

2019

Egg Whites: A Short Puppet Film Script

Alva Rogers

Follow this and additional works at: https://opencommons.uconn.edu/ballinst_catalogues



Part of the African American Studies Commons, Africana Studies Commons, and the Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

Rogers, Alva, "Egg Whites: A Short Puppet Film Script" (2019). *Living Objects: African American Puppetry Essays*. 4.

https://opencommons.uconn.edu/ballinst_catalogues/4

Egg Whites: A Short Puppet Film Script

by Alva Rogers

[*Egg Whites* begins in the bedroom of an un-named African American girl about seven years old, who lives with her mother in an iconic city where the buildings go up. Unable to sleep, she is intent on knowing her mother's night schedule and whether she knows the right place to plant a flower in honor of her sister. Mother says, "The moon may know such spaces, such places." Dreams, memory, ecology, conservation, comfort, love and loss collide with Mother's night schedule during the girl's epic journey. Propelled by moonbeams, illuminated by the sun's brightness, and buoyed by the calm sea's salty tears, she discovers the best place is not far from where she lays her head to sleep each night. All the characters are rendered as marionette, Bunraku and shadow puppets.]

EXT. STARRY SKY—NIGHT

EXT. MOONLIT CITY STREET—NIGHT

A TICKING CLOCK is heard. The NARRATOR stands alone on the moonlit street. She is not an adolescent, no longer a girl, and wears sepia red.

NARRATOR: I have a story to tell.

EXT. MOONLIT WINDOW—NIGHT

Narrator's POV:

A GIRL about eight years old wearing an off-white antique nightgown, looking like she stepped out of a James Van Der Zee photograph, talks to a flower in a small clay pot. Her MOTHER walks into the room.

EXT. UNIVERSE—NIGHT

We see the EARTH SPINNING SLOWLY. One half is illuminated by the SUN. The MOON illuminates the other.

EXT. STARRY SKY—NIGHT

EXT. CITY SKYLINE—NIGHT

A shadow rendering of the iconic New York City skyline appears.

NARRATOR (V.O.):

This girl and her mother

Live in a building that goes up.

EXT. PRE-WAR APARTMENT BUILDING—NIGHT

A pre-war apartment building reaches towards the stars.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM—NIGHT

A wooden analog clock reads 7:30 p.m.

CLOCK: Tick-tock.

Various collectable DOLLS sit in a row atop a dresser; they gesture “good-night” to each other and the GIRL. We see a photograph of the GIRL with her deceased older sister. Close-up on GIRL'S FACE lying in bed. The ticking of the clock recedes into ambient nighttime sounds (ambulance/fire engine sirens and clanking pipes moving NYC steam heat).

MOTHER tucks the covers under the mattress, making a tight hospital fold before kissing her daughter.

MOTHER: Good night.

MOTHER stands and turns off the light. GIRL bolts up as her mother starts to exit.

GIRL: Mama!

MOTHER turns.

GIRL: Can you please stay with me for one more minute?

MOTHER: Just one.

MOTHER lies down next to her daughter.

GIRL: Tell me the night schedule.

MOTHER: The night schedule?

GIRL: Yes.

INT. KITCHEN—NIGHT

A few remaining unwashed dinner dishes remain in the sink. On a countertop, there are glass and metal measuring cups, metal measuring spoons, mixing bowls, a blender, spoons, a bowl of eggs, muffin tins and cake pans.

MOTHER (V.O.): I will finish dishes, while you dream of moonbeams and fishes. Then, a mixture of flour, milk, eggs and sugar will make sweet batter for your morning muffins.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM—NIGHT

GIRL: Yum!

GIRL burrows closer to her mother. MOTHER kisses her daughter. GIRL releases her embrace.

MOTHER'S POV:

She sees the moon through GIRL's bedroom window.

GIRL retrieves the clay pot with the flower from under her bed.

GIRL: Mama, when I go 'round the world, will I find a piece of dirt and sky, unseen by eyes and untouched by feet?

MOTHER: I have not seen around the world, but the moon sees the whole wide world and the moon knows the whole world, all around. So before you shut your eyes to sleep, ask the knowing moon.

MOTHER and GIRL look at the moon in silence.

EXT. MOONLIT STREET—NIGHT

NARRATOR: The clock goes ...

INT. THE OTHER SIDE OF GIRL'S BEDROOM DOOR—NIGHT

MOTHER: Tick-tock.

INT. GIRL BEDROOM—NIGHT

The sleeping GIRL tosses and turns.

Close on GIRL'S eyes.

We hear a knocking on the window. A brilliant white light slips under the GIRL's bedroom window, opens it, and MOONBEAMS enter, dance all around the room and onto her bed.

GIRL is startled, then becomes enchanted by the dancing moonbeams. MOONBEAMS form a road leading to the MOON—filling the sky.

GIRL: Hello Moon, do you know where I can find a patch of green grass, below a patch of blue sky, unseen by eyes, untouched by hands and feet?

POV MOON:

Girl presents the small clay pot with dirt in it to the MOON.

GIRL: See?

EXT. MOONLIT SKY—NIGHT

MOON: I light the world at night and cannot see the dark, dark spaces. Come, I will introduce you to my friend the Sun, who may know of such spaces and places.

Lights up on the NARRATOR as though she is the light side of the moon.

NARRATOR: And so the girl and her flower sit on a moonbeam, and ...

EXT. MOONLIT STARRY SKY—NIGHT

Girl sits on a moonbeam moving at nearly the speed of light.

GIRL: Wheeeee!

We see the MOON and the GIRL riding its accompanying beam across the dark side of the world, and as night bleeds into day, we see the smiling sun shining on the light side of the world. GIRL gets off the moonbeam with her flower.

GIRL: Thank you for being the only light I have when Mama says it's time to shut my eyes to sleep.

She curtsies to MOON. MOON introduces GIRL to the SUN. The SUN and MOON trade places and moonlight transitions into sunlight.

NARRATOR: The Girl tells the Sun her quest for untouched land and sky.

GIRL shows the SUN her flower.

SUN: I light your world so bright and cannot see beyond my brightness.

GIRL: Oh, how sad.

SUN: So I cannot direct you to a place I cannot see.

GIRL: Oh, Sun, your brightness grows flowers to see and smell and food to eat. Your light warms me when the air is cool, and ...

EXT. GIRL'S FEET—DAY

The SUN shoots a ray, which lands at her feet.

SUN: The rays at your feet will lead you to my friend, the Sea, who may know of such places.

EXT. GIRL STANDING—DAY

GIRL covers her eyes, as she is nearly blinded by the light. We see that ray of light mutate into multiple rays of light which combine and make a tunnel of light.

INT. SUN TUNNEL—DAY

GIRL walks through the sun tunnel.

GIRL: Ooohh!

Close-up on GIRL's face.

GIRL's POV:

We see blue sky and sea at the end of the tunnel.

EXT. ROWBOAT IN MIDDLE OF SUNLIT SEA—DAY

The GIRL rows in the vast ocean.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTHER'S HANDS IN KITCHEN SINK—NIGHT

Her hands turn off the faucet.

INT. CLOSE ON MOTHER'S FACE—NIGHT

MOTHER: And the clock goes tick-tock.

EXT. MIDDLE OF SUNLIT SEA—DAY

We see the GIRL having a conversation with the SEA.

GIRL: See?

GIRL reveals her flower to the SEA. We hear the subliminal ticking of the CLOCK.

Suddenly the SEA rises in waves like stiff egg whites, all around the GIRL in the rocking boat.

INT. STIFF EGG WHITES IN BOWL AROUND ELECTRIC MIXER—NIGHT

EXT. MIDDLE OF SUNLIT SEA—DAY

SEA: So you want to plant your flower?

GIRL: Yes.

SEA: I cover most of the world and not a drop falls off. Beneath me are lands untouched by humans big and small, who discard objects into my waters—objects that do not grow under the sun and sky. Now, my coral fruits and fishes are dying. Your flower will not grow here.

GIRL: Please. Mama and me send our good wishes to you and your fishes while washing dishes. We do not send broken dishes. What now? Moon can't help. Her light blends into

the dark night and cannot see; the Sun is blinded by its own light and cannot see; you are sick and I cannot plant my flower in your dead sea. Thank you. Goodbye.

Her sadness lulls her to sleep in her rocking boat.

SEA: Wake up!

GIRL is startled.

SEA: Carry on! Row, and keep sending those wishes while washing your dishes and row! Row towards the approaching waves. They will wave you into where the ground beneath me rises. That ground is my cousin, Earth. Earth may know of such spaces and places.

GIRL waves goodbye and begins to row.

SEA: So long, my friend.

NARRATOR: The Sea was so moved by the girl and her story that it began to cry.

The SEA's tears shoot up into the sky, falling all around the rowboat like rain until the waves become like stiff peaks of egg whites, before releasing her onto dry land.

EXT. DRY LAND/SANDY SHORE—DAY

GIRL, holding her flower, stretches her arms outward towards the sky, before getting on her knees to press her face onto the sand.

GIRL: Dear Earth, please lead my feet to a piece of you, unseen, untouched, for my flower, Mama, and me.

GIRL points to her flower.

NARRATOR: The Earth does not speak. The girl waits in silence for the Earth to speak, just as Moon, Sun and Sea did.

Then, as if all of a sudden, flowers pop up in bloom, in a line, not always straight.

GIRL: Whoa!

A lane created by flowers in bloom. GIRL begins to walk with flowers leading the way on either side.

EXT. FLOWER LANE—DAY

We see GIRL walking through the lane.

EXT. FLOWER LANE ON HIGHWAY—DAY

GIRL walks through flower lane on highway.

EXT. FLOWER LANE IN COUNTRYSIDE—DAY

GIRL walks through lane in countryside.

EXT. FLOWER LANE IN CITY—DAY

We see GIRL walking through the lane, in the city, which leads her to a path of green in the front of her apartment building, where it stops.

EXT. MOONLIT CITY STREET—NIGHT

EARTH: This piece of green, between concrete and steel, needs you right here, right now.

INT. KITCHEN—NIGHT

We see golden brown muffins cooling on a baking rack, resting on a clean counter top.

EXT. MOONLIT CITY STREET—NIGHT

GIRL plants her flower on her own in the dirt in front of her apartment building. Then, a MOONBEAM lifts GIRL up and releases her through her open bedroom window. MOONBEAM tucks her into bed.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM—NIGHT

Close-up on various collectible DOLLS sitting in a row atop a dresser. They are puppeteered to sleep and we see them gesture "good-night" to each other and the GIRL. We see a photograph of the GIRL with a similar looking girl, but older.

Close-up on GIRL's face lying in bed. Ambient nighttime sounds (ambulance/fire engine sirens and clanking pipes moving NYC steam heat) recede, and the ticking of the CLOCK remains.

MOTHER opens the door of GIRL's room.

MOTHER's POV:

She sees the sleeping GIRL, then closes the door.

Close on GIRL's face.

NARRATOR (V.O.):

And the story ends: Tick-tock!

GIRL opens her eyes. Her eyes smile and she winks.

EXT. MOONLIT STREET—NIGHT

We see the sepia NARRATOR standing alone on the moonlit street under a streetlight. She is not a grown-up, not a girl, and wears sepia red.

END