

From black we hear the sounds of rain beating against a building and a few chords from a detuned piano.

INT. BURR COMMON - DAY

Rain beats against a window pane and we pull back to reveal a young woman sitting at an old piano and noodling.

Her wedding band clinks against the keys.

We move down to reveal a mattress on the floor and a man laying under the sheets, his face obscured by a book:  
LAUGHTER IN THE DARK.

There is no wedding band on his finger.

FRANCIS

(reading)

'In its striving towards artistic materialisation, a subjective idea will be stimulated and jolted by form and may sometimes be pushed on to a path which was entirely unforeseen. This simply means that verbal form is not a passive reflection of a preconceived artistic idea but an active element-'

She slams a key on the piano.

He puts the book down and gets up. His name is FRANCIS.

Francis crosses the room to the piano and stands opposite glaring at the girl who doesn't look up. Her name is ANN.

The rain, the notes, the clinking of the ring.

From above, we see Francis is stretching across the piano.

Finally, she looks up. Francis crosses to the window.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I think the rain will stop.

The rain spatters his knuckles. He turns away from the window.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Or anyway, it's a sunny sort of rain.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
 (sitting down beside her)  
 You were one of those habitually  
 untalkative girls.

Hands swivel from piano keys to knees.

ANN  
 (muted by the rain)  
 I want to tell him... I just can't  
 yet.

Away from the piano now, he is helping her pull on her sweater. He sighs as though to speak but she turns away for her cigarette pack. She pulls one out and lights it. He drops his arms in defeat, smiles and pulls her from behind.

They kiss and then she places the cigarette to his lips.

ANN (CONT'D)  
 I've got to visit Paul today. Come  
 along.

FRANCIS  
 Do we have to?

ANN  
 He invited me and anyway we'll be  
 terribly bored there.

FRANCIS  
 Oh fine.

ANN  
 Will you write about it all? A poem  
 I mean. Or a story.

FRANCIS  
 Oh I don't know. I'll think about  
 writing about it in any case.

TITLE CARD

SOUNDS

EXT. BURR - DAY

Slow motion climb down wall and walk down driveway.

End up at road outside BURR.

She stands in a pool of sunlight smoking.

She flicks her ashes. She exhales sharply.

ANN

I'm not scared. Are you?

Francis walks up to her, puts his thumb on her chin and hugs her. Behind her back, he lift the Godard book and reads aloud from it. She takes it and throws it.

FRANCIS

What the fuck?

(or)

I needed that.

(or)

That was a library book.

Walking up a path.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Maybe I just think it's the right thing probably.

ANN

Don't you ever think of the other person? Do you think of anyone but yourself?

FRANCIS

I think about you all the time.

ANN

You only think about things relative to their opposites. You think about me in terms of what it would mean for me to not be here for you.

FRANCIS

What's the difference?

They arrive at Burr, first walking up to a back door.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

How am I supposed to know if I'm trying too hard?

ANN

You're just supposed to know. You're old enough to know.

FRANCIS

That doesn't seem fair. This town  
is a shit-hole.

ANN

It's beautiful. You're stupid.

They knock on the door but no answer comes. Suddenly, there  
is a call. A woman, up on a balcony.

WOMAN

Who are you looking for?

ANN

Paul!

WOMAN

Paul Palych, you have visitors!  
(then)  
Try the side door.

FRANCIS

I think you only perceive things in  
their immediate form. You're  
utterly unable to conceive of  
implication.

WOMAN

That isn't true and anyway whose  
memory is this? Close your eyes and  
listen to the sounds of the  
children that will be here.

At the side door, Ann smokes. Francis steps under the  
parapet.

FRANCIS

(with one clap)  
Action!

He walks up the door and knocks. Paul answers.

PAUL

Francis! What are you-?

FRANCIS

Paul I was out and I was and it's  
so

ANN

Paul.

PAUL

There's two of you.

Ann and Francis awkwardly shake hands as though they've only just met.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Yeah, alright. Come in.

INT. BURR

Paul walks them up the steps. Francis pokes at Ann's skirt as she walks up and she slaps him away. They step into the BURR BASEMENT.

PAUL  
Let me get some coffee, come, come.

FRANCIS  
This is where they've got you now,  
Paul?

ANN  
It's lovely.  
(then to Francis)  
I think he forgot he invited me.

Paul brings coffee.

ANN (CONT'D)  
What are you working on?

Ann and Paul stand aside the easel.

PAUL  
Oh well, you know it's a...

PAUL (CONT'D)  
It reminds me of Pittsburgh.

FRANCIS  
What do you remember of that night?

PAUL  
I remember you were with... what's  
her- Claire, do you still see  
Claire?

FRANCIS  
I, uh...

Insert shots of hands and the sounds of skin on skin.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
And how about Sarajevo?

PAUL

Was in Ukraine. For his thesis. I spoke to him one day-

FRANCIS

And what are they throwing bombs about?

PAUL

Well I spoke to him he- he asked me if Ukrain had a sort of independence day because he was hearing concussive sounds outside Kyiv, I said Dear Sarajevo do you read the news?

FRANCIS

Was he evacuated?

PAUL

He said he was going to stick it out. For the sake of his thesis.

FRANCIS

His- about how the Polish jews may have actually stolen the idea for the bagel from the Ukrainian Bublik?

PAUL

Yeah.

FRANCIS

Well. And Vassili?

PAUL

Last I heard, he was staying with a refugee family in Belfast. Or he was at least until he was arrested for indecent exposure, that one made the university paper... And how is your husband?

A long silence.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Well anyway, I think I'm in love.

FRANCIS

Oh. And how does she feel about it?

PAUL

I said to her, 'Come be with me. So that when I do things, I can do them for you. Or anyway, you'll be in my periphery.'

FRANCIS

That's very logical. Oh fuck!

They look at Ann who has bitten her lip until blood runs down her chin. She touches the blood and Francis comes to wipe it away proper, with his thumb.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Are you O.K.?

ANN

Probably.

(then)

I hope she loves you, Paul.

PAUL

Thank you.

Close on Ann as the music starts.

EXT. PARK (OCCUM) - DAY

As they walk away, they pass a girl with a blue scarf. Her and Francis make eyes at one another.

Francis runs up behind Ann and grabs her elbow. We can't hear their words over the sounds of nature. But whatever they are, they hurt.

On Ann, we see she is crying when she looks up. With a lighter in her hand. She flicks it in Francis' face and he recoils.

ANN

I left my cigarettes at Paul's.

FRANCIS

Ann, I-

ANN

Please.

He starts to move away, angry, but she takes his hand and then takes hold of his face.

FRANCIS

Stay here.

He runs away.

Returning to the building, Francis passes the woman with the scarf again. It seems she is leaving from Paul's.

When he answers the door, there are tears streaming down his face.

INT. BURR BASEMENT

Inside, the painting is torn to shreds, the room is trashed.

PAUL

It's that love. The problems I have of it seem so much more detrimental than what you read goes on in those other places. How absurd.

FRANCIS

(looking for cigarettes)  
I think you just have more time to sit and think about it. You should go outside. There are sounds Paul.  
(finds the gun)  
Everything in here falls so dead.

PAUL

I think I'll do some ayahuasca.

FRANCIS

It's just no good in here

Francis grabs the cigarettes and makes to leave.

PAUL

Tell me that there are other things to live for?

FRANCIS

How about the next time I see you?

PAUL

Au revoir.

FRANCIS

Bye Paul.

On the way out the door, Paul stops Francis and punches him in the face. He then hands him a band-aid.



EXT. PARK - DAY

Francis runs along while Ann reads out of the book.

He passes a tall man with a bicycle and stops to do a double take.

The tall man asks him for a cigarette and Francis gives him one.

As he takes one out of the pack, we see a wedding band on his ring finger.

The man gives Francis a suspicious look. He is DAMON.

DAMON

Are you with the phone company?

FRANCIS

What?

DAMON

They're working on the lines.

FRANCIS

I'm a writer.

DAMON

Oh. 'A writer.' You're a literary agent? You're as dull as rain at dawn.

FRANCIS

That's rude.

DAMON

An observation.

FRANCIS

Would you kill yourself for a girl to notice you?

DAMON

You love a girl like you love a time period in which you never lived.

EXT. SHAFER GARDEN

Francis finds her at the bench.

FRANCIS

Suddenly, he noticed that she had blushed violently and risen to her feet.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

ANN

I've decided I love you.

FRANCIS

That's a luxury.

ANN

Do you love me?

FRANCIS

I don't know. Probably I do.

ANN

Did you like looking for me when I hid?

FRANCIS

I always like looking.

ANN

I'll tell him today.

FRANCIS

No. Let's just... No.

Francis starts down the path away from her. He looks back.

Ann holds out a finger gun to him.

BANG.

Francis acts shot.

He runs into Damon on the steps, sneaks away.

DAMON

They want me to teach in the west end for a year.

ANN

Are we the survivors of the shipwreck of modernity?

DAMON

You wouldn't know it to look at you.

ANN  
Something.

DAMON  
You're a didactic catydid.

He boops her nose and they glare at each other.

DAMON (CONT'D)  
Can you remember loving when you  
were a child? I don't know if it  
hurt more or less.

Francis steals the beauty from the past and rejects the  
ideologies. He takes the luxuries of the present while  
eschewing the responsibility.

Francis steals the bicycle.

FRANCIS  
Hey!  
(beat)  
Fuck you asshole!

Francis trips with the bike and Damon catches up to him.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
I've been punched today already.

DAMON  
It's no matter. I would hit you but  
you're barely there. She'll forget  
you when you leave the room just  
like the whole of your generation.

FRANCIS  
What the fuck does that mean?

EXT. RUINED BUILDING - DAY

Francis stands with his hand on a girl's breast.

GIRL  
Would you like to hear a poem I  
wrote?

FRANCIS  
Sure.

GIRL  
(taking out paper)  
'The baby is lying under the  
streets.

(MORE)

GIRL (CONT'D)

Dark is a darling beneath your  
pleats. For miles and miles and  
miles. Call your mother, or maybe  
just come home for Thanksgiving.

FRANCIS

(dropping his hand)

Oh.

EXT. WALL BY THE GYM - DAY

Francis walks up to a young girl.

FRANCIS

I'd like to crush her beautiful  
throat.

GIRL

I'm dead anyway.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Francis walks alone.

On the bridge, he turns the gun over in his hands.

The girl with the scarf walks past him.

He holds the gun up and thinks.

FRANCIS

No. You can't take a pistol and  
plug and plug a girl you barely  
know just because she turns you on.

Francis walks along and sees Paul painting on an easel  
outside in the sun. He is painting a vase of flowers. They  
wave and Francis takes the flowers out of the vase.

Francis walks up the blue scarf girl in the gazebo and hands  
her the flowers. She smiles.

THE END