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Kelly Mark,

*Hiccup (audio instructions)*, 2004 (Transcript of audio instructions played through headphones during the performance *Hiccup*. The bold text refers to performed actions, the italicized text refers to text from *Times Arrow* by Martin Amis, which was read during the performance.)

### Hiccup (audio instructions)

(now, look center 12345678910, look right 12345678910, look left 12345678910, look far right 12345678910, look center 12345678910, look at watch 12345678910, look center 12345678910, look right 12345678910, look left 12345678910, look far right 12345678910, look center 12345678910, look at watch 12345678910, rub neck 12345678910, sunglasses 12345678910, hat 12345678910, look far right 12345678910, look center 12345678910, rub eyes 12345678910, rub mouth 12345678910, rub right knee 12345678910, drink coffee 12345, drink 12345, pause 12345678910, drink 12345, pause 12345678910, drink 12345, coffee down 12345, cigarette 12345678910, lean-lighter 12345678910, light 123456789, inhale, exhale, flick cigarette to right, lean forward, pause 12345678910, smoke and exhale, 1234567891011121314151617181920, smoke and exhale, 1234567891011121314151617181920, smoke and exhale, lean back, cig to right hand, coffee 12345, drink 12345, smoke and exhale, lean forward, drop, crush, lean back, take out book, look at back cover 12345, open) *scarved and swaddled against the wind and the cold, sometimes naked in strange apartments.*

*So it's almost total, this immersion in the bodies of others. And bodies are nice, are they? Is that what I'm supposed to think? Yes, well, okay—they are nice. They forgive everything. When they're old. They can't judge. Irene, whose white voluminousness forgives everything. She says as much.*

*"You don't want to know," Tod whispers in the dark, before he dreams.*

*"Whatever it is, I could forgive it."*

*"You don't want to know," Tod whispers.*

*She doesn't want to know, I don't want to know. No one wants to know.*

*And then there is our own body, our own corporeal instrument, which we're awfully proud of now. The bobbly briskness of our stride. (twist neck) My, the clarity and attack of our bowel movements. How perfectly we function. . . . It's hardly surprising, I suppose, that the ladies go for us in a big way and come across so quickly, with our impassive oblong of a face, our clean and powerful hands. If you like the type, and though I say it myself, Tod is incredibly handsome. . . . This body: his pride in it, I firmly speculate, is connected to the fear that someone might hurt it—might mutilate or demolish it. Now why would anyone want to go and do a thing like that? Doctors may want to; but Tod doesn't use doctors; he doesn't go near doctors. "You don't want to listen to doctors," he tells Irene, coming as close as he ever does to talking and smiling at the same time. "They'll try to get their knives in you. Don't ever let them get their knives in you." Sleek and colorful before the mirror in the bathroom, Tod feels pride that has a wince or a flinch in it. (look at watch 12345, lick finger, turn page) Go on, I want to say. Mime it out. Bend and cringe with your hands on you loins. Cover your low heart.*

*Meanwhile I sit in the spacious bar-restaurant, in this drool parlor, in this fancy vomitorium. The woman has come, and now it's meat and tears, with the food growing in heat on our plates. Wait. This one's a vegetarian. She says she loves all animals—but she won't put her money where her mouth is. Soon . . . Jesus, the whole routine is like the very act of lust. First the sadness and disarray, then the evanescent transcendence; then the bodies put on clothes again, and there is a prowl of word and gesture before they go their separate ways. (pull right ear lobe 12345)*

*Tod features another kind of dream in which he is a woman. I'm the woman too: in this dream I am participant as well as onlooker. A man is near us with his face averted, his slablike back half-turned. He can harm us, of course. But he can protect us, if he likes. On his protection we gingerly rely. We have no choice but to love him, nervously. We also have no hair, which is unusual for a woman. I am delighted to say that we don't see any babies in this dream. We don't see any babies, powerful or otherwise. We don't see any bomb babies, babies with the power of bombs. This dream is childless.*

front

back

*Time is heading on now toward something. It pours past unpreventably, like the reflection on a windshield as the car speeds through city or forest.*

*Identical twins, dwarves, ghosts, the love lives of Caligula and Catherine the Great and Vlad the Impaler, Nordic iceclouds, Atlantis, the dodo.*

*Hold on. All of a sudden Tod has started reading travel brochures that praise certain semiremote areas of Canada. Yes, he finds them in the trash. Now Canada is where young **(scratch head 123, adjust hat 123)** men hang out when they really ought to be in Vietnam. Maybe Tod is considering Canada. Maybe Tod is considering Vietnam. Vietnam might do him good. The gibbering hippies and spaced-out fatsoes who go there, they come back looking all clean and sane and fine, after a spell in the war, in the Nam, in what they call the shit.*

*Nicholas Kreditor's latest letter reveals a hidden talent for detail and amplitude. The weather down there in New York, "although recently unsettled," Kreditor writes, "is temperate once more!" I think he's wrong. I think it's changing. I think it's definitely getting stormy.*

*I knew something was up the minute Tod started selling all the furniture. Throughout the whole process I looked on in wronged silence, like a wife. First every stick of furniture gets carted off, and all my labor-saving appliances, then the carpets and the curtains, if you please. Why was Tod punishing me like this? He got a real kick out of it too, always looking for new ways to uglify the home. On would come the dungarees at the weekend. He prowled around in a simian hunger, searching for things to splatter and deface. **(rub nose 123)***

*He did a real blitz on the electrics. He took me down for many terrible half hours beneath the floorboards, beneath the joists, with cord or cable in his questing hand; the platonian darkness of this underworld became a figure for our nightlife, candlelit, torchbeam-pierced; our old existence I came to picture as a boundless cathedral of light. He did a similar job on the plumbing. God-awful work, plumbing. Everything's back of everything else; you're all elbows and kneecaps with your cheek crushed against the copper viscera. Anyway, it worked: we now have no water. Just the garden tap. Going to the bathroom these days is quite a heavy trip: the can becomes a kind of geyser, and Tod has to look lively **(look up center 12345678910, turn page)** with that bucket of his. Life clangs and swings and scrapes with all these buckets and pails. Until there we are on the bare boards downstairs, with the candles and bottled gas and a deli picnic on a paper plate. That's what Tod has brought us to. I mean, when I started out with him I never thought . . . Outside, the defoliated back garden, its bald bush, its sorry grass, its scorched earth. **(stretch right leg 123)***

*It wasn't the belt tightening that depressed me, nor Tod's refractory and sinister cheer, which in any case didn't last long. After all, I am stuck with the old bastard, whatever the lifestyle. It was the solitude growing around me, growing under me: this I couldn't take. The shine of priestly indifference on the faces of shopkeeper and barman. In the eyes of the neighbors a watery oblivion. It's happening at work too now: I can feel it. As for the women—well, thanks, ladies. One by one they stepped out on me. Only Irene persists. She couldn't have been more tactful about the conditions, though her mood was understandably solemn and cautious. Something tells me I won't be seeing her for a while either. Christ, even the dog next door has gone off on me, and now hates me. She used to squeeze through the fence and bring me her bones. She used to bounce and romp. Now I get the tensed snarl and the stare of malarial loathing. Bitch. . . . **(take out pen, cap in mouth, lean down, underline 12345, pen cap, pen away, close book, back in briefcase, coffee 123, drink 12345, pause 12345678910, coffee down, 2nd cigarette 123456789, lighter 12345, inhale, exhale, 12345678910, smoke, exhale, 12345678910, smoke, exhale, 12345678910, check right boot 12345, check watch 12345678910, stretch 12345, stand up picking up coffee, walk towards camera, walk towards left, end)***

*Italicized text from "Times Arrow," Martin Amis (pages 57-60).*