

*Rodrigo Toscano*

## **ECO-STRATO-STATIC**

(a radio play in one act)

*elements:*

a wall of flames,  
a big blue ball  
on one side of it;

an entity,  
another entity,  
several more entities.

\*

*Hurl it over.*

I can't—it's too heavy.

*Get help.*

I can't—everyone's too busy.

*Scream to see if anybody responds.*

Scream what?

*HELP.*

Ok.

*Is anyone responding?*

Not a one, responding.

*Start acting like you have an innovative product.*

Ok.

*What's happening?*

I'm acting like I have an innovative product.

*Is anybody coming?*

No.

*Put on a happy-pappy face.*

Got it.

*Is anybody coming?*

I see somebody.

*Somebody coming?*

Somebody coming.

*Say something.*

What?

*HELP.*

Ok.

*What's happening now?*

They're talking to me about an innovative product.

*What is it?*

Some kind of art-thing.

*Can it be fashioned into a lever, or a ramp?*

I'll ask'em.

*What do they say?*

"Depends on how you look at it."

*Tell them you're out of time.*

Ok.

*What do they say?*

They want to know if I have financial backing.

*Escort them to the wall.*

Escorting—in progress.

*What's going on now?*

They've walked into the wall of flames.

*What did they say?*

Aaah!

*Start dancing.*

Ok—dancing. I'm dancing...still dancing...still.

*Do you see anybody dancing?*

No.

*Put on a happy-pappy face.*

Got it.

*Do you see anyone dancing?*

Yes—yes I do.

*Keep dancing.*

I'm dancing—with a happy-pappy face.

*What's going on now?*

They're dancing my way.

*Keep dancing.*

Dancing—big time.

*Now put on a desperate face.*

Got it.

*What's happening?*

They're dancing away.

*Back to the happy-pappy.*

Got it.

*What now?*

They're coming back.

*Ask them if they can help.*

Ok.

*Can they help?*

No.

*Why not?*

They say it's not their specialty, cup of tea.

*Ask them what is.*

Ok.

*What do they say?*

Innovative ideas, images, looks, designs.

*Tell them, that if they help, to get the big blue ball over the flaming wall, there'll be a prize in it for them.*

Alright.

*What do they say?*

They want to know what the prize is.

*Tell them LIFE.*

Ok.

*What do they say?*

They say they want it up front.

*Gyrate toward the wall.*

Gyration—in progress.

*What's happening?*

They're following.

*You know what to do.*

Done.

*What's going on now?*

The billowing flames of the wall are cascading down the underbelly of the big blue ball. Wait.

*What is it?*

One them left the art-thing behind.

*What kind of thing is it—exactly?*

Hundreds of printed sheets of paper, bound together, into an almost perfect cube.

*What does it say?*

“A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Y cladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,  
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,  
The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde—”

*Stop... What else?*

“Yet armes till that time did he never wield:  
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,  
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:  
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,  
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.”

*Scream for help.*

Ok.

*Anyone coming?*

No.

*Can the thing be fashioned into a lever, or a ramp?*

“But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,  
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,  
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,  
And dead as living ever him ador'd:”  
—Hardly.

*Hurl it into the wall.*

Done.

*Look up.*

I'm looking up.

*Do you see any rain?*

No.

*Unfurl your umbrella.*

Done.

*Is it raining now?*

Yes.

*Proclaim the end of cause and effect.*

Done.

*What's happening?*

Millions of them are coming my way.

*What do they look like?*

Reverential.

*Ask them if they can help.*

Ok.

*What do they say?*

Not a one—can help.

*Why not?*

They want to see the umbrella & rain thing again.

*Tell them no.*

Done.

*What now?*

They're dispersing—in silence.

*Unfurl your umbrella.*

Unfurled.

*Is it raining?*

No, but they're coming back.

Furl in *your umbrella*.

Furled in.

*Are they still coming?*

They're getting closer.

*Read from the thing.*

“Upon a great adventure he was bond,  
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,  
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,  
To winne him worship, and her grace to have,  
Which of all earthly things he most did crave—”

*Pause...go on.*

“And ever as he rode, his hart did earn  
To prove his puissance in battell brave  
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;  
Upon his foe...a Dragon horrible and stearne.”

*What's happening? What's happening now?*

They're forming into groups.

*What kind of groups?*

One is calling itself, The Administrators (Group A), the other (Group B) can't quite decide on a name. Group A is busy cataloging, scheduling, surveillancing. The other is...well! Well, well not exactly really but—

*Proclaim—The Beginning—of Self.*

Alright.

*Is anyone saying anything?*

Not a word.

*Proclaim—The End—of Self.*

Ok.

*Anyone saying anything now?*

I see a few specs in Group B starting to twinkle.

*Dance.*

How?

*In the approximate rhythm of their twinkling.*

Ok.

*Anything happening?*

The twinklers are forming into their own group—Group C.

*Do they have a spokesperson?*

I can't tell.

*Dangle a giant mic from a giant crane.*

Done.

*Is anybody approaching?*

One of them is hanging from the mic, swinging on it, back and forth.

*That's your spokesperson.*

I figured that much.

*Say something.*

What?

*Ask for help.*

No.

....

....

I said no. No...hey...I said, I said no. Do you hear me? I said—

**Yo! Do I have to swing on this thing all day to get your attention?**

Uh...Oh!...hang on.

**Hang on!?! Whadya think I'm a trapeze artist here? Whadya think this is a circus? Who're you—Bozo, The Existentialist?**

Uh...

**My people are getting antsy over here. You wanna show—you don't wanna show. You call for a show—you don't wanna show—**

I...I want a show...I want...a show.

**Alrighty then! What do you want—you want bungee sticks, guillotines, AK-47's, car bombs, hemlock pot roast, moonseed muffins—what do you want—spit it out.**

A lever and/or ramp would be nice...pre•fer•ably.

**Prefubly.**

Yes, pre•fer•ably.

**Prefubly.**

That's what I said.

**You got an extra syllable there.**

Uh—do you have some sort of license, or degree, or some kind of certificate, for this kind of work?

**Listen, Bozo, you proclaim the End of Self as a *Beginning* of Self, across an axis of Presence / Absence, as an ideo-somatic registry for an onto-episto paratactic—to get your prophylactic—to work—for *peanuts!* WE'RE OUTTA HERE!!**

Wait, no. Don't. Oh...oh no...(damn!)

*A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Y cladd in mightie armes and—*

Hey! Where the hell have you been? Were you here the whole time? Did you hear all that?

*The whole bloody thing.*

Why didn't you step in—lend counsel, direction, why didn't you, after all, HELP?

*I wanted to clear your mind—of one word, once and for all.*

What word?

*One, that when not casting its terminal tunnel vision, that the high wall of flames might lower down to the height of say, shag carpet.*

What word?

*So that the big blue ball might with the slightest effort, through simple love, be rolled over—to the other side (being the near perfect sphere that it is).*

That it is, that it is. But, what word?

*Be still, I'll whisper it to you.*

Nice. Trust me, it's cleared. Clean.

*Good.*

But now you've got me snagged up on "simple love."

*Simple love, yes, a simple (reverential) love—of life, itself; basic technology, like flint-tips, pottery, the wheel, the lever and/or ramp; a millennia to develop it, a millennia to destroy it at the same time.*

Not like "econ—"

*No. Development, in the true sense, borne of the body, resilient, hard to market.*

And not like "help."

*No. "Help" in our epoch, too readily invites knights, crosses, swords...dragons...Faerie Lond.*

Faerie Lond. I'll try to come to grips with that.

*You do that.*

I will.

*Good.*

Good.

*Good.*

Good.

*New York, March, 2005*