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Loosely inspired by G Bruno's work:
Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants

FRANCE/TOUR/DETOUR/DEUX/ENFANTS 1

JULIEN CLERC (*sings*)

Folk like us are sometimes happy -
When we're sad the sky clouds over ...
Our moods veer with the winds - vary with the
times.
You can change the name of the place you
live - change the way it looks ...

Caption: FIRST MOVEMENT

(*CAMILLE getting ready for bed*)

MOTHER

Is your satchel ready?

CAMILLE

Yes!

MOTHER

And your drawing things, darling?

CAMILLE

It's not today, it's tomorrow.

MOTHER

Is it? OK ... but be quick if you don't mind ...
What are you doing, Camille?

CAMILLE

I'm taking off my tights.

MOTHER

Hurry up ... please.

CAMILLE

OK

NARRATOR (*male*)

Preparing one's body for the night.
Discovering a secret, and then covering it
again. The beginning of a story, or the
story of a beginning. Slowing down.
Decomposing

Caption: DARK

(*Shot of an owl*)

Caption: DARK CHEMISTRY

(*Shots of motorway at night*)

NARRATOR (*male*)

The monsters go home, with as little delay as
possible, like atoms. They travel across the
landscape they have laid waste ... the lifework
of the tourists. Laying waste a countryside.
Devastating. It's a vast undertaking.
Solitary. The wolves switch on their
sidelights. The diamond. A solitaire.

NARRATOR (*contd.*)

Still like atoms. Lit up. A dark lunacy.
An industrial disaster. The dawn of the age
of steel.

Caption: TRUTH

(*CAMILLE sitting on her bed*)

CAMILLE

... to try to know ... I don't know

INTERVIEWER

This is your room? ... This room's yours?

(*JEAN-LUC GODARD's voice
throughout*)

CAMILLE

And my brother's.

INTERVIEWER

Yours and your brother's?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And you pay a lot to live here?

CAMILLE

No ... it's mummy who pays.

INTERVIEWER

OK, so we were saying we were ... what time
of day is it now?

CAMILLE

Evening.

INTERVIEWER

Evening. And you're all by yourself on your
bed.

CAMILLE

I'm all by myself on my bed, but there's
someone else in the room.

INTERVIEWER

Well yes, there's me.

NARRATOR (*male*)

So there he is; and he's telling himself that
one of these days ... one of these days, he'll
have to make a beginning with the night; and
that tonight, to get the job done, he'll have
to make a beginning here. Perhaps after all,
that's as far as he's got. So with her or
another - what's the difference? Everything
has its price. And I suddenly realise that to
approach someone sometimes needs an awful lot
of courage.

INTERVIEWER

Are you a brave girl?

CAMILLE

It depends what about.

INTERVIEWER

For instance, what frightens you? .. There
are things that frighten you?

CAMILLE

Well ... I don't really know.

INTERVIEWER

Space - do you know what that is?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

And time - do you know what that is too?

Yes.

But what about the night? Do you think it's space or time?

Both.

But more one than the other? Or not?

... I don't know.

And silence ... which do you like best, silence or noise?

Caption: TRUTH

CAMILLE

Noise.

INTERVIEWER

And silence, does it worry you if there's silence? If someone looks at you in silence?

CAMILLE

... No.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think silence belongs more to the day or to the night?

CAMILLE

More to the night.

INTERVIEWER

More to the night?

NARRATOR (*male*)

He's still there, facing her, and the night is breaking. As she neglected to tell him earlier, at the beginning of the programme, she didn't want to show her bottom; he didn't make a point of it, so that now he can only see part of her shoulder and a mass of thick blond hair ...

INTERVIEWER

... you remember last time, when we were talking about existing ...

CAMILLE

Yes ...

INTERVIEWER

And about existence?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Have you thought about it any more?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

No? Are you still sure you have an existence?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And one ... not several.

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

You're quite sure?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER
And apart from you, there are other things which have an existence?

CAMILLE
- My bed - that exists.

INTERVIEWER
How do you know?

CAMILLE
Because I can see it.

INTERVIEWER
Suppose you were blind?

CAMILLE
Well, I'd touch it so I'd know it exists.

INTERVIEWER
And if you had no senses?

CAMILLE
I don't know.

INTERVIEWER
Because you can see and touch, and hear as well.

CAMILLE
Yes, because if someone sat down, there might be a creak.

INTERVIEWER
Yes. Last time we were talking about when you undress, or just now when you were undressing ... There are times when you can see yourself in the mirror?

CAMILLE
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
And who was it you saw?

CAMILLE
My reflection.

INTERVIEWER
Your reflection?

CAMILLE
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
And your reflection - is that you or someone else?

CAMILLE
It's me.

INTERVIEWER
And this 'me' you can see - has that got an existence too?

CAMILLE
No, because it's me that's looking at myself in the glass.

INTERVIEWER
Yes, but the reflection, has that an existence too?

CAMILLE
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
So it's as if you had two existences?

CAMILLE
Maybe.

INTERVIEWER
And just now you said you had only one, and the reflection had no existence ... and that you weren't double.

CAMILLE
Well I do know I'm not double.

You're not double?

No.

Even so, the other one's exactly like you.

Yes.

And when there's two of the same thing, doesn't one call them 'double'?

Yes but ... if there wasn't a mirror, I wouldn't be double.

No ... but there is one.

Yes ... but I'm not double, all the same.

But sometimes there's no need of a mirror ...
your mother, for instance, can't see you at
the moment ...

No . . .

But she knows you exist?

Yes.

And that's because she's got - why is it? -
It's because she's got a picture of you in
her mind; it's like a mirror - isn't it? ... No?
No.

So for your mother, at the moment, you don't exist?

Yes I do, but not in a mirror.

No, it's not in a mirror, but all the same, it is an existence.

Yes . . .

So you really are double. You're both here and maybe with your mother as well ... and perhaps you're with me and with lots of other people too. So you may be much more than double - triple perhaps ...

Yes but when anyone sees me I'm just one
person.

Do you think one should call it a picture of you or a picture that belongs to you ... what you ... when you see yourself in the glass or when you see a photograph of yourself?

It's my picture - it's ...

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE

INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE
INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE
INTERVIEWER

CAMILLE
INTERVIEWER

But would you say it's a picture of you - or
a picture that belongs to you?

A picture that belongs to me.

And would you say it's a picture with you as
well? You wouldn't use the word 'with'?

No.

So you think a picture of you hasn't an
existence in relation to you? You have one
but not your picture?

Yes, but when I look at myself in the glass,
the image that's in the glass is not someone
who exists.

It's not someone who exists?

Yes it is ... but in the glass ...

In the glass it doesn't exist?

No.

But all those people, for instance, who are
going to ... who can see you right now on
television ... they're going to see the picture
of a little girl. Do you think they'll believe
that this picture of a little girl is a real
little girl, or that it's a little girl who
doesn't have an existence?

A real one.

A real one? And yet they won't see the real you,
they'll just see a picture.

Yes ...

So this picture has an existence. Because you
agree that when they see your picture, they'll
say it's a real little girl, and though they
won't be able to touch you, they'll think it's
a real little girl.

Yes ...

But a picture is really an object, all the same,
a bit like a bed or something ...

Caption: TRUTH

She's hardly moving, numbed by her day's work.
And he goes on looking at her. I don't believe
he wants to get an image of her - whatever one

NARRATOR (*contd.*)

might think - or a sound. He's simply sending out a signal and waiting to see what happens when the signal reaches her. Often it reaches her and conveys nothing.

INTERVIEWER

Was it you who painted your bedroom walls white?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

It makes the room very light. And do you do the housework? It all looks very clean.

CAMILLE

No - it's the - the concierge.

INTERVIEWER

You don't even make your bed?

CAMILLE

Yes, sometimes.

INTERVIEWER

Sometimes. And when the sheets get dirty, do you do the laundry?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

Never?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

Well, who does do it?

CAMILLE

Either mummy or the - the concierge, when she comes to do the cleaning.

INTERVIEWER

Is your mother well paid for the work she does?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

But cleaning the house - that's work, don't you think?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And don't you think one should get paid for working?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Then why doesn't your mother get paid?

CAMILLE

Because no one could pay her.

INTERVIEWER

No one could pay her?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

Why? Because it would cost too much?

CAMILLE

No because ... I don't earn any money so I couldn't pay her.

INTERVIEWER

But doesn't your father pay her?

CAMILLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

But you're sure she doesn't get paid?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

How do you know she doesn't get paid? Perhaps she's paid without your knowing.

CAMILLE

I should be surprised if she was.

INTERVIEWER

You'd be surprised? Perhaps there's someone who pays her - I don't know - you've heard of the state?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

The government, it's the ... If you're talking about the state, would you say 'Mrs State' or 'Mrs Government' or would you say 'Mr Government' or 'Mr State'?

CAMILLE

Mr.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. Well then this Mr, don't you think he might be paying your mother? Perhaps not with money, with something instead of money. Sometimes you can pay with words.

CAMILLE

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

With the words ... you see I think it might be with words like 'thank you'. Mr State says to your mother: Well, Madam, you're a very good mother and you love your little girl, so you have to wash her socks and her undies, and so I say to you 'Thank you'. And your mother finds ... thinks she's been paid, don't you think?

CAMILLE

She couldn't be paid like that.

INTERVIEWER

No, but she'll think that the 'thank you' is as good as money, that she doesn't need to be paid ... that she's doing a favour.

CAMILLE

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

You don't know?

CAMILLE

I've never asked her.

INTERVIEWER

What about you, have you got any money?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

How much have you got?

CAMILLE

I get two francs a week.

INTERVIEWER

Two francs a week ... I've been thinking: when you said you existed - when you say you exist - in your opinion, is it something that's as clear, for instance, as your room? When you

INTERVIEWER (*contd.*)

think of your existence is it something clear,
something light?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And in a minute when you go to sleep, the lights
in here will be put out.

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And when the lights are out, it'll be dark?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And do you think you'll still exist, when it's
dark?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

But once the lights are out, will your existence
be something clear or something dark? ... Will
it stay light or will it get dark?

CAMILLE

It will be light because it'll be clear that I
exist; but it will be dark because it will be
night and no one will be able to see me.

INTERVIEWER

But even at night, it'll be clear to you that you
exist.

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Are there things - can you give me any examples
of things in your life that you don't see
clearly?

CAMILLE

There's the night.

INTERVIEWER

But the night belongs to everyone. Something
that belongs to you, that you don't see clearly,
and something that you do see clearly.

CAMILLE

Going to school.

INTERVIEWER

Going to school - that's something you can see
clearly?

INTERVIEWER

Well then ...

CAMILLE

Eating.

INTERVIEWER

Eating ... But I'm thinking about school ...
Yes?

CAMILLE

Daytime.

INTERVIEWER

In that case you could say light as well!

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

OK but to continue, let's say school ... I don't know ... but I have the feeling that when you put out the light presently to go to sleep, you yourself - your body - once it's dark, is rather like a school where they've left all the lights on, as if they'd closed the shutters but it's still light inside. You have a kind of feeling that your body is ...

CAMILLE

Yes ...

INTERVIEWER

... is like a house where they've left all the lights on.

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And what sort of house? a school or ... because you say you can see a school clearly.

CAMILLE

Yes ... maybe a school.

INTERVIEWER

And when you ... you shut your eyes when you go to sleep?

CAMILLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And when you shut them, that makes it dark too - it's hard to see. Shut your eyes now for a second. Now is it the same darkness when you close your eyes as the darkness that comes when you put the light out, do you think - or is it a different darkness?

Caption: TELEVISION

NARRATOR (*female*)

I dream sometimes of the kind of society in which people, meeting a television reporter, would question him. They would go into details. It would take time ... they would dare to take time and the reporter would answer quickly, I mean without delay. Because in this society, television would already have done its homework. Instead of questioning the workers, they would have worked on the questions, as they say. So - to come back to the point - the little girl, to whom no one says hello, except when her mother says goodbye, this little girl wouldn't take up too much time - any more than she does now.

(Blank screen)

Caption: TELEVISION

INTERVIEWER Even when it's all quite dark, your existence is still clear?

CAMILLE Yes, because mummy knows I exist, even when I'm asleep.

INTERVIEWER And can you still see ...

Caption: STORY*

NARRATOR *(male)* Thank you, Robert Linard. And I think ... I think it's time for a story. Not her story, not a story coming from her. But her coming from a story. And both. But both before. Her before and the story after. The story before and her after. Or superimposed. The story of ...

Caption: IL ETAIT UNE FOIS**

... not the story of 'Once upon a time there was a little girl', but the story of ... 'il-y-avait une fois'

Caption: ELLE ETAIT UNE FOIS**

- 'il' not 'elle' - so perhaps the story of 'elle-y-avait une fois'. It's more the story - a story of a beginning.

Caption: STORY (with HISTOIRE gradually changing to TOI = YOU)

NARRATOR *(male)* Generally, to follow a story, you mustn't lose the thread. But where does this thread have its beginning? For instance, how can one tell, before one speaks of it, that the future exists, that it will still be clear even when the lights are put out - to the right and to the left. How did Camille know that it would still be clear even if everything was switched off?

Caption: YOU

(Shot of pregnant woman. Music)

NARRATOR The truth. It is unable to visualise tomorrow but it can remember yesterday. Once this memory

* HISTOIRE can mean HISTORY or STORY

** An untranslatable pun involving the use of genders in the phrase 'Il etait une fois' = 'once upon a time'

NARRATOR (*contd.*)

is inside, it can be projected outwards; and because it is projected outwards, it becomes a picture. A picture, the trace of what will come after. No one can see what will come after, but we can see the shape it had before - and in that, there's darkness. But let this be the trace of two and not of one. The memory of two peoples' desire. Before and after. Father and mother. A sickly desire to be more than one. And inevitably fatal ... An other who comes to announce our death.

(*Music*)

Caption: TELEVISION

NARRATOR (*female*)

I find your story a bit obscure, Albert.

NARRATOR (*male*)

Yes, but you see earlier on, she couldn't think of any examples for obscurity.

NARRATOR (*female*)

Yes, that's true. Only examples for clarity, like the school.

NARRATOR (*male*)

OK. The story you've just seen that was an example of obscurity; and I don't understand how it could be so clear ... In fact, it wasn't a story, I quite agree, but the story of this story - even the prehistory of this prehistory. All right we're stopping. We must sleep.

NARRATOR (*female*)

Why 'must'?

NARRATOR (*female*)

That's another story.