

The Embassy Project

A US fighter pilot, a Libyan farmer and an imaginary diplomat on the topic of future diplomacy (4-channel voice play; with other noises)

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Pilot: I don't know you... why are you pestering me?

Farmer: I don't know you either... why are you here?

Pilot: In the air.

Farmer: On the ground.

Pilot: I never know for sure what or who is below. The earth becomes abstract, a space of coordinates, a map.

Farmer: I always look up, to read the weather. The clouds tell me about the future. The sun refreshes my body.

Pilot: Stop it!

Farmer: Why?

Pilot: I am your enemy.

Farmer: No, you are a threat; you are a force hitting the earth.

Pilot: How can I speak to you?

Farmer: How can I speak to you?

Whisper: The voice. The voice.

Pilot: I hear voices all the time. They come from a distant place. They direct me. They are voices inside my head.

Farmer: The voice of the other.

Pilot: A voice that commands.

Whisper: The voice. The voice.

Pilot: Who is there?

Farmer: It is no one.

Pilot: It is someone. That is certain.

Farmer: You're imagining things.

Whisper: To imagine. The figure. The thing.

Pilot: I know. But the imagination is often more real than all of this. This table, this chair. And even you there.

Farmer: Where are we?

Pilot: I have never been here before.

Farmer: I can't stop remembering the fire. In the sky.

Pilot: My eyes are still burned. My hands also.

Farmer: And the falling. The thunder.

Pilot: It's all I hear.

Whisper: To imagine. The figure. The thing.

Farmer: I should return to the fields, to the farm.

Pilot: I should return to the sky, to the plane.

silence

Diplomat: It is a question of finding the voice. Searching for it. Yes, I think so. Of bringing these two together. The earth and the sky. The pilot and the farmer.

Whisper: The pilot and the farmer.

Farmer: Who are you? Where are you from?

Diplomat: I am from the capital.

Farmer: Which one?

Diplomat: This one.

Farmer: I have never been before.

Diplomat: It is a place of bodies, and of language. It is a place of history, and of the future. It is a place of buildings.

Farmer: I come from a place of earth.

Pilot: And I, come from the sky.

Diplomat: I have noticed; like brothers.

Pilot: No, like enemies.

Diplomat: Which often are the same things.

Farmer: No, they are not.

Pilot: What are you reading?

Diplomat: Notes.

Pilot: Does it say something about me?

Diplomat: Yes. About the fire in the sky, about the night, the metal against the earth. And about the nation.

Pilot: How is the nation?

Diplomat: There is satisfaction; and there is disquiet. Always. There are those living more than others; and also, there is imagination for a future horizon. This is what's important to understand, that everything is uncertain. That the streets never stop with their movements, and the days pass by with their great energy. And of course, the voices, everywhere. That we speak, but we also listen; that language is a double-sided coin.

Pilot: You already speak too much.

Diplomat: It is all we have.

Pilot: No, we must also act. To do something.

Farmer: To farm the earth.

Pilot: To attack.

Farmer: No, to care for time.

Diplomat: The time of this speech.

Pilot: But what of the silence? There is always silence...

Farmer: What are you afraid of?

Pilot: I am afraid to no longer recognize the earth; that my arms will forget their movements, those that reach for other material, for other gestures.

Diplomat: I understand your arguments. This is why you are both here.

Farmer: I want to go home. To return to the country.

Pilot: To return to the sky.

Diplomat: No, not yet. There is much to discuss. Between us. It's important.

Farmer: Why?

Diplomat: Because, you both were not supposed to meet each other, and yet you did, on the night of March 22nd, 2011, in the fields of Libya. It was a night, during the bombings, and there was not supposed to be any problems, but your plane went down, and you with it; you found yourself in a field, surrounded by farmers, and the one here, he approached you, held out his hand, to take yours, in a moment of attention and kindness; it was hard to imagine what could happen next, it was so unexpected, this moment, this hand, reaching out. Do you remember what happened?

Farmer: I only remember the noise, and then the smoke, the flames, and how the rabbits ran into the trees, and the smell of the earth coming alive under the fire.

Diplomat: Yes, and...

Pilot: I remember falling through the sky, the brightness burning my skin, and falling, so fast as if the air would burst into my lungs; and then being there, suddenly, on the ground, and I was surprised that I could stand, that the ground was under my feet.

Farmer: And I followed to where you had crashed, to find out who you were, what you wanted, and I knew that you would be afraid, that you had no possibility of knowing, of where you were and what would happen next. I thought, how terrified you must be...

Diplomat: This is what my notes contain: the description, of what happened; the reports.

Farmer: What is your point?

Diplomat: I want to go back, to this moment, when you suddenly faced each other, a pilot and a farmer, in the fields of Libya. I am curious about this moment, and what I might call, the space between you and him. I imagine it as a space of diplomacy.

Farmer: But there was no language. It felt like the earth had stopped.

Pilot: And the sky had disappeared.

Diplomat: And then what happened?

Pilot: There he was, standing before me. There were rabbits in the field, everywhere, and foxes too; the animals... I felt the terror of total oblivion, the violence under my skin, in the bombs around, and there in the field, the possibility of dying...

Farmer: I held out my hand; I could feel his terror; and I felt the terror of the ground and the sky coming together, crashing one into the other; and the rabbits, and the foxes, and the trees burning.

Pilot: Uncertainty.

Farmer: Uncertainty.

Diplomat: And the space between you and him, the one standing before the other; the uncertainty.

Pilot: Is that what your notes say?

Diplomat: They stop here. I don't know the rest, what you said, how you made it out alive. But that is not really the point. Instead, something has stayed with me, a curiosity, and maybe a hope, if I can use this word.

Farmer: A hope for what?

Diplomat: For another language.

Pilot: I don't know much about language, only the sky, the clouds, the ground below.

Farmer: The ground under my steps, and the clouds and the rain and the sun above.

Diplomat: Still, I want to discuss with you the possibility of a future diplomacy. What this can be, to address the particular dilemmas we face today, all around us. What I'm talking about is a crisis – not in the economies of the world, not in the forests or the seas, or not even in the day to day existence of everyone. But of the languages and the voices that circulate and command the movements of negotiation.

Pilot: Are you talking about power?

Diplomat: Absolutely, and more: the speech of speech.

Farmer: The voice?

Diplomat: The voice of the voice.

Farmer: Do you mean the voice of song?

Pilot: The voice of authority?

Diplomat: I don't know, I am searching, which is why you are both here.

Farmer: To discuss?

Pilot: To debate?

Diplomat: To search for the voice of voice, and the speech of speech, which I'm sure is never singular.

Pilot: I know nothing of politics. I only know the distances between above and below, the ratio of speed and contact, and the densities of the air.

Farmer: I only know the earth, and the rabbits that burrow into the dirt, and the way the clouds move, through the seasons. And how the planes break the clouds.

Diplomat: This is already a beginning. To meet, to share the elements of each, to bring together, and to find the difference that can be shared.

Pilot: Are you speaking in riddles?

Diplomat: I am speaking of the global society. The urgency that stands between this building, and the others.

Farmer: Between here, and the Syrian Embassy?

Diplomat: Yes, absolutely. And the others.

Pilot: But you are talking about architecture? Buildings?

Diplomat: Yes, and no. I am talking about the voice, a future diplomacy, the acts of a nation in a foreign country; I am talking about language, and I am talking about rooms.

Farmer: I think there should be an embassy for the farmers. For the one's who are close to the earth. To create a federation of farmers.

Pilot: There could also be an embassy for pilots, for the ones that drop the bombs, across the globe; to bring the pilots from each nation together, and to discuss the clouds and the fire.

Diplomat: Yes, but what of policies?

Pilot: I have no feelings for such things. In the sky everything can disappear.

Farmer: Everything can disappear on the ground as well.

Diplomat: The disappeared... Precisely.

Farmer: The lost tribe.

Pilot: The loss of perspective.

Diplomat: An embassy for the disappeared. This could be a beginning.

Pilot: For a language of disappearance?

Diplomat: For constituting what has gone missing.

Pilot: For what the nation has taken, is that what you mean?

Diplomat: Yes, and no.

Farmer: A space for what has been removed.

Pilot: Erasure.

Farmer: The buried.

Diplomat: And for those who are left behind.

Pilot: The silence, the void, the cavity left after the impact.

Farmer: And where new earth may also appear.

Whisper: The echo. Between. The space between.

Pilot: There are also the memories, for what is no longer there. The names. The spirits. What about an embassy for the ghosts?

Farmer: A house for the undead.

Diplomat: Absolutely, for the ghosts of the nation.

Farmer: The ghost in the mouth.

Diplomat: The ghost in the archive.

Pilot: This is what I thought, out there, in the night, when I was falling through the sky, and you appeared, out of the fields... I thought, I am a ghost, already, a body in the darkness. I thought I could hide in the earth, to take cover.

Whisper: To be nothing – the fever in the wind, the invisible ocean, the disappearance.

Farmer: I thought you might run.

Pilot: I couldn't. I was paralyzed. I felt everything hold me.

Farmer: Maybe you wanted to stay? Maybe you thought you had reached home?

Pilot: I did hesitate, I felt this: to be on the ground, suddenly, without a plane. Without a metal body, my skin suddenly alive, with the fire, with the smoke. And you in front of me. I almost thought I recognized you...

Diplomat: But you could have tried to escape? To run away?

Pilot: The ground held onto me, I felt it, and then all of a sudden, for a moment, I thought maybe I was already dead. Or that I was seeing something I should not see.

Diplomat: A blackness?

Pilot: I can't say.

Whisper: A blackness, an emptiness, breathless.

Farmer: You didn't say anything – I tried to speak to you, but there were no words. When I faced you, I did not think, I only felt this sudden gravity.

Diplomat: The gravity of speech?

Farmer: The gravity of speechlessness.

Whisper: The quiet, the silence – and the reverberation.

Pilot: It felt like an eternity, this moment.

Diplomat: The night?

Farmer: There was nothing to do. The ground stopped moving. There was no breath, no sound either.

Pilot: I suddenly felt, I needed to hide, not from you, but from them, from the nation.

Diplomat: You wanted to desert?

Pilot: To drop the weight of the sky, the metal from my body.

Whisper: Lightness. Clouds. Breath.

Diplomat: What did you imagine, then?

Pilot: I wanted a new name.

Farmer: To be foreign?

Pilot: To be at home.

Farmer: Yes.

Diplomat: In another body?

Pilot: It is hard to say.

Diplomat: Precisely. It is hard to say. I am also often without words. They leave me, at times, at those moments when for instance someone like you arrives; to disrupt what I thought was ordered, secure, functional. The uncertainty in the voice. The night.

silence

Farmer: The time moves on. I feel it. The seasons are changing, don't you feel it?

Pilot: I don't notice such things when I'm on the ground. I only know the signs from above. This city has no clouds.

Whisper: Passing, between. The rain. The reflections.

Farmer: I feel it within my body. The passing.

Pilot: I feel it as a pressure, on the skin.

Farmer: Like a wind?

Pilot: Like a force without dimension.

Diplomat: Can we speak of the individual? Can we talk of subjectivity, and how it is marked? These forces you describe.

Pilot: You are full of questions.

Diplomat: They are all I have.

Farmer: You must be lonely.

Diplomat: But there are others. I am accountable.

Pilot: We are all accountable.

Farmer: I don't understand. Your system is without belief, you only think of knowledge.

Diplomat: To understand the marks of language. The inscriptions, as they say; the text, the law that binds identity. Is this not what's most important?

Farmer: No, to be close, instead, to bring our skin together...

Diplomat: I don't follow you...

Farmer: You begin with language. I begin with the earth: the smell of the dirt, the movements of the rabbits, the texture of this cloth on my skin.

Diplomat: To speak from the skin?

Farmer: The skin doesn't have to speak. It is already ahead of language.

Diplomat: A shadow?

Farmer: No, a light.

Pilot: I'm tired.

Farmer: But you never sleep.

Pilot: There's too much work to be done. They've got me flying everywhere, with the bombs. It never ends.

Farmer: Is this diplomacy?

Diplomat: I cannot say.

Pilot: You are hiding.

Diplomat: Yes, and no.

Pilot: All politicians eventually hide.

Farmer: What is the relation between politics and diplomacy? What is the relation between this building and the farmhouse in Libya? Can you speak of this connection?

Diplomat: The associations are countless: what happens in the fields is tied to what happens in this room. What happens in this embassy is tied to what happens across the street. What happens in these words is tied to what happens in others.

Farmer: Earth to earth.

Pilot: Sky to sky.

Diplomat: Nation to nation.

Farmer: But you don't even speak my language.

Whisper: The fox. The rabbits.

silence

Diplomat: Can we imagine a room full of other rooms?

Pilot: A labyrinth?

Diplomat: A room full of reverberation.

Farmer: A new home.

Pilot: In the sky there are no rooms.

Farmer: On the ground we are always in search of room.

Diplomat: Space.

Pilot: Lines.

Farmer: Circles.

Whisper: Breath.

Diplomat: You enter.

Pilot: I leave.

Farmer: There are windows.

Diplomat: That open.

Pilot: That close.

Farmer: There is a view.

Diplomat: That leads to a landscape, to a city.

Farmer: I leave.

Pilot: I enter.

Diplomat: Rooms within rooms.

Farmer: A labyrinth?

Diplomat: Yes, and no.

Pilot: A place to hide.

Farmer: To escape?

Diplomat: To include what is often distant, and yet so close.

Pilot: I'm tired of this language. I'm tired of politicians. I'm tired of the state of the State. I'm tired of remembering: of counting the lines that cross the sky, and that divide the ground into fragments. I'm tired of the rational. The reason.

Diplomat: Do you prefer chaos?

Pilot: Is this not already chaos?

Farmer: I prefer a rhythm of sensitivity. Of the ground under my feet, and the smell of bread. I prefer the slow movements.

Pilot: Of energy; of drives, and of release.

Diplomat: The emotional?

Farmer: The sensual.

Pilot: The blood.

Farmer: The softness under the tongue.

Diplomat: To shape the corners. To break the doors. To build a staircase leading to nowhere.

Farmer: What about an embassy for the animals?

Pilot: That sounds like the ark.

Diplomat: Possibly. In preparation for the disaster. For surprises.

Pilot: Do we need surprises?

Diplomat: I am surprised: by you here, and he there; by the presence of your body, and that voice; by the whisper that can speak more than all of us. I am surprised by what we might imagine.

Farmer: The voice in the room that can change the lines, the view, the landscape.

Pilot: That can provide a new name.

Diplomat: To disagree.

Pilot: There is always disagreement. Antagonism.

Farmer: But what of the circle? To bring disagreement inside. It needs room to breathe.

Diplomat: This is how we describe diplomacy: a space of disagreement.

Pilot: You are lying.

Diplomat: No, I am searching. For the voice that can travel great distances, that can fill these rooms with ideas, that can be more than one.

Pilot: I don't trust such a voice. It sounds like a voice of power. The one I hear inside my head.

Farmer: The one that breaks the clouds. The one without a face.

Whisper: The bomb, the fire, the burning ground.

silence

Pilot: I leave.

Farmer: I enter.

Diplomat: There are windows.

Farmer: That open.

Pilot: That close.

Farmer: There is a view.

Diplomat: That leads to a landscape, to a city.

Farmer: I leave.

Pilot: I enter.

Diplomat: Rooms within rooms.

Whisper: Silence. Silence.

Farmer: Are you talking about merging buildings together?

Pilot: We are going in circles.

Diplomat: To bring the embassies together, yes.

Farmer: Into a circle?

Diplomat: Yes, or a type of composition.

Pilot: I imagine this more as a noise. A friction.

Diplomat: Yes, of the voice.

Farmer: In the throat. The vibrations. Through the body.

Pilot: More conversation. More speaking.

Diplomat: The conversations are never really complete. Each is often a step forward, and a step back. At the same time.

Pilot: As I said, I'm tired.

Farmer: You have forgotten how to sing.

Diplomat: The voice. The one that might appear from between.

Song.