

IN MEMORY OF JOHNNY B. GOODE

A Radio Play

by

The Ghosts of Nothing

Incorporating thirteen rondels in French

from

PIERROT LUNAIRE

By

Albert Giraud

(and freely altered translations by Ilmar Taimre)

VOICE SCRIPT

FINAL (REVISED TITLE VERSION 08, corrected)

14 October 2014

In Memory of Johnny B. Goode (Radio Play)

Script – FINAL (REVISED TITLES), Version 08 (14 October 2014)

Titles and Credits (to be read, with clean breaks after each line)

In Memory of Johnny B. Goode

A Radio Play by The Ghosts of Nothing

With rondels from “Pierrot Lunaire” by Albert Giraud

Read by Linda Taimre

Act 1 – Rise & Fall

Act 2 – Remembering & Forgetting

Act 3 – Life & Death

1. *Bohemian Crystal*

Part A

This is Johnny. He doesn't read or write too well. He carries his guitar wherever he goes. He has Someone Special in his life. Or at least he believes that he does. But that's enough for now.

Part B (read title)

BOHEMIAN CRYSTAL

A moonbeam locked in beautiful Bohemian crystal. Such is the fairy poem I have rhymed in these verses. I am Johnny, dressed as a clown, able to offer anything I like a rare and precious offering to the one I love ... a moonbeam locked in beautiful Bohemian crystal. My dearest one, this is the symbol which truly captures who I am: Johnny the Clown, in a pale disguise. I feel, under my made up mask ... A moonbeam locked in.

Part C (read the title)

CRISTAL DE BOHÊME

Un rayon de lune enfermé
Dans un beau flacon de Bohême,
Tel est le féerique poème,
Que dans ces rondels j'ai rimé.

Je suis en Pierrot costumé,
Pour offrir à celle que j'aime
Un rayon de lune enfermé
Dans un beau flacon de Bohême.

Par ce symbole est exprimé
O ma très chère, tout moi-même :
Comme Pierrot, dans son chef blême,
Je sens, sous mon masque grimé,
Un rayon de lune enfermé.

2. *Sunset*

Part A

The first deathly blow has struck. Without any warning, she has chosen another. There is a wedding ... a White Wedding. Lies beget lies. It is – and always will be – the darkest day in Johnny's life ... This is how betrayal feels.

Part B (read title)

SUNSET

The Sun opened its veins on a bed of russet-red clouds: Out of a mouth of holes, its blood ejaculates in red fountains. Convulsive branches of oak trees whip the insane horizons: The Sun opened its veins on a bed of russet-red clouds. Like a debauched Roman, stuffed with disgust, vomiting into sewers of filth, bleeding from diseased arteries, the Sun opened its veins!

Part C (read the title)

COUCHER DE SOLEIL

Le Soleil s'est ouvert les veines
Sur un lit de nuages roux :
Son sang, par la bouche des trous,
S'éjacule en rouges fontaines.

Les rameaux convulsifs des chênes
Flagellent les horizons fous :
Le Soleil s'est ouvert les veines
Sur un lit de nuages roux.

Comme, après les hontes romaines
Un débauché plein de dégoûts
Laisant jusqu'aux sales égouts
Saigner ses artères malsaines,
Le Soleil s'est ouvert les veines !

3. *For Columbine*

Part A

Johnny proclaims his love one last time. He begs on bended knee and is refused once again. He soon slides into a desperate place. What is the point of anything? What is the point of staying alive ...? A mystical voice proclaims a cryptic message ... is this the answer or another impossible question? Johnny is not ready to think about this right now ...

Part B (read title)

FOR COLUMBINE

The pale flowers of moonlight, like pink shades of clarity, bloom in the summer nights: If I could just gather one of them! To relieve my misfortune, along rivers of oblivion, I seek the pale flowers of moonlight, like pink shades of clarity. And I will alleviate my bitterness, if I can reach to the swirling sky for an elusive pleasure, the play of dappled light on your soft brown hair, the pale flowers of the moonlight!

Part C (read the title)

A COLOMBINE

Les fleurs pâles du clair de lune,
Comme des roses de clarté,
Fleurissent dans les nuits d'été :
Si je pouvais en cueillir une !

Pour soulager mon infortune,
Je cherche, le long du Léthé,
Les fleurs pâles du clair de lune,
Comme des roses de clarté.

Et j'apaiserai ma rancune,
Si j'obtiens du ciel irrité
La chimérique volupté
D'effeuiller sur ta toison brune
Les fleurs pâles du clair de lune !

4. *Hymn to Hysteria*

Part A

Perhaps the cure for lost love is not so hard to find ... Johnny goes looking for fun! He finds himself swept along with a strange and lawless crowd, a blank, lost generation, thrill-seeking at any cost ... Now in a stolen car, Johnny is out of control. Red-eyed and numb with heartache, Johnny finds himself at the wheel ... it is frightening, yet at the same time gloriously... exhilarating.

Part B (read title)

HYMN TO HYSTERIA

O Madonna of Hysterias! Climb the altar of my worms, plunge the sword of fury into your shrivelled breasts. Your aching wounds are like red, open eyes: O Madonna of Hysterias! Climb the altar of my worms. With your long bony hands, offer up to an incredulous universe ... Your Son, with gangrenous limbs, with falling and rotted flesh, O Madonna of Hysterias!

Part C (read the title)

ÉVOCATION

O Madone des Hystéries !
Monte sur l'autel de mes vers,
La fureur du glaive à travers
Tes maigres mamelles tariées.

Tes blessures endolories
Semblent de rouges yeux ouverts :
O Madone des Hystéries !
Monte sur l'autel de mes vers.

De tes longues mains appauvries
Tends à l'incrédule univers
Ton Fils aux membres déjà verts,
Aux chairs tombantes et pourries,
O Madone des Hystéries !

5. *Intoxicated by the Moon*

Part A

The party crowd never sleeps. Johnny tries to lose himself in an excess of everything: sex, drugs and rock and roll ... he parties hard, trying to forget.

Part B (read title)

INTOXICATED BY THE MOON

A wine to be drunk with the eyes flows in green floods across the face of the moon, and submerges like a swell on silent horizons. Soft, pernicious counsels push and shove in the crowded potion: A wine to be drunk with the eyes flows in green floods across the face of the moon. The religious poet gets drunk on absinthe. He breathes heavily — until his head rolls, in an insane gesture, skywards — a wine to be drunk with the eyes!

Part C (read the title)

IVRESSE DE LUNE

Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux
A flots verts de la lune coule,
Et submerge comme une houle
Les horizons silencieux.

De doux conseils pernicieux
Dans le philtre nagent en foule :
Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux
A flots verts de la lune coule.

Le poète religieux
De l'étrange absinthe se soûle,
Aspirant — jusqu'à ce qu'il roule,
Le geste fou, la tête aux cieux —
Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux !

6. *The Mirror*

Part A

Try as he might, Johnny cannot forget. The memories are just too strong ...

Part B (read title)

THE MIRROR

The moon's smiling crescent cuts an incision into the blue sky of evening. And, by the boudoir's balcony, an errant light enters. Opposite, in the shimmering calm of a clear and deep mirror, the moon's smiling crescent cuts an incision into the blue sky of evening. Johnny the Conqueror studies his reflection. And suddenly, in the blackness, he laughs silently to see himself crowned by his white luminescent parent, the moon's smiling crescent.

Part C (read the title)

LE MIROIR

D'un croissant de lune hilarante
S'échancre le ciel bleu du soir,
Et par le balcon du boudoir
Pénètre la lumière errante.

En face, dans la paix vibrante
Du limpide et profond miroir,
D'un croissant de lune hilarante
S'échancre le ciel bleu du soir.

Pierrot de façon conquérante
Se mire — et soudain dans le noir
Rit en silence de se voir
Coiffé par sa blanche parente
D'un croissant de lune hilarante !

7. *To My Crazy-Ass Cousin*

Part A

With temptations all around, Johnny abandons all restraint. Spurred on by the madness of his companion, he runs ever faster ... wilder ...

Part B (read title)

TO MY CRAZY-ASS COUSIN

We are children of the Moon, my crazy-ass cousin and me, because we feel a pale agitation whenever she shows herself at night. At the foot of the gallows he used to gesture wildly at the king: We are children of the Moon, my crazy-ass cousin and me. I have the light of glow-worms to guide my fortunes. I live by drawing, like you, my language in endless blood-feud with the Law, my own words constantly pleading with me: We are children of the Moon.

Part C (read the title)

A MON COUSIN DE BERGAME

Nous sommes parents par la Lune,
Le Pierrot Bergamasque et moi,
Car je ressens un pâle émoi,
Quand elle allaite la nuit brune.

Au pied de la rouge tribune,
Il chargeait les gestes du roi :
Nous sommes parents par la Lune,
Le Pierrot Bergamasque et moi.

J'ai les vers luisants pour fortune ;
Je vis en tirant, comme toi,
Ma langue saignante à la Loi,
Et la parole m'importune :
Nous sommes parents par la Lune !

8. *Johnny On Ice*

Part A

The next morning, Johnny is wasted, more wasted than he has ever been in his life. A dull, thudding realisation pounds its way into the desperate corners of his brain ... he still cannot forget.

Part B (read title)

JOHNNY ON ICE

A gleaming polar ice floe of cold sharp light halts an exhausted Johnny, who feels his ship sinking low. With a stolen glance, it masquerades as his impromptu rescuer: A gleaming polar ice floe of cold sharp light. And the sinister mime leads him to believe in a disguised Johnny, and an eternal white beacon in the crystal night: A gleaming polar ice floe of cold sharp light.

Part C (read the title)

PIERROT POLAIRE

Un miroitant glaçon polaire,
De froide lumière aiguisé,
Arrête Pierrot épuisé
Qui sent couler bas sa galère.

Il toise d'un œil qui s'éclaire
Son sauveteur improvisé :
Un miroitant glaçon polaire,
De froide lumière aiguisé.

Et le mime patibulaire
Croit voir un Pierrot déguisé,
Et d'un blanc geste éternisé
Interpelle dans la nuit claire
Un miroitant glaçon polaire.

9. *Johnny Robber*

Part A

Johnny is in a downward spiral. He now moves only at night, always searching for somewhere wilder, some place or thing more exciting than the last. The night creatures grow faster, the drugs are harder. What is happening to Johnny is becoming less predictable. Things are getting really crazy ...

Part B (read title)

JOHNNY ROBBER

Red royal rubies, injected with murder and glory, hide in the secret corners of this cabinet, full of the horrors of endless underground tunnels. Johnny, with a band of thieves, wants to ravish the day, having drunk of red royal rubies, injected with murder and glory. But the hairs on their necks bristle with fear, cloaked with mohair and velvet, just as eyes masked in black eye-shadow set fire to jewel cases full of red royal rubies!

Part C (read the title)

PIERROT VOLEUR

Les rouges rubis souverains,
Injectés de meurtre et de gloire,
Sommeillent au creux d'une armoire
Dans l'horreur des longs souterrains.

Pierrot, avec des mandrins,
Veut ravir un jour, après boire,
Les rouges rubis souverains
Injectés de meurtre et de gloire.

Mais la peur hérissé leurs crins :
Parmi le velours et la moire,
Comme des yeux dans l'ombre noire,
S'enflamment du fond des écrans
Les rouges rubis souverains !

10. Absinthe

Part A

Dangerously close to the edge, Johnny searches for the Fast Night People and finds them. So begins another dark night of excess and drug-fuelled madness. But relentlessly taking control, over him and over everything around him, dominating every sense and every fragmentary thought, is a siren call – a siren scream – calling up vivid images of Someone Special ... who will never leave him alone.

Part B (read title)

ABSINTHE

In an immense sea of absinthe Johnny discovers drunken countries, with capricious and insane skies, like the desires of a newly pregnant woman. Heady waves tinkle in greenish and soft rhythms. In an immense sea of absinthe, Johnny discovers drunken countries. But suddenly his boat is hugged by viscous and soft octopuses. In the middle of a sticky movement he disappears, with no complaint. In an immense sea of absinthe ...

Part C (read the title)

ABSINTHE

Dans une immense mer d'absinthe,
Je découvre des pays soûls,
Aux ciels capricieux et fous
Comme un désir de femme enceinte.

La capiteuse vague tinte
Des rythmes verdâtres et doux :
Dans une immense mer d'absinthe,
Je découvre des pays soûls.

Mais soudain ma barque est étreinte
Par des poulpes visqueux et mous :
Au milieu d'un gluant remous
Je disparaissais, sans une plainte,
Dans une immense mer d'absinthe.

11. Black Butterflies

Part A

Johnny drives through the night. Is he alone or is he with the Fast Night People? Is this even Johnny's car? He is no longer sure of anything. He just keeps driving. But something is still not right. He has lost Someone Special and there is nothing he can do about it. And Oh God ... the flashing lights of police cars are now exploding in the rear view mirror.

Part B (read title)

BLACK BUTTERFLIES

Sinister black butterflies extinguish the Sun's glory. The far horizon turns starless and Bible-black, smeared in the ink of evening. Occult smoke drifts from the censer, a secret perfume concocted to disturb the memory: Sinister black butterflies extinguish the Sun's glory. Monstrous insects with sticky suckers search angrily for blood to drink. And out of the sky, in black storm of dust, swooping down on our desperation, are sinister black butterflies.

Part C (read the title)

PAPILLONS NOIRS

De sinistres papillons noirs
Du soleil ont éteint la gloire,
Et l'horizon semble un grimoire
Barbouillé d'encre tous les soirs.

Il sort d'occultes encensoirs
Un parfum troublant la mémoire :
De sinistres papillons noirs
Du soleil ont éteint la gloire.

Des monstres aux gants suçoirs
Recherchent du sang pour le boire,
Et du ciel, en poussière noire,
Descendent sur nos désespoirs
De sinistres papillons noirs.

12. Suicide

Part A

This is the bleak and inescapable end that awaits us all ... was it all a rock and roll dream, a cruel nightmare in teenage wasteland? Have we all been here before?

Part B (read title)

SUICIDE

In a white moon dress, Johnny laughs his bloody laughter. His drunken gestures become troubling. He decants another glass of the Sunday wine. His sleeves drag in the dust. He hammers a nail into the white wall. In a white moon dress, Johnny laughs his bloody laughter. He wriggles like a worm, as the slipknot forms a collar, pushing back the shaking stool, gagging on his words, and swaying like a glorious dancer in a white moon dress.

Part C (read the title)

SUICIDE

En sa robe de lune blanche
Pierrot rit son rire sanglant.
Son geste ivre devient troublant :
Il cuve le vin du dimanche.

Sur le sol traînaille sa manche ;
Il plante un clou dans le mur blanc :
En sa robe de lune blanche
Pierrot rit son rire sanglant.

Il frétille comme une tanche,
Se passe au col un nœud coulant,
Repousse l'escabeau branlant,
Tire la langue, et se déhanche,
En sa robe de lune blanche.

13. Johnny's Departure

Part A

Just one last song before you go, please dear Johnny B. A grand pathetic gesture to all those that you've left behind ... a parade of lunatic clowns forever struck dumb, your frantic orphaned children with danger in their eyes.

Part B (read title)

JOHNNY'S DEPARTURE

A moonbeam is my steering oar, a white water lily my funeral launch. On a zephyr breeze I return to Memphis, adrift on a pale river of madness. The mourners sing a tearful song of sadness, like a vapour trail cutting across the sky. A moonbeam is my steering oar, a white water lily my funeral launch. The snow-capped king of mime has proudly powdered her face for the final show. And like a lover's punch swirling in a crystal cup, the vague green horizon sets itself on fire— A moonbeam is my steering oar.

Part C (read the title)

DÉPART DE PIERROT

Un rayon de lune est la rame,
Un blanc nénuphar, la chaloupe ;
Il regagne, la brise en poupe,
Sur un fleuve pâle, Bergame.

Le flot chante une humide gamme
Sous la nacelle qui le coupe.
Un rayon de lune est la rame,
Un blanc nénuphar, la chaloupe.

Le neigeux roi du mimodrame
Redresse fièrement sa houppe ;
Comme du punch dans une coupe,
Le vague horizon vert s'enflamme.
— Un rayon de lune est la rame.

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