

# Fleeing Creatures (2016)

## By Christina Ouzounidis

Duration 90 minutes

Cast size 3

### Excerpt

#### Time

The time when the play is performed. A “before” or an “after.”

#### Setting

The setting where the play is performed. A “border of,” on one side or the other.

A slash (/) marks where the next voice begins to speak.

L

The messenger has already spoken.

S

The judgement has come down.

E

Yet we see no results. No gods have shown themselves.

L

No flying horses, dragging the drowned from the seas.

S

No ark.

L

No ocean floor laid bare.

E

No ruins. (*short pause*) Not here.

S

No new culture spreading out and taking over. The same view as usual, from this window. A road. Streetlights. The same old arbor vitae in the garden.

E

Where are the winged? Where are the artful and the enterprising?

L

Where are the golden-shod, the invisible, and the lightning-bearers? Where are the demigods and the humans who have been transformed into animals? Where are the centaurs?

S

Where are the songs? The boats? All the baskets full of golden grain?

E

Where are the oxen and the swans? Where are the braying asses?

L

Where are the tortoises who win against all odds?

S

Where is the rain of gold?

E

Where are the cries, the whine of arrows, and the howls of animals being transformed back into humans?

L

Where are the Amazons?

S

Where is the blood from Medusa's head?

E

Where are all the beings that stir beyond our gaze, that transform us without our noticing? That reside in our bodies, that have taken over our longing and that make our eyes gleam like dampened fur?

L

Not a single star.

S

Not a single fish, not a loaf of bread, not a bottle of wine.

E

Do you hear?

S  
Nothing.

L  
Nothing, only silence.

(...)

S  
It's turning now. It must, it / must turn.

L  
It's / turning.

E  
It's turning, it must turn.

S  
Isn't that a new sound? That howling. Like a tone. From the fan in a some sort of appliance.

L  
Tomorrow we will move. We must leave this place, / become new.

S  
Tomorrow we will move.

E  
An appliance? In the forest?

L  
I didn't even notice that I was about to land. I didn't even notice.

S  
This is no forest. We are right in the middle of a planned community of weekend homes.

E  
But—the tracks in the snow? The scat on the lawn? All the cherries, eaten up?

L  
That tree ought to be pruned, it has completely taken over.

S  
Nothing can grow in this abundance.

L

Is it really nice to have such a lumpy lawn? Maybe it is.

E

Soon all those roots will burst the stone wall.

S

We're leaving this place no matter what. We really are. Even if it means we fall asleep here.

L

This advocating for lines of flight is merely a fresh attempt to carve a line that can endure to the very end as it was written, that avoids being subsumed, becoming part of another pattern or becoming a nearly invisible path on that map. What are you doing here? Where do you belong? Why don't you just lie down and die? I ask myself this time and again. Why all of that struggle, the unfulfilled battle? You call it a wave, but for it to be called a wave it must eventually flatten out, subside among the rocks, make way for new waves. Not just grow and deny.

E

No wings can help in these waves. The monster still rules all. Perhaps the petrification didn't take. I remember making an attempt, I do remember that. I think I know that. I think so. I think I remember that. I'm totally sure.

(...)

L

Who will decipher all this?

S

No need.

E

This technical savvy, how do I get away from it? I feel too savvy for my own good. There's no release in it. Just one long, methodical honing.

L

I'm afraid I'm about to wake far too late. That everything will be gone when I stick my head out the window, that the forest won't feel like a space anymore. That she will have grown tired of this humdrum sleeping, of the meticulousness of my anxiety. All this so-called determination reaches no farther than to my numb fingers.

S

I can't hear the sound of my own yelp.

E

I don't feel all that artful. And the shiny scales are scattered like fallen sequins.

S

Yes, that's new. It's a new kind of humming. The night doesn't lie, the palpitations when I sit up in the dawn light.

E

Something in my body has changed.

L

Soon you won't notice it. Soon you will have grown accustomed.

E

Soon you won't hear it. Soon it will be no more unnatural than the dying flies on the windowsill.