

JO section (Autumn)

JO (of JO)

1b (Jo)

Old woman

I am an old woman a neighbour a survivor

Autumn is nearing its close these woods should be lovely now
a twisted altar of golds and reds these woods should be lovely now

I am an old woman a neighbour a survivor

On this path where the market garden grew
I forage for food among fire-cracked stones

She gestures towards the burnt house.

This half burnt house was full of life these broken walls held
a strong whistling father who grew hot chillies in his greenhouse
a mother who collected magpie feathers and planted when the moon waned
two girls a moody, dark weed and her moonlit sister

I am an old woman a neighbour a survivor

I knew a girl a moody, dark weed

My feet stick in the ashy clods my heart is an empty seed head

2a (Ha)

There are two voices for Ash/Green – the performer/dancer and the singer within the ensemble. The singer within the ensemble never uses the first person. Their voices can overlap, harmonise or be separate. In this section, the performer sings the three 'stone' pieces as she stops by each pile and the ensemble singer sings when she is moving, with a slight overlap with the performer.

Ash (ensemble) Stories unfold like white flowers petal by petal

Ash (performer)

The performer stops at each pile of stones, introducing each colour/person.

Black for her mother
Stones cannot feel

Silver for her father
Stones cannot feel
Stones cannot cry

White for her sister
Stones cannot feel
Stones cannot cry
Stones cannot see

She stops a fourth time.

And for her?
No stones no stones

2b (Ha)

Ash (ensemble)

The roar of the fire so far away across the river so far away

The bridge all but melted

Ash:

Overlap and/or repeat the two voices as seems appropriate)

I smell like smoke

I smell like smoke

Ash (ensemble)

Half-blinded by cinders

Ash

I chopped off my burnt hair

Ash (ensemble)

Half-blinded by cinders

Ash (performer)

I want

Ash (ensemble)

not to speak

Ash (performer)

I want

Ash (ensemble)

not to share

Ash:

I want

Ash (ensemble)

to disappear

Ash (performer)

Do I imagine myself?

Do I imagine my mother's footsteps

my father's whistle? my sister's laughter?

Ash (ensemble)

Half-blinded by cinders

Stones cannot feel

Stones cannot feel

Stones cannot feel

3a (Kyu)

Old woman

Who are you? What is your name?

3b (Kyu)

Ash

My name is Ash I knew the girl who lived here

she was my friend special friend best friend

She whispered to the sweet peas her voice like leaves

she was my friend best friend

a moody dark weed a weed who grew too tall

Green they called her Green Green, blacked out by the fire

She was my friend her voice like leaves

Now I live here in this half burnt house

close to her close to her close to her

HA (OF JO)

4 (Jo)

Old woman

I heard the whoosh of the fire I heard the whoosh of the fire
across the river

I heard people jumped from buildings I heard people jumped from buildings
like silver birds

5a (Ha)

Ash (performer)

She'd just turned sixteen all her life stretched before her
everything was green as far as the eye could see

Every week the whole family packed their wooden crates
crossed the bridge and sold their vegetables in the city

I knew she was not coming back I knew I knew

Ash (ensemble)

This overlaps with 'I knew I knew'

So far away so far away

5b (Kyu)

Ash (performer)

I sleep in her house where sparks crossed the river
and blacked out memories

Her sweet voiced mother knew gardeners' secrets

like vinegar on roses to chase away beetles

/blacked out memories

Ash (ensemble)

Overlaps with 'blacked out memories'

So far away so far away

Ash

Her strong father carried heavy crates

but brushed away her tears with gentle fingers

/blacked out memories

Ash (ensemble)

Overlaps with 'blacked out memories'

So far away so far away

Her sister could never sit still she laughed so hard

her pale hair like moonlight

/blacked out memories

Old woman

I have a gift for you

She goes to the back of the performing area and brings out a bag.

Look!

Ash (performer)

It's birdseed.

What shall –

Old woman

You'll see you'll see

The old woman leaves.

Ash (performer)

Birdseed birdseed birdseed

I can't eat birdseed

She throws a handful on the ground in anger.

KYU (OF JO)

6 (Jo)

Ash (performer)

I watch time moving like a lame hare across snow

and I remember her long black hair

I dig this needle into leather sew thorns until my thumb bleeds

I dip this pin in black ink mark my arms with bats and ravens

Blood and ink Blood and ink

I remember her long black hair

Blood and ink Blood and ink

'Clog dance': 7 (Ha)

Ash begins tentatively, as if testing her feet. As she does this she sings.

Ash (performer)

Nails in my boots Nails in my boots

Ash (ensemble)

Blood and ink Blood and ink

The composer may use any combination or repetition of these two lines in the 'clog dance'.

Ash cannot continue the dance; she breaks down in grief and throws the birdseed.

8 (Kyu)

Ash (performer)

Why am I the one who is still alive? Why did I survive?

I would rather sleep than eat or see the sky

Days silent as stone No-one comes home

Sorrow in the wind Grief in the trees

Anger makes claws of my hands

Darkness where once there was patience

Black where once there was green

She throws the birdseed into the air.

