritated. She is clearly taking her anger out on Mary.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, and I don't mean to pry, I'm just curious. But what kind of films have you seen? Just curious.

Mary looks uncomfortable.

MARY

Uh, I watch all kinds of movies.

Zola laughs.

ZOLA

All kinds, really? Just the classic beginning middle end type shit right, Mcdonald's jingles, the Evangelical programs, late night commercial television and the celine dion tapes. CAUSE IM YOUR LAAAAADY AND YOU ARE MY MAAAANN

Zola belts the lyrics, startling Mary and Jane. Mary rolls her eyes.

MARY

I mean, I took an Intro To class in college, I think I "get it". It's just not how my brain works— my brain is very linear.

ZOLA

Do you know what a brain looks like.

Mary rolls her eyes.

MARY

June come on, let's go.

Mary tugs June.

ZOLA

No I mean seriously, nothing in our organic systems has this beginning middle and end. It's an endless cycle, it's circular.

Zola makes circles with her fingers in front of Mary's face.

JUNE

What happened to your eye?

Zola touches her eye. She gets quiet, insecure.

ZOLA

I'm going blind.

JUNE

Shit, I'm sorry.

MARY

Sorry.

Mary squeezes June's hand.

JUNE

How would that work? With filming and stuff?

Zola is quiet. She hadn't thought about this. She shrugs. She inhales the joint. She exhales a huge amount towards Mary and June.

ZOLA

I'm sorry, do you guys want some.

June looks to Mary, asking for permission? Mary tilts her head, indicating a reluctant "sure"

JUNE

Yeah, sure. Thank you.

Zola hands the joint to June. As June inhales, we hear a car alarm go off. Zola winces, as if something has been inflicted within.

JUNE (CONT'D)

You good?

ZOLA

Oh yeah... I'm fine.

JUNE

Oh okay... Anyway, sorry about your eyesight... I really liked your film.

ZOLA

You did?

JUNE

Yeah. I liked the metaphor behind it all, like film and life.

June hits the joint fairly hard. She exhales.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It makes real sense if you think about it, I mean when people die all you really have left of them are these chemicals fixed on photosensitive paper and-

She hits the joint again.

JUNE (CONT'D)

These little pixels, light particles or whatever hahaha- I don't know. I don't know what I'm trying to say...

June passes Zola the joint. Zola inhales.

ZOLA

No, no, you're right. It's all about that. You know? Films.. eternal archive- the real "life after death".

Zola exhales. She starts off performatively, than grows sentimental.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

The camera as a kind of machinic God, and I, the Mary of Cinema, giving birth to His Word as universes of pixels and lights refracted and reflected in such a way that one's mind could not tell the difference between the projector and the sun. Both vital to existence.

Zola clips the joint on her boot, she puts the butt in her pocket. Zola looks up, it appears she has been crying.

JUNE

Wow. Beautiful, that was beautiful,
huh Mary.

Mary scoffs. She kicks pebbles around. Zola notices.

ZOLA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset
you.

MARY

I'm not upset.

Mary kicks her foot harder this time. Beat.

ZOLA

You seem upset.

MARY

It just seems... A little self-
involved, that's all.

ZOLA

Self-involved? I mean... you could
argue that everyone is self
involved, you know, all we have is
the self its only natural...

MARY

No, I don't mean like that. I mean
it sounds like you have a God
complex.

Mary laughs to herself.

MARY (CONT'D)

I mean the whole thing about the
camera as God and you the "mary of
cinema"? I mean why are you Mary?

ZOLA

Do you think you're Mary?

MARY

No, my point is, why is anyone
Mary? Or, why isn't everyone Mary?

Zola shrugs, she's not sure herself. She grows small, her
eyes water as if her world shattered.

Mary glares at June.

ZOLA

Do you ever go to the park and listen to birds? Look at them through binoculars?

MARY

No.

ZOLA

It's the most... Alive feeling I've ever felt.

Zola starts to get emotional. Her eyes grow wet.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

Your senses are just completely enhanced I mean, you can hear everything so wonderfully and

Zola makes binoculars with her hands.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

You can see them so much better than your eyes allow.

MARY

What's that gotta do with films?

ZOLA

It's got everything to do with films, the lens— you can't zoom in, you can't capture, you can't do any of that stuff with just your eyes but a camera can do it all and record it too, and play it back over and over and over again. You can relieve your moments with the birds forever. It transcends our capacity for memory, it transcends our abilities to process light into symbols into meaning, into everything, into life, into reality.

June and Mary stand astonished by Zola. It is unclear whether they are swayed or not.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

I want to see everything closely, I want to scavenge yesterdays and remember tomorrows— fuck, it's everything, cinema is everything oh God I'll be nothing, I'll be nothing.

Zola starts to tweak. She holds her eyes.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
I'll be nothing.

MARY
Alright we have to go.

Mary drags June and they rush away from the scene. Zola is unaware of her surroundings. She clutches her face.

ZOLA
(to herself)
I wish my eyes were fucking
cameras, oh God I'll be nothing.

Zola looks up at the sun. We hear the sound of film rolling through a projector. We stay with this image for a long time.

Zola closes her eyes. She touches them. We hear the call of a cardinal. We see the shadow of the bird pass by Zola's face a few seconds after the call.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The walls are covered in gold wallpaper that sparkles by the light beaming through the sun roof. It is dimly lit by candles lit with prayer. There are beautiful stained glass windows and biblical portraits. We hear the sounds of generators, vents, and passing vehicles amplified and echoed in the space— they feel as if they originate organically in the space.

We watch as Zola kneels before the CARDINAL, dressed in red garb. We watch the Cardinal dip a palm leaf in holy water. He presses the palm leaf against the right eye.

CARDINAL
One.

We hear vents and generators, trucks going over speed bumps. We hear the faint undertones of a cardinal's singing song.

The Cardinal dips another palm leaf in holy water. He presses this palm leaf against the left eye.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)
Two.

Zola gasps. Her eyes remain closed. Cardinal signs the cross over Zola with every prayer.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

(whispered)

In the name of the father, the son
and... In the name of the father,
the son and the... In the name of
the father

We hear just the cardinal's call now.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

May the Lord bless you, heal you,
child.

Zola signs the cross. She touches her right eye, she touches her left eye which is still bloody. She thanks the Cardinal. We hear the cardinal's song once again. Zola thanks the cardinal.

CUT TO:

EXT- WOODS- DAY

Through binoculars, we see a nest.

The binoculars go in and out of focus.

Through binoculars we see baby birds crying in their nest. We start to hear the murmur of a baby crying. The crying intensifies and grows overwhelming, it syncs up with the crying of the baby birds.

CUT TO:

EXT - WOODS - DAY

We hear the steady pulse of a heart monitor.

We see a giant nest.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see Zola rested in the nest naked, curled up into a ball. We see a strip of film stitched onto her spine.

We see the stitches, they ooze and pus. It looks poorly done and infected. Zola's arm jerks, reaching for the film. She scratches her stitches. We watch the pus and scabs go into her fingernail.

Zola yawns, stretching. She stretches too far, ripping the stitches. The film falls from her back. She screeches like a hawk. Zola cries, touching her back, feeling where the film once was.

She bleeds from her wounds. Zola cries again although this time it's human-like child like. She cries out as if calling out to someone. She looks towards us. She cries, calling out to us. We hear the sounds of as toddler crying.

She cries and she cries. We stay with this moment until it is uncomfortable. Until it suffocates us with it.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

We see Zola sitting in a theater alone. She stares at the glowing screen, almost hypnotized by the light.

We see her bloody eye.

We see the projector. Dust particles float around.

We see Zola's face illuminated by the glow.

Zola looks around, to assure she is alone.

She looks back at the screen, comfortable that she has made sure she is alone.

We see the TICKET TAKER, mid 20s, sweeping in the far right corner of the theater. The Ticket Taker is the kind of guy who notices everything. He is wearing a red uniform. He notices Zola, but he does not care too much. He continues to sweep.

Zola watches the screen. We start to hear the crescendo of machinic hum. The projector cranks and clicks and buzzes. We hear Zola's seat creak as she adjusts in her chair.

We see her legs rub against each other, sensually, but also uncomfortable as if to get rid of a feeling.

The Ticket Taker continues to sweep, unnoticed by Zola.

Zola continues rubbing her legs together, as if to please herself.

We see Zola's face, we stay with her for a long while as she climaxes.

She forgets where she is momentarily, releasing Oh's and Ah's.

A flashlight blares in Zola's eyes.

She covers her face.

The Ticket Taker laughs. He laughs, and laughs, he cannot stop laughing at Zola.

Zola still covers her face, seemingly embarrassed. But the Ticket Taker's laugh invites Zola to laugh.

They laugh together. Zola uncover's her face, laughing. The Ticket Taker notices her bloody eye. He screams, dropping the flashlight. He continues screaming.

Zola's smile fades. She stares straight ahead, we can tell she's wounded by this interaction.

We watch her sink down in her chair, she disappears. The film ends. The theater goes black.

We hear the sound of the projector turn off, then turn on again.

The Ticket Taker is sitting next to Zola now. We watch from behind as they stare straight at the screen. They turn towards each other.

TICKET TAKER

What's my name?

Beat.

ZOLA

I don't know...

TICKET TAKER

Really? I know you.

ZOLA

No you don't.

TICKET TAKER

I do, I know you. I see you all the time.

Beat.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Zola.

Beat. Zola laughs.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

What's my name?

ZOLA

I don't know.

TICKET TAKER
That's no good.

ZOLA
No good at all...

TICKET TAKER
What shall you call me?

Zola thinks.

ZOLA
Hm....

Beat.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Ticket taker...

Zola laughs. The Ticket Taker laughs... They lean closer to each other.

We see a bird fly past the screen. We hear its wings hitting against its body, amplified and echoed. This sound is overwhelming and almost horrific.

The Ticket Taker shines his flashlight, searching for the bird.

We hear it's wings beat again, but we do not see it. Zola and the Ticket Taker jump, clutching each other.

The Ticket Taker motions to Zola to follow him. They creep out of the aisle and follow the sound of the bird.

Every time the bird beats its wings against its body, the sound is even more horrific. They wince every time, as if inflicted with some illness.

Zola looks around for the bird. She clutches a bag close to her body for comfort. We see the Ticket Taker's flashlight move around in the distance.

ZOLA
(whispering)
I can't see anything!

We hear the wings beat again. Zola digs in her bag. She pulls out an old looking camera, she turns it on.

The camera has an annoying start-up song that ruins the suspense of the moment.

The Ticket Taker shines his flashlight at Zola almost as if to acknowledge the moment ruined.

Zola gestures an apology. The Ticket Taker returns searching for the bird.

Zola looks around through her camera.

THROUGH A CAMERA'S TACKY NIGHT VISION FILTER:

We see the movie theater. Zola looks around for the bird but sees nothing. We hear its wings beat again and come to a stop. The bird has landed somewhere.

Zola zooms in looking around the room. She spots the bird, perched on top of the screen. The bird shits on the screen.

Zola zooms even closer to the bird. We see its face now: a small black pigeon. It looks gentle and sweet sitting on the projector.

We see the pigeon's head cock right and left.

Zola zooms in slowly on the pigeon's eye. She turns the camera off, we are back in the theater now organically.

We see Zola looking through a camera lens. We see her bloody eye.

We see the pigeon's eye, red and glowing. It looks horrific.

Zola continues looking through her lens.

We hear, but do not see, the Ticket Taker throw his flashlight at the bird.

We hear it's body fall to the ground.

Plop.

Zola starts to cry, like a child. She hyperventilates, choking on tears.

The Ticket Taker picks up the pigeon body.

We see it rested in his hands. It looks gentle again, its eyes closed.

CLOSE ON

We see the pigeon's eye again. Bright red, in the center. It stops looking like an eye and more like a symbol or geometric shape.

We see Zola's eye juxtaposed with this.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see the pigeon lay in the Ticket Taker's hand.

We hear the sound of film rolling through a projector.

CUT TO:

EXT - RESTAURANT - DAY

We see the sun as the projector sound persists. A truck goes by, interrupting this sound. It honk, honks.

Zola and the Ticket Taker sit at a table outside of a small restaurant. The outdoor dining area is decorated with fake flowers and fake vines. Zola smells one of the fake flowers.

ZOLA
Mmm, microfibers.

The Ticket Taker laughs. He nudges a small red shoe box underneath his chair with his foot unconsciously.

TICKET TAKER
Are you feeling better?

ZOLA
Hm?

Zola realizes what he means.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Oh, yes. Much better...

Zola and the Ticket Taker drink from their water at the same time.

A WAITRESS comes by and places a vase full of white flowers on the table silently.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Did you know, pigeon's are domesticated?

TICKET TAKER
No, no, I did not know that...

ZOLA
Well remember like homing pigeons?

TICKET TAKER

Yeah

ZOLA

Well yeah, they were trained by humans to do that, to deliver messages. Like that's why we kept them around for communication and stuff, to reach other people when we couldn't...And then we just abandoned them. Now they live on the streets as pest. But I hear that's why they really stick around you know, in cities and stuff, because they miss us really...

Zola saddens herself with this thought. The Ticket Taker notices this emotional shift.

TICKET TAKER

Hey well, did you ever hear about birds being government surveillance machines?

Zola laughs.

ZOLA

No, I've never heard of that.

TICKET TAKER

Yeah, some buddy of mine back in college wrote his thesis on it. Everyone thought he was, ya know, off the 'cid or something but, I thought it was really intuitive.

ZOLA

Intuitive? I don't think so.

Zola laughs, caustically, shoving this idea away.

TICKET TAKER

I mean, not that I believe birds are government surveillance machines or anything like *that*, I mean, I'm not completely sold on the fact that they're not either... I could be persuaded either way, but by intuitive I mean—

A series of cars honk one after another. They form a kind of chorale. Zola and the Ticket Taker wait for this chorale to be over.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

I mean like it makes sense,
intuitively, that his mind would
create that hypothesis?

ZOLA

Oh, really? Why do you think?

TICKET TAKER

I mean look at how often we are
being watched.

The Ticket Taker nods his head towards a security camera
attached to the panneling of the restaurant. Its light glows
red once noticed. Zola jolts back, as if scared.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

You good?

ZOLA

Oh yeah, I'm fine.

Zola and the Ticket Taker notice two WAITRESSES staring at
them and whispering. Zola runs her fingers through her hair.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

I just hate being watched.

TICKET TAKER

Everyone does, its dehumanizing. In
nature, other animals *avoid* each
other. When do you ever see a
squirrel walking up to a groundhog
and shooting the shit?

Zola smiles, a little uncomfortably.

ZOLA

Never, I guess. But we're different
than animals, we're socialized.

The Ticket Taker laughs at this thought.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

(sternly)

What's funny?

TICKET TAKER

"We're different than animals,
we're socialized"

Zola shifts her weight in her seat.

TICKER TAKER

I mean it's a great line. But animals definitely are socialized, in their own way. It's just human exceptionalism that makes us feel otherwise, like we're the only social beings. I'd maybe even go as far as to say that maybe even more so than us, at certain moments...

ZOLA

Why do you think so? I'm not disagreeing or anything, just picking your brain I guess.

The Ticket Taker pauses, smiling at Zola. He is clearly pleased by this notion.

TICKET TAKER

I like the image of that. You picking my brain.

Zola looks down at her plate.

We see a throbbing brain, its covered in blood that is obviously red corn-syrup. It lays on a plate of empty film strips, arranged like spaghetti

Zola stabs her fork into the brain.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Ow!

Zola grins. She stabs the brain over and over again.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Ow, ow!

Zola picks up a film strip covered in the corn-syrup blood. She licks the blood off the right side of the strip, then the left.

She jolts the film strip away from her. She touches her tongue. She realizes she's cut herself.

Zola sticks her tongue out. The Ticket Taker leans over the plate of brain and film to lick the blood from Zola's tongue.

They laugh together. All of a sudden there is spaghetti on their plates and no longer brain and film. The waitress gives them each a "look" before walking away and returning the other waitress. Both waitresses stare at Zola and the Ticket Taker.

Zola looks down at her plate of spaghetti. She cuts a meatball in half before chewing.

ZOLA
(mouth full)
So what did you mean before?

She covers her mouth as she swallows.

TICKET TAKER
Oh, right. Hmm well...

Beat.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)
Well, people these days can hardly stay in the same relationship two months, let alone a lifetime. Birds like cardinals stay together for years if not until death.

Zola lights up.

ZOLA
I love cardinals.

TICKET TAKER
The little red birds? Yeah they're great.

ZOLA
They sound like car alarms...

TICKET TAKER
Well most birds sound kind of digitalized. I mean because that's the context we're interpreting them in, this digital, technological moment we're in... It's industrialized our way of listening.

ZOLA
Wow, that's a great way of saying that.

TICKET TAKER
Thank you, I've written some stuff about it... if you'd like to read it sometime.

(MORE)

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

It's interesting the ways in which the organic inform the inorganic, and then the inorganic endings up re-informing the organic over time and this cycle has seemed to persist throughout history. I mean the way we hear sounds, like birds, but also cars and phones and other technology is so informed by one another.

Zola is quiet.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Sorry if that was too much.

ZOLA

No no it's fine, I'm just a little confused I think...

TICKET TAKER

Hm... Well, you wouldn't know what sounds came from where, if it weren't for your ability to perceive the objects that birth them. Like... okay. I guess what I mean is, if you hear the sounds of a generator, but didn't know that it was like, inorganic to nature, would you hear it differently? I'm not sure, but we could test my hypothesis right now.

ZOLA

How?

The Ticket Taker covers Zola's eyes.

TICKET TAKER

Listen.

OVER BLACK

We hear what Zola is hearing:

The sound of steam wooshing out of trucks as they pull up to the red light.

A car blinker goes off, ticking, ticking.

We hear the coo of pigeons eating complimentary bread left behind by the restaurant goers.

We hear wind rustle through trees.

The sound of a plastic "Thank You" bag swishing against gravity. The contents of the bag clink together, in that melodic, plastic way.

We hear these sounds stretched, harmonized, reversed, echoed and delayed, to sound melodic and beautiful.

We hear the sound of a horse's hooves clomping against the road.

Zola opens her eyes. She sees the Black Knight riding down the street on his white horse, waving his flag. Zola goes quiet.

The Ticket Taker is quiet. Zola adjusts in her seat, trying to get his attention.

ZOLA

...That was like a whole new world.
But it felt like I've been there
before...

The Ticket Taker motions to the waitress for the check. She stares at him. She rolls her eyes and walks inside begrudgingly. The Ticket Taker can't help but smile at this behavior.

TICKET TAKER

What did you hear?

ZOLA

Mostly just... Machinery. But in a
different way than before...Like,
music?

TICKET TAKER

Ahhh machine music, my favorite
genre of ambience.

Zola laughs, shrugging this off. The waitress throws the check on the table.

Zola looks up at the security camera again. The Ticket Taker pays for lunch. He leaves a hefty tip for the scowling waitress, smiling at her.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

(mouthing)

Great service.

The waitress smiles wickedly— there is an understanding between them that was not there before. They see each other.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

I'd like to go for a walk with you.

Zola nods. They get up from the seat. They begin walking, Zola grows uncomfortable.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

ZOLA

Oh god, Oh god, cover me.

Zola ducks behind the Ticket Taker, shielding herself. We see Mary and June walk past them and towards the restaurant where they are seated.

Zola moves from behind the Ticket Taker. He is amused by her movements.

TICKET TAKER

What was that about?

ZOLA

Ahhh geez. I just like, know those girls.

TICKET TAKER

Oh from where?

ZOLA

Well, I don't like know them, know them but... After a screening of mine I was getting stoned outside cause I was just all sorts of fucked up cause I had just gone to the eye doctor-

TICKET TAKER

(gesturing)

Oh yeah, I meant to ask about that... but sorry, finish your story

ZOLA

I had just gone to the eye doctor and found out I'll maybe be blind and I just, I don't know. I was stoned. I got into a little thing with one of the girls Mary, and she insinuated I had a God complex, you know, about cinema- and I didn't mean to come off that way or anything I just really really like film!

TICKET TAKER

Hey, everyone gets a little stoned and rambley sometimes. That's the whole essence of pot. Speaking of which—

The Ticket Taker pulls a perfectly rolled joint from behind his ear.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Would you be interested in partaking?

ZOLA

Oh no, I'll be humiliated tomorrow when I remember all the dumb stuff I said.

TICKET TAKER

You don't like that feeling?

ZOLA

Humiliation? No.

TICKET TAKER

Oh, I do.

ZOLA

Why?

TICKET TAKER

It's a very human experience... And the feeling is informed by a lot of other kind of 'exclusively' human feelings like judgement and how experience informs perception and all that...

ZOLA

You know, you sound like a philosopher a lot of the time.

TICKET TAKER

I'm sorry, does that bother you?

ZOLA

No, I like philosophy.

TICKET TAKER

What's your philosophy?

ZOLA

...I need to think on that one.

Zola laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

We see Mary and June are seated at the same table as Zola and the Ticket Taker.

Mary smells the fake flowers, but she is indifferent to their fakeness

MARY

Don't you love these flowers June?

June looks at the menu.

JUNE

Oh yeah, they're great.

Mary shifts in her seat. She feels something. She looks down.

MARY

Oh, what's this?

Mary lifts up the red shoe box the Ticket Taker left behind.

JUNE

Looks like a shoe box. Are there shoe's inside?

MARY

I don't know, let's check.

Mary reaches to lift the lid, she is interrupted and startled by June.

JUNE

WAIT.

MARY

What?! Jesus June! You scared me!

JUNE

What if it's a bomb?

Mary rolls her eyes.

MARY

Why would it be a bomb?

JUNE
I don't know... I've seen it happen
before.

MARY
...Where?

JUNE
Well, in movies and stuff...

MARY
Oh please, June.

Mary is annoyed, she lifts open the box revealing what's
inside:

The dead pigeon.

Mary screams.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh GOD, oh GOD, OH GOD.

JUNE
What? What is it?

MARY
Oh, oh, oh my god.

Mary gets up from the table and starts running across the
street with the red box. A red car jolts swerves out of her
way, she apologizes and keeps running.

June watches Mary, unsure if she should follow or not. The
Waitress comes by. June thinks...

JUNE
Yeah I'll actually just have a-

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

We see the shoebox with its lid off sitting in grass.

Beside it, Mary sits by a pond, washing the deceased bird
with a leaf.

We watch her wash it for a long while.

As she washes the bird, she coos just like it once had. Mary
coos to herself and to the bird. We watch this for a while.

Mary sniffs— she smells something familiar. She looks around, clutching the bird to her heart.

We hear distanced laughing before we see Zola and the Ticket Taker walking and smoking.

Mary notices, then realizes it's Zola from the other day.

ZOLA

No, I mean really, it's my favorite film of all time.

TICKET TAKER

Of all time?

ZOLA

Mmmmmhmmm.

The Ticket Taker laughs. Mary watches them.

MARY

HEY.

Zola and the Ticket Taker look at Mary. Zola realizes it's her. The Ticket Taker recognizes the shoe box, he realizes he left behind the bird. He hits Zola's hand. He looks with his eyes, towards the bird and the box.

ZOLA

Hey... Mary, right?

Mary nods. She holds the bird closer to chest. Zola and the Ticket Taker avoid look at the bird consciously.

TICKET TAKER

Oh you're from the screening.

Zola nudges the Ticket Taker. He realizes he shouldn't have said that and gestures sorry. Mary laughs.

MARY

Yes. Although I don't know if I'll ever be at one of those again...

TICKET TAKER

Oh yeah why?

MARY

Just the whole indie film scene, it's really not for me... I just like to watch movies, normal, you know?

TICKET TAKER

No, I don't know. I'm not sure what you mean.

Mary turns away from Zola and the Ticket Taker. She returns to tending to the bird.

MARY

I just mean... I just like to watch them. I don't really like to think about them or theorize or unpack, just be there, I guess.

Zola shifts her weight of annoyance of Mary's opinion.

TICKET TAKER

That's a perfectly reasonable way to enjoy cinema--.. and all art, really. Right, Zola?

Zola looks at the Ticket Taker in a little disbelief.

ZOLA

Mmmmn. I don't know.

TICKET TAKER

What don't you know?

ZOLA

I mean there's so much thought that goes into art. It's useless to experience it but not think about it... It's meant to make people think.

MARY

It's made to make people feel, also.

Mary clutches the bird away from Zola.

TICKET TAKER

I think it's more nuanced than just thought and feeling... And I'm not entirely convinced you don't think about the art you consume Mary.

MARY

Well, I do think about it. Just not in the way she wants.

ZOLA

What "way"

MARY

You know, *that* way. That pretentious and snobby way.

ZOLA

What are you, some kind of phillistine?

MARY

I'm not religious.

Zola laughs maniacally.

TICKET TAKER

Ignore her. But why do you feel its snobby?

MARY

I don't know... It's like if you haven't taken a film class or studied film in college you can't even share your thoughts, cause everyone thinks you're ill-informed, not qualified to speak or even generate whatever thoughts happen organically...

TICKET TAKER

Right, I see.

Mary continues washing the bird, unphased. She strokes its face.

MARY

And it's like, the people who make them always think they've done some grand gesture for humanity.

Zola continues to laugh over Mary. But Mary directs her voice to the Ticket Taker, who is listening.

MARY (CONT'D)

Like they believe the audience is incapable of putting the dots together on their own— which isn't true, if I wanted to make a film about something deep or philosophical, I'm just qualified to speak on that as anyone else. We're *all* just humans, on this rock

—

ZOLA

Oh god not the floating rock
speech.

TICKET TAKER

Hey.

The Ticket Taker looks at Zola as if to quiet her. Zola looks in disbelief, but she stops.

MARY

I don't know, this is just my
opinion. If you think I'm not
qualified to have that opinion,
well, you prove my point.

Mary turns her back to the Ticket Taker and Zola. She washes the bird up in the pond some more.

TICKET TAKER

You know you can get pretty sick
from dead animals.

MARY

It's not dead, it's stunned. It's
still breathing.

The Ticket Taker holds Zola's hands.

Mary coos to the pigeon.

We see the pigeon rest in her hands. We notice its breath.

Zola watches the pigeon breathe, its feathers shivering.

MARY (CONT'D)

Poor thing.

Mary strokes its head.

We see its breath again. We hear human breathe over this image, airy and breathy.

MARY (CONT'D)

Are you feeling better, since we
met? You seemed kind of
distressed...

ZOLA

OH... yeah. I'm fine, I was just
stoned.

MARY

OH.

Mary says this with judgement. The Ticket Taker notices.

TICKET TAKER
Do you smoke?

MARY
No, never.

ZOLA
Why?

MARY
Just a personal choice, really... I don't really see a need to alter my state of mind.

Zola sighs to herself.

TICKET TAKER
That's interesting, I like that.

Zola eyes the Ticket Taker.

ZOLA
Well, we have to go.

MARY
Farewell.

Zola and the Ticket Taker walk away. Mary sighs, she feeds the bird a sip of water from the leaf. The bird responds to this and drinks.

The bird adjusts itself in Mary's hands. She smiles, giggling.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Zola and the Ticket Taker walk back past the restaurant and towards Zola's apartment.

Zola sees June eating by herself.

ZOLA
Hey, June, right?

June looks up and recognizes Zola.

JUNE
(chewing)
Oh hey, you're that filmmaker.
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Hey, wait, thanks for the pot the other day. It's been so long.

ZOLA

Oh no problem, really. I just saw your girlfriend in the park.

JUNE

Oh! I was wondering where she went.

Zola and the Ticket Taker look confused.

JUNE (CONT'D)

(swallowing)

Oh she doesn't have a phone, so.

TICKET TAKER

Ahhhh.

ZOLA

Why doesn't she have a phone?

JUNE

Mmm I think she's just not a big fan of technology.

ZOLA

(caustic)

What is she afraid of the chemicals and radiation?

JUNE

No, she just prefers not to have one.

TICKET TAKER

Makes sense.

JUNE

Yeah she says it helps her stay present... Hey so find out about your eyesight yet?

Zola grows uncomfortable.

ZOLA

Not yet, no...

JUNE

Oh. I'm sure everything's fine.

Zola nods. June continues eating.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Are you gonna have any more screenings by the way? I really liked your last film.

ZOLA

Thank you! And, uh, I'm not sure. I haven't really been in the mood to film lately... Cause of the eye stuff.

JUNE

Man, thats tough...

ZOLA

Yeah.

JUNE

It would be cool if they could give you like, bionic eyes and shit— like bionic arms and legs ya know?

TICKET TAKER

Hey now that's an idea, bionic eyes.

The Ticket Taker laughs. Zola's face is serious.

CUT TO:

INT. ZOLA'S APARTMENT- EVENING

Zola's apartment is covered in cameras old and new, working and not working. She has camera's draped from the ceiling like chandeliers. There are also lots of plants, pathos vines straggled everywhere. There are also wires strung in their own pockets of the room. They all have their own kind of sentience.

We hear keys jingle outside the apartment door. We hear the key enter the lock and twist and jolt open. Zola and the Ticket Taker enter the apartment mid conversation.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

I just felt like you were being a little standoffish, that's all—
WOAH.

The ticket taker is interrupted by his awe of Zola's apartment.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

Holy shit... Is this meant to be kinky?

ZOLA
Why would it be?

The Ticket Taker gestures to the cameras

TICKET TAKER
Uh 24 hour surveillance.

ZOLA
None of them are on.

TICKET TAKER
Doesn't mean they're not
watching...

Zola laughs.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)
Any of them ever turn on by
themselves?

Zola shakes her head. She starts fixing things around the
room, turning her attention away from the Ticket Taker.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)
I like your place though, it's very
nice. Very "Zola".

Zola smiles.

ZOLA
Thanks.

TICKET TAKER
And sorry we couldn't go to mine...
You wouldn't want to any way.

ZOLA
Why not?

TICKET TAKER
My roommates are freaks.

Zola laughs.

ZOLA
More so than you?

TICKET TAKER
Hey I'm not a freak...I just have a
love for... thought. And discourse.

ZOLA
 (shrugging)
 If that's what we're calling it.

The Ticket Taker strolls through Zola's apartment. He touches her plants.

TICKET TAKER
 Are these real?

ZOLA
 Of course they're real.

TICKET TAKER
 Why of course? There are people who buy plants.

ZOLA
 That's so tacky. Why not experience the real thing?

TICKET TAKER
 I think I could ask you the same question in a different context.

ZOLA
 What do you mean?

TICKET TAKER
 I mean you love movies, right?

ZOLA
 Films.

TICKET TAKER
 Is there a difference?

ZOLA
 A Bugs Life is a movie. Les Quatres Centes Coups is a *film*.

The Ticket Taker scoffs.

TICKET TAKER
 By what standard?

Zola scoffs back.

ZOLA
 Everyone's.

TICKET TAKER
 OK.

Beat.

ZOLA

Well what were you gonna say,
before.

TICKET TAKER

I mean you like films so much, I
see you at the theater all the
time. Why not... Go outside.
Experience the real thing. Like the
thing that cinema tries so hard to
grasp— Life?

ZOLA

Fuck you

The Ticket Taker grabs Zola's face in his hands.

CLOSE ON

Zola's cheeks look red, flustered. Her eyes are drifted away,
her thoughts elsewhere. Her eyebrows furrowed. We see the
Ticket Taker's thumb brush across Zola's cheekbone and move
towards her bloodied eye.

TICKET TAKER (O.S)

Look at me.

Zola rolls her eyes.

TICKET TAKER (O.S) (CONT'D)

Please. I wanna see you.

Zola shuts her eyes.

TICKET TAKER (O.S) (CONT'D)

Experience you?

Zola breaks, she laughs a little.

TICKET TAKER (O.S) (CONT'D)

I like your face.

ZOLA

Really.

Zola opens her eyes and looks down at his thumb. She bites
it. She smiles to herself.

ZOLA (CONT'D)

You really like my face?

TICKET TAKER (O.S)
Oh yeah.

ZOLA
What does it look like?

TICKET TAKER (O.S)
(whispering)
Like a movie star's.

The Ticket Taker's thumb goes over Zola's face again.

ZOLA
Even with my eye...

The Ticket Taker pushes his finger over Zola's right eye (the seemingly 'normal' eye), he closes it.

TICKET TAKER (O.S)
(whispering)
Especially with your eye...

Zola kisses the Ticket Taker's hand.

TICKET TAKER (O.S) (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I can't tell if you wanna fuck or
not...

A car alarm goes off outside. They laugh. The car alarm persists.

ZOLA
Do you think car alarms sound like
cardinals? Or cardinals sound like
car alarms.

TICKET TAKER
Surely there were cardinals before
cars.

ZOLA
Surely?

TICKET TAKER
Surely.

ZOLA
What if they sounded different
before cars?

TICKET TAKER

Ahh... That's a good question. I wouldn't know, but interesting thought.

ZOLA

I read somewhere that most birds can learn up to 16 songs— Mockingbirds can learn up to 200 new songs. I don't know, I've just been thinking, about what you said. About the cycle of the organic and the inorganic informing each other...

TICKET TAKER

Right.

ZOLA

And like how some birds can hear like ringtones, or camera shutters, or car alarms and micmic them exactly.

TICKET TAKER

Mhmmm.

ZOLA

It's just interesting because when we think of birds we think they're beautiful and melodic and nice to hear but when car alarms go off they're cacophonous and annoying. Why is that?

TICKET TAKER

Hm I'm not sure. I guess because of the way our listening is conditioned, what we're conditioned to find melodic. We prioritize the organic and neglect the inorganic out of some belief it'll connect us more to humanity and the experience of the organic world.

ZOLA

It won't.

TICKET TAKER

Why do you say?

ZOLA

Well... If it weren't for camera's and lenses, I wouldn't be able to see or remember much of the organic. Your natural senses can only do so much... When I experience nature through my camera, I feel connected to them, in a way I don't feel when I'm straining my eyes to see them.

Zola and the Ticket Taker sit down on a couch. Zola rests her head on his lap. He strokes her hair.

TICKET TAKER

Why a camera, why not a magnifying glass or a binocular?

ZOLA

To remember.

TICKET TAKER

Ah, I see.

ZOLA

I mean memory is so tentative. You can be present and experience life, sure, by all means but, I don't know about you, I wanna remember this stuff, I wanna be able to live and relive and recreate, reinvent. I want people to remember *me*. And it's more than just the camera anyway, it's the whole process, every step of the way. We accept The camera, the eyes, the filmmaker, the brain interpreting the image, the projector just birthing life again and again and again...

TICKET TAKER

I get it, I mean I work in a theater, that's as close as you can get, sweeping up popcorn. Or I guess, you're a filmmaker, right? That's probably the closest.

ZOLA

No, no way...

TICKET TAKER

No?

ZOLA

This is gonna sound weird— I don't know... Sometimes like... I just wish I was a camera— er or a like... or something, I don't know never mind that sounded stupid.

TICKET TAKER

Not stupid at all, and you're not the first to say either.

ZOLA

Oh yeah?

TICKET TAKER

Oh yeah there are plenty of transhumanists— my roommate Greg is real into that shit, talks about it non-stop.

Zola sits up.

TICKET TAKER (CONT'D)

What?

ZOLA

Let's go to your place.

TICKET TAKER

Agh, it's so far from here. Wish we could just jump cut, like in the movies, right.

Zola sighs.

ZOLA

Yeah.

The ticket taker continues stroking Zola's hair. Beat.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TICKET TAKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We watch a white guy, LARK, with greasy blonde hair and too-long stubble attempt to light a joint shaped like a cross.

The format of this scene should be "smoke circle" whoever is holding the joint, gets to talk or respond. The stoner dialogue should be improvised by the actors, who are really stoned, in one take.

At some point, the joint should be passed to our protagonist. When this happens, the improvisation stops and return to the script.

Zola inhales from the joint. She coughs and laughs.

ZOLA
You guys are cool.

A collective "aye" arises from the circle. Zola laughs.

The joint is passed from person to person. We see them in this order; in the circle we have:

EMILY, 24, working as barista. Has a pixie cut, piercings, all of that.

GREG, 27, greasy and white. Says "dude" too much.

DAVID, 25, bowl cut. Constantly interrupting, loves discourse too much.

AMIR, 25, clean shaven, thick black glasses. Condescending.

The joint makes it way back to Zola.

EMILY (O.S)
You're really pretty.

ZOLA
Thanks.

Zola blushes. She inhales a huge hit, exhaling and coughing.

We see Emily putting drops in her eyes. The boys hype her up while she does this.

ZOLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What are those for?

EMILY
(laughing)
To help me see!

Everyone laughs except for Zola. Zola smiles timidly. She doesn't understand.

AMIR
It's acid- it doesn't *literally* help you see.

EMILY
Yes it does. See things you wouldn't normally, that is.

GREG

Yeah like the fucking mites eating
the shit off your eyelashes 24
hours a day.

EMILY

Fuck offfff dude you're gonna ruin
my trip.

AMIR

Pass me those.

Emily passes the LSD drops. Amir drops them in both of his eyes. He passes them to Greg. Greg drops in each eye, then does it again. He pauses. He drops more in his eyes.

DAVID

Dude, chill.

Greg passes the LSD to David. David drops them in his eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey, bro!

David calls out to the Ticket Taker who enters the room upon hearing.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You want some?

The Ticket Taker looks at Zola.

TICKED TAKER

What do you think?

ZOLA

(mouthing)

I don't know.

EMILY

Come on, you seem like a tweaky
girl. Look at those eyebrows.

Zola blushes.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You look like you know how to have
fun.

Zola is convinced. She reaches her hand out for the drops.

ANOTHER ANGLE

From above, we watch Zola put the drops in her eyes. She opens her right eye lid, dropping the liquid in. We watch her gently touch her left eye lid, stretching it wide open. She drops the LSD in her eye.

We hear the sound of a pigeon coo and flap, as if it occurred organically in the space. We hear the sound of film starting up in a projector.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TICKET TAKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We are at least ten minutes into the LSD trip. Everyone is dressed strangely, like characters in a Nijinsky play.

We hear the sound of a heart monitor steadily, and quietly under the muffled voices. Zola looks over to the Ticket Taker

ZOLA

(to Ticket Taker)

I wanna get some footage of this,
can I use an outlet or something?

DAVID

Nooooo, no cameras. That'll ruin it
all. Nope, no way.

ZOLA

What do you mean ruin it all?

DAVID

The second you bring out a camera,
people start performing. It's not
organic or natural or candid at
all.

AMIR

Hey, you know what, this old
Russian playwright once said, "Life
should not inform theater, theater
should inform life." I think the
same could go for film

Amir gestures towards Zola.

EMILY

I agree. Performing is a natural
part of existence, that's why it
even happens on stage.

David rolls his eyes.

DAVID

How did you guys meet anyway?

Zola and the Ticket Taker laugh.

GREG

Not to be... rude or anything

Everyone groans collectively.

GREG (CONT'D)

WHAT???

ZOLA

No, say it.

GREG

...if we're gonna all trip together
for the next eight or twelve hours,
I gotta get this off my chest.

Zola stares at Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)

What the fuck is up with the cyborg
eye?

The Ticket Master hits Greg on the back of the neck.

ZOLA

It's fine... I was just like,
getting this eye-pressure thing-
test and it like... Jabbed the fuck
out of my eye.

GREG

Dammmmmmmn. That's crazy.

ZOLA

And I might be going blind, so...
There's that also.

GREG

Damn, what do you do for a living?

ZOLA

I make films.

Everyone is quiet. They shift around awkwardly.

DAVID

Man, I'm sorry Zola.

ZOLA

It's fine, it's fine. We don't have to talk about it if it's gonna kill the vibe... Hopefully they'll come out with a bionic eye or some shit.

Emily, Amir, and David laugh. Zola laughs too, although she is visibly a little sad.

DAVID

I'd love to see one of your films.

EMILY

YES. Me too!

AMIR

As would I, that'd be a great way to kick this off.... Unless they're bad of course.

Emily hits Amir.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Kidding, obviously.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

MONTAGE

We see a cardinal on a tree top. We see its beak open, but we hear the engine of a plane.

We see a red plane pass by in the sky. We hear the call of a cardinal.

We see a bluejay eating seeds in the dirt. We hear the spinning of propellers

We see a blue jet landing on a runway. We hear a bluejay's "caw, caw"

We see a Helicopter hover over a city. We hear the screech of a seagull.

We watch a seagull hover over the ocean. We hear the spinning of a helicopter.

We see a black crow sitting on top of telephone wire. More crows join it. When they open their beaks, they do not caw together, but we hear the static of electricity. We hear it as a chorale.

We see a cardinal, again, although this time it sounds like a cardinal. It hops along a road, perking its head from left to right.

We study the cardinal for a long time.

We watch the cardinal pick a bug up off the road. We watch it fly away.

We see the cardinal flying his nest. He feeds his babies.

We see the cardinal fly away again.

We see the cardinal back on the road. It sings.

We watch it for a long while.

A red car runs over the cardinal.

We see the cardinal's body from above.

We see hands lift up its wing revealing a small zipper.

We watch the hands unzip the cardinal.

They pull out its insides which are wires and circuits.

We see the cardinal's body once again next to wires and circuits.

We study the circuits. We hear the call of a cardinal over this image.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TICKET TAKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Zola sits quietly on the couch staring off into the distance.

The Ticket Taker, Emily, Amir, and David are dancing to a strange song.

The sound of the party fades and we start to hear the call of a cardinal.

CLOSE ON

Zola's eye. We hear the cardinal sing and sing...

GREG (O.S)

Zola...

We see Zola again, sitting on the couch. Greg is seated next to her. She is startled. Greg assures her everything is fine with his hands.

GREG (CONT'D)

Come with me.

Greg leads Zola into his room.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Greg's room looks Classically messy. Books everywhere, questionable stains, boxers on the ground, crunchy socks.

Most noticeably in the room, a picture of the fembots from AUSTIN POWERS, with their guns cocked, besides a picture of a sexy cyborg with huge chrome tits.

Zola looks at these pictures while Greg scouts through the mess as if he knows where every item is laid. He spots the book he's looking for.

He picks up the book which is titled "Restoring Classic and Collectible Cameras"

ZOLA

What's going on?

GREG

Your film about the birds and the planes, really moved me. And I'm never moved, so, I want to help you.

ZOLA

Help me?

Greg takes Zola's hands.

GREG

(shrugging)
Help you see.

ZOLA

What do you mean?

Greg points to the book again.

Zola starts to cry. We watch Zola cry for a long time.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is way too small, and ocean themed. Zola has her hair pulled back. She watches herself in the mirror. She studies herself, her eyes. She touches her bloody eye.

GREG (O.S)
Do you want to, or should I?

ZOLA
Let me do it.

Zola reaches for a scalpel. Zola breathes. She reaches a scalpel to her eye. We hear the song of a cardinal again.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
Do you hear that too?

GREG (O.S)
No, I don't hear anything.

Zola looks at herself one more time in the mirror. She lifts the scalpel to her eye. We hear the sound of a car alarm as she cuts her eye out of the socket.

The image of Zola cutting her eye is horrific, there is blood and juices squirting everywhere. Zola screams horrified the entire time.

Greg moves in front of Zola, blocking our view. She screams and cries, a car alarm persists behind this.

Greg operates on Zola while she cries.

Beat.

Silence.

A long pause.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

We see Greg sitting on the toilet. He looks up from his seat. He looks at Zola in complete disbelief.

GREG
Does it hurt?

ZOLA
Not anymore than it did before.

ZOLA (O.S) (CONT'D)
How... How do I look?

GREG
You look... Hot.

Greg stands up. There isn't much room for two people in this bathroom; we see Zola's torso pressed up against Gregs. We can only see the lower half of their body. They whisper so they are not heard.

We see Gregs hand adjust awkwardly. He tries to touch Zola but decides not to.

GREG (CONT'D)
I'm really high...

ZOLA
Me too...

GREG
Like... okay this is cliché, to say, but I might be tripping balls

Beat. Zola starts laughing, Greg joins her.

GREG (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay... This is so fucked up but like

ZOLA
What?

GREG
No, never mind its fucked up.

ZOLA
No, no... what is it?

GREG
Okay uhhhh it was stupid.

We see Zola's hand nudge Greg's.

GREG (CONT'D)
Okay I was just gonna... I don't know, kiss you. I mean, I know the implications of that but, I guess I just feel connected to you right now? I don't know... Like in this weird way... I feel kind of fatherly right now. I mean, oh my god, I'm sorry.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

I'm just tripping balls right now
 holy shittttt hahahahahahaha
 okay... I'm sorry. Cause like maybe
 that's like weird and voyeuristic,
 like... "Oh I'm your creator, can I
 fuck you?" Like that's weird,
 but... I just felt like for a
 moment

Zola touches Greg's hand. Greg stops talking. Zola touches
 Gregs thigh. Greg puts Zola's hand on his dick.

Beat.

We hear the fabric of their clothes shifting and rubbing
 against each other. The sound is awkward and uncomfortable.

We hear the sound of them kissing. This is awkward and
 uncomfortable too, the sound echoes almost. It sounds wet,
 and very human.

We see Greg and Zola kissing now. Greg blocks Zola's face.
 Greg moves his head as he kisses her neck.

We see Zola's eye for the first time. A camera lens bloody in
 her socket.

CLOSE ON

Zola's eye. We moved closer and closer to the eye until all
 we see is the lens reflecting back another lens in blackness.

Greg moans.

GREG (CONT'D)

Fuck, fuck.

Greg orgasms. Zola gasps. We watch Zola take her hand out of
 his pants. Her hand is covered in sticky cum. Zola plays with
 it in her hand. She smiles to herself.

THROUGH HER LENS

We zoom into the substance until it becomes microscopic.

We see the microscopic sperm flop around, we watch them as
 they squirm around each other. We study the sperm for a long
 time. We hear the sound of ocean waves over this image. They
 are loud and engulfing.

We are back in the room with Zola and Greg. They stare at
 each other. Zola bursts out of the bathroom and into the
 living room where everyone is still tripping.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Ticket Taker, Emily, David, and Amir stare at a still Zola. At the same time, they start screaming blood curdling cries. Zola panics, she covers her eye, leaving the building.

She runs down the steps of the building.

We see a WOMAN and her CHILD trying to get into their apartment. The child spots Zola and points, crying. The mother ignores as she is busy unlocking the door.

Zola looks at the child. She starts crying along with the child. They cry as they stare at each other. Tears come out of Zola's lens eye, and it starts to spark from the water.

The mother unlocks the door, she looks back at the child and Zola. The mother screams, rushing the child inside.

Zola sobs she reaches for her eye. It shocks her when she touches it. It starts glitching and shocking her. She hits the side of her head, to make the camera stop glitching but this makes it worse.

Zola runs down the steps.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Zola runs down the street. As she runs down the street people make remarks about what they see. They scream and curse and run away from her. Zola holds her eye, it shocks her again.

Zola reaches a train station, she runs down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR - NIGHT

We see Zola sitting in a corner seat covering her eye. She is quiet and very still.

There are other people on the train, minding their business.

The train jerks pulling into the station, slipping Zola's hand off her eye. A WOMAN notices and starts pointing quietly too stunned to speak. A MAN looks at the woman pointing and notices a disheveled Zola. He starts yelling.

The train lights flicker off.

OVER BLACK

We hear everyone on the train yelling. We hear the sound of electricity whirring. We hear the electrical parts of the train amplified. The lights flicker back on.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

The train pulls to a stop. Zola runs out of her seat and towards the door. The train doors stay closed for a long while. Zola shakes. The man and woman continue screaming.

The door opens.

Zola runs through the train car. We watch her run down the stairs and onto the street.

EXT- CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Zola runs and runs until she ends up at LUNA PARK. We see the entrance, a big plastered man, with red cheeks and red lips. you enter through his teeth.

Zola holds her eyes. The park is illuminated by the rides and their Neon lights. It is completely empty.

Zola stands in front of the ferris wheel. We hear the sounds of it churning slowly, and the machine convulsing. Zola touches the metal. She closes her working eye. She studies the sounds.

We listen with her:

We hear the hum of the ferris wheel spinning through the wind.

We hear the sound the LED lights hum as they flicker on and off and on and off.

We hear the machine crank and jingle, as if missing pieces.

We hear the gears bump up against themselves.

We hear the coo of a pigeon

Zola opens her eyes again.

She looks back, studying the eye of the ferris wheel.

We see the eye slowly resemble the eye of the pigeon.

We see the eye of the pigeon once again, red and enlarged.

Zola runs away from the machine. We hear its gears turn as she disappears.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

Zola runs down the boardwalk, we watch her run for a long time until she ends up where the beach begins. She stands still, watching the grass blow in the wind.

We see a shadow come across her. Zola looks up reluctantly.

The Black Knight sits steady on his horse. He holds the flag again. We see his skeleton hands adjust his grip.

Zola looks away, hiding her face.

BLACK KNIGHT
What have you done.

Zola starts crying. The Black Knight gets off his horse. He stands towering over Zola. He sticks his Skeleton hands out towards Zola.

Zola looks down at his hand. She understands. Zola sobs, she shakes as she reaches towards her eye.

We watch her detach the lens from eye, she screams violently as she does this- as if she were ripping her own flesh.

She hands the lens to the Black Knight.

We see the lens drip blood into the Black Knights skeleton hand.

BLACK KNIGHT (CONT'D)
And the other.

Zola looks up at the Black Knight.

ZOLA
I can't.

BLACK KNIGHT
But you must now, child. As you have demonstrated greed.

ZOLA
(through tears)
No...LOVE

Zola looks up at the Black Knight. We see her again, her empty socket bleed, her eye tears.

Zola sobs even more. She sobs into the palms of her hands. The Black Knight grabs her...

He reaches for her eye and pulls it out of the socket. We hear Zola scream, this scream sustains.

The Black Knight mounts his horse again. He rides off into the night.

Zola throws up onto the ground.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see the contents of the throw up. We see circuit parts and broken wires mixed with chewed up spaghetti.

Zola cries and screams. She drops to all fours, she starts to crawl. She feels around in the sand, in the darkness. As she cannot see.

She listens for the ocean. We hear its waves, they sound violent and aggressive.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The moon is bright in the sky.

Zola continues crying until the crying turns into laughter. She laughs and laughs. Zola crawls towards the sea.

We see seagulls in the sky hovering like vultures. They screech and screech.

Zola is silent now as she returns to the sea.

Zola crawls into the water. She sits quietly as the tide hits her.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see her face in the moonlight, her eyes empty. Tears and blood cover her face.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Zola crawls back into the ocean. We watch until she disappears.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

We see the tide as it washes up against the shore carrying seaweed and shells.

We watch big tide rush in, as it disappears back into the sea, we see a roll of film washed up and tangled in seaweed.

We study the film on the shore.

We hear the sound of a baby crying, like it has just been born.

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

We hear the sound of a projector start up.

END.