

Stojan SRDIC

THE LAME PEOPLE
(a drama)

English translation:
Elizabeta IVOVIC

CHARACTERS:

MAN I (30)

MAN II (30, and 60 whwn he is dying)

BLACK-HAIRED WOMAN (as old as MAN II)

THE FIRST HOBBLER (at least 30)

A SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR (as old as FIRST
HOBBLER)

ONE HOBBLER

THE NEXT HOBBLER

A SECOND HOBBLER

A THIRD HOBBLER

A SHE HOBBLER

THE NEXT SHE-HOBBLER

THE YOUNGEST HOBBLER

A YOUNGER HOBBLER

THE YOUNGEST HOBBLER

A YOUNG SHE-HOBBLER

THE OTHER HOBBLERS

A VOICE FORM THE LIGHT

COMMENT: There can be as many ONE HOBBLER and OTHER
HOBBLER characters as given in the text, or
as many as the director of text deems
necessary.

Act One

FIRST SCENE:

The cross-roads of two country roads. Roads exactly the same.

Seen from all directions around the roads and the cross-roads are the same trees, the same grass, the same flowers.

It is the night.

The moonlight illuminates everything

The same shadows are everywhere.

Man I and Man II are standing in the middle of the cross-roads.

They are of the same height.

They have the same face.

They are dressed the same.

They stand silently.

They look into each others eyes, at each others legs.

They look at each others mouths, hands.

Holding in their hands wooden cogged clubs.

Threatening each other with them.

Swinging them to and fro.

Sometimes the clubs butt against each other; a dull sound is heard.

They growl like mad dogs.

Suddenly: a strange light appears!

The shadows disappear.

It becomes as light as daylight.

The Black-haired woman is created from the light.

Her black hair drags on the ground.

She approaches the two of them.

She looks at them silently.

They look at her naked breasts, her naked belly.

*Suddenly: the Black-haired woman slays Man I.
She breaks both legs below the knees of Man II!
The Black-haired woman laughs.*

The strange light disappears.

*Man II moans and weeps.
He cannot walk.
The Black-haired woman catches him under the arms.
She drags him along.
They disappear into the darkness.
The moonlight illuminates everything again.*

SECOND SCENE:

(MORNING, DAY, NIGHT... MORNING,
DAY, NIGHT.)

*A stone-pit; grey, full of serpents, lizards, strange
birds... fine grass, and stunted bushes.
The Black-haired woman is walking along it.
She is dragging the crippled Man II.*

*They rest on the stone slabs.
The Black-haired woman kills serpents.
She trickles poison from their mouths.
She lays it on soft leaves, taken from her bosom.
And nurses the broken legs of Man II.*

*They are resting upon the grass.
The Black-haired woman cools the broken legs of Man II
with slates.*

*One of his legs has healed.
The other is crippled, crooked.
For that one she makes a thick, wooden crutch.*

*He is learning to walk.
He cannot... he hobbles.*

THIRD SCENE:

(DAY... DAY... DAY...)

*The Black-haired woman is coming.
Man II follows her, still learning to walk.
Learning to hobble.
It is difficult to get used to the crutch.
The Black-haired woman supports him under the arm.
Encouraging him with kisses.*

*Joyous, she knits socks for him.
She lays her clothes on the grass in place of a bed.
She lies with him.
They cover themselves with her hair.*

FOURTH SCENE:

(DAY... NIGHT... MORNING...)

*The Black-haired woman is coming. She is pregnant.
Followed by Man II, who is hobbling properly.
They rest.*

(NIGHT.)

*The Black-haired woman gives birth; once, twice...
several times!*

(MORNING.)

The woman, joyful, sets out.

Man II goes after her.

A procession of lame children follow them.

FIFTH SCENE:

(DAY CONTINUES ONTO NIGHT, NIGHT
ONTO DAY. YEAR ONTO YEAR. TIME
PASSES. THERE IS A CHANCE OF
LANDSCAPES; STONE-PITS, WOODS,
WATER...)

The lame people are wandering.

Headed by the Black-haired woman.

She has become an old woman.

Man II - an old man.

Lame children, lame people.

In their wandering they come to a cross-roads.

The Black-haired woman dies.

Man II dies as well.

The others mourn them.

They lay them in one coffin.

*They bury them in one grave, in the middle of the
cross-roads.*

*On the top of the mound, they make a cross of two
crutches.*

The sun sets.

The lame people gather around the First Hobbler.

They look at him.

They bow to him.

*He is tall, light-haired, sharp-eyed.
Leaning on a slender crutch, he watches them.
He looks at them haughtily, proudly, like a lord.*

ALL HOBBLERS: *O, first Hobbler, You are our
leader now. Find a wife... marry the most
beautiful She-hobbler. Choose the one who
will give you the first heirs.*

*The First Hobbler raises his crutch.
He can barely stand upon one foot.
They all quitted down.
The First Hobbler lowers his crutch. He approaches the
lame ones.
They line up.
The Hobbler are on one side, the She-hobblers are to
the other side.
The first Hobbler hobbles between them.
He looks at the young and beautiful Hobbler.
He looks at the young and beautiful She-hobblers.
He chooses a She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

He takes her to the woods.*

(NIGHT.)

*The First Hobbler and the She-hobbler with flame-red
hair are alone.
They look at each other.
They kiss.
She makes a bed out of her clothes on the naked ground.
They lay down naked.
They cover themselves with her flame-red hair.*

(MORNING. THE OTHER HOBBLERS ARE
PRESENT AS WELL.)

*The She-hobbler with flame-red hair is pregnant.
The first Hobbler makes little crutches.*

*The She-hobbler with flame-red hair gives birth;
once... several times.*

(DAY... DAY... DAY...)

*The lame children are growing.
They are lame in both feet.
The older hobblers make new, bigger crutches for them.
They are teaching them to walk.*

*They have taught them.
When they hobble, they hobble in hops.*

SIXTH SCENE:

*The cross-roads.
It is covered with overgrown bushes and rocks that
sprung up.
The mound of the Blacked-haired woman and Man II is
barely noticeable.
The cross is overgrown with creeper, it can hardly be
seen.*

*The First Hobbler and She -hobbler with flame-red hair
pull the weeds, clear the stones.
The other hobblers stand around them.
They watch the two of them silently.*

The same strange light appears as when the Black-haired

woman appeared.

The First Hobbler raises his crutch high.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair joins the others.

She hides her flame-red hair beneath the robes of the other She-hobblers.

They are all frightened.

They are silent.

VOICE FROM THE LIGHT: (COMING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS AND A BURDEN UPON THE HEADS OF THE LAME ONES)

Lame Ones! To get sound feet, you must come to the straw hut which awaits you at the end of your travels. When you go, take some stones from these cross-roads, so your paths are not soiled. So your feet are not dirtied. So your crutches do not sink in the mud.

(LAUGHTER)

O, lame Ones! If you cannot manage by yourselves, then hobble. Hurl curses at your mother and father! Curse your father and your mother... for creating you as you are... When you hobble, when you curse, bang your woodwork. Tear down all the trees around here! The sound ones are driving you out of the land... driving you to your deaths!

(THE VOICE IS BECOMING MORE DISTANT. THE LIGHT IS WEAKER. THE HOBBLERS AND SHE-HOBBLERS ARE KNEELING, AND THE FIRST HOBBLER IS STILL HOLDING HIS CRUTCH ABOVE HIS HEAD.)

THE VOICE FROM LIGHT: *Lame Ones, if you do not find the way to the hut, put halters around your necks. Trot on two limbs. Trot on three limbs. Neigh like horses or like people would! Pray to your hobblers God. May he keep you. May he at least keep your heads! The rest is unimportant... there will always be crutches.*

The light disappears.

The First Hobbler lays down his crutches.

He kisses the cross.

He kisses the mound.

The lame ones look at him as they would at a God.

ALL HOBBLERS: *Let us leave, O, First Hobbler! Let us leave from the father and motherland. Let us leave as soon as possible. Our hut awaits us somewhere.*

SEVENTH SCENE:

The First Hobbler is coming.

Followed by the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

And by the lame men.

And by the lame women.

And by the lame children.

Only the First Hobbler carries a crutch.

The others carry crutches and stones.

EIGHTH SCENE:

The First Hobbler is resting.

They wash his crutch.

They bathe his body.

They kiss him.

The male hobblers avert their eyes.

The she-hobblers' mouths are full of flesh.

Mouths full of golden hairs, every hair trailing to their knees.

NINTH SCENE:

The First Hobbler is alone.

He is hobbling wearily.

Drinking rain.

Juggling on crutches.

Turning about himself.

Stones fly around him.

A strange laughter is heard all around him.

FIRST HOBBLER: O, hobblers and she-hobblers, come! The sound ones are throwing stones at me. The stones are black, full of poison. They are burying up the way to the hut!

The other hobblers come.

They clear the black stones.

They throw them in the woods.

The strange laughter ceases.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair lays a grey, big stone in front of the First Hobbler.

He climbs on it.

He looks like a master.

He shouts:

FIRST HOBBLER: Do not forget! The way is showing itself to me. I shall be the first one to the hut! I shall be the first one with sound legs!

*Suddenly: the First Hobbler stumbles.
The crutch falls out of his hand.
He barely holds on to the air.*

FIRST HOBBLER: (AS LOUDLY AS HE COULD)
Forgive me! We shall reach the hut together. We shall all have sound legs, so... lean on your good legs, the ones who have them. Leave your crutches to the side. Feel the strength of the earth. Put your hands together. Pray. Mumble our prayer... mumble our prayer.

*The lame ones kneel.
Some on one, some on both knees.
The crutches are thrust into the earth.
They put their hands together.
They bow in worship to the First Hobbler.*

ALL LAME ONES: (IN PRAYER VOICE)
Open, lame sky! Show yourself, lame God; Help us! It is difficult for us to hop on crutches and defend ourselves from the sound ones with them... Help us get to the hut. To forget our land in another one, and never recall the past!

*In ecstasy, the First Hobbler steps forward.
He reels.*

Falls to the ground.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair catches him by his hair - and keeps him from falling.

She gives him a crutch.

FIRST HOBBLER: (TO THE SHE-HOBBLER WITH
FLAME-RED HAIR)

Get back to your place! Pray!

(TO THE OTHER HOBBLERS)

Pray, all of you. Repeat these words after
me: O lame God bestow us with iron
crutches...

ALL HOBBLERS: Oh lame God bestow us with
iron crutches...

FIRST HOBBLER: (TO YOUNGEST HOBBLER)

You, the one in whom I place my trust,
continue! I shall listen and they will
listen.

The First Hobbler sits on a stone.

He looks at The Youngest Hobbler in fatherly way.

He looks at all the hobblers in a fatherly way.

He swings the crutch like a Godly stick.

FIRST HOBBLER: (LOUDLY, THE LOUDEST HE CAN)
To your knees, everyone! Beat your heads
against the stones! Beat them and listen!

The youngest Hobbler leans on two crutches.

He lifts his head towards the heavens.

Tears burst from his eyes.

YOUNGEST HOBBLER: Bestow us o Lame God with
iron crutches... light and sharp as nails.

To thrust into the land we are leaving. To thrust into the sound ones. To drink of their blood, to get sound legs, to reach the hut.

*The First Hobbler touches his shoulder with the crutch.
He kneels.
Beats his head against the stone.
And he weeps.*

ALL HOBBLERS: IF the heavens do not open,
the earth will!

TENTH SCENE

*The First Hobbler is kneeling.
The she-hobbler is kneeling.
The she-hobblers and other hobblers kneel.
The First Hobbler puts out his left eye with his crutch.
The others put out their right eyes.*

*The First Hobbler kneels.
The others kneel also.
They are looking at their extracted eyeballs on their palms.*

FIRST HOBBLER: We shall see a new Sun, new stars! We shall see the way to the hut. We shall see, yes, we shall see only if you look!

*The First Hobbler is kneeling.
The others rise slowly.*

They return the extracted eyeballs.

They are weeping.

ALL HOBBLERS: (ONE AFTER ANOTHER)

It is all the same! All the same! We are even lamer than we were! Our Sun is the same! Our stars are the same! The same blood! Our ways are the same, only the darkness in eyes is greater!

The lame man is kneeling.

He looks at his extracted eyeball.

He looks at his worn crutch.

He takes it.

On its tip, a dirty tip, he places the eyeball.

He turns to the others.

And shouts:

FIRST HOBBLER: Do not forget who I am! My crutch can see now.

ALL HOBBLERS: Let it see, let it see! We might find the way to the hut easier.

ELEVENTH SCENE:

The First Hobbler is coming.

He is alone.

He uses the new crutch as a walking stick, under his left arm.

The old one, the one that can see, he uses under the right arm.

The First Hobbler is coming.

He beats at the stones with the left crutch.

He sways the right crutch over his shoulder.

He looks in all directions.

There is light only around him, everywhere else it is dark.

FIRST HOBBLER: Crutches of mine, you are wooden. One of you has vision from my eye. You have what no wood has: you can see the sky, the earth! So, take me to the hut. To make my people happy. To bestow them with sound legs.

The First Hobbler goes on.

He has put both crutches over his shoulders.

He stumbles; from the sky to the earth.

He stumbles; from stone to stone.

The light leaves him.

The darkness takes him.

TWELFTH SCENE

The First Hobbler comes to the valley.

Around it everything is green.

The light of three Suns through three skies bursts from it.

The First Hobbler is sitting on the edge of the valley.

He places the crutches beside him, as one would children.

He admires the beauty of the light in the valley.

The hobblers and she-hobblers are coming.

They are carrying stones in their hands.

They lay them around the valley.

*They look at the valley.
The Light is too bright for their eyes.*

*They are frightened.
They scream.
They hop on the crutches.
The light becomes brighter. Their shadows are huge.*

*Suddenly, they are still.
They push the stones into the valley with their
crutches.
They tumble them down into the valley.*

*The three Suns have fallen apart.
The three skies have gone to pieces.
In their fear, the lame ones step over the crutch with
the First Hobbler's eyeball.
The First Hobbler squeals.
He rises slowly.
Takes the other crutch.
Jumps into the valley.*

*The hobblers and she-hobblers on the edge of the valley
are confused.
They weep a little, they wail a little, they beat their
 chests with their fists.
They raise their arms and crutches to the sky.*

*In the valley, the First Hobbler rises slowly.
There are stones under him an all around him.
He shakes pebbles off himself.
He wipes drops of blood from himself.*

As if nothing had happened, he rises.

Standing like a huge tree.

Looking at his lame ones around the valley.

FIRST HOBBLER: Come. Here it is like above... Perhaps a little better? The sound ones do not set foot here... Come. I have lost an eye and a crutch. I have spilled blood on stones. Come down slowly.

The hobblers and she-hobblers quiet down.

They are embracing one another.

They have made a circle around the valley.

They descend into it quietly, like shadows.

They are lying around the First Hobbler.

He looks at them as The Lord would.

He hails the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

She approaches.

He embraces and kisses her.

Everyone around them weeps.

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still. All this shall pass. We will come out of the valley bursting with strength, and arrive at our hut.

(CURTAIN)

ACT TWO

FIRST SCENE

(SEVERAL YEARS HAVE PASSED. PERHAPS A FULL TEN YEARS? THE LAME ONES ARE STILL IN THE VALLEY. THEY HAVE GOTTEN OLDER AND THERE ARE NEW FACES AMONG THEM. THERE ARE MANY STONE MOUNDS AROUND THEM, ON TOP OF WHICH CRUTCHES ARE THRUST.)

The lame ones are lying in the valley.

The elders are on one side, the younger ones on the other.

The First Hobbler hobbles around them.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair hobbles after him.

He touches all of them with his crutch.

She caresses all of them with her hand.

She kisses everyone.

The lame ones awaken. Rise.

Dogs barking and human laughter is heard in the distance.

The elder lame ones are motionless.

The younger are confused and frightened.

They turn about.

They gather around the First Hobbler.

The gather around the First Hobbler.

The gather around the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

He stills them with a fatherly hand.

She strokes them with a motherly one.

A lame one approaches them.

LAME ONE: It is the sound ones looking for

us!

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Oh, if we only had a sound little man to nibble on.

ALL YOUNGER LAME ONES: We are hungry O Lame God, hungry! Give us a sound little man to eat... to be full with his flesh, to be drunk with his blood... to be filled with laughter.

The First Hobbler raises his crutch up high.

All is quiet.

The younger lame ones return to their places.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair kneels.

She embraces the First Hobbler's sound leg.

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still. This too shall pass!

SECOND SCENE

(A MISTY MORNING)

The First Hobbler is sitting in the middle of the valley.

He is biting at his crutch.

Chewing it with all his might.

All the hobblers are around him.

ANOTHER HOBBLER: If he bites through it, he will have a crutch and a half! Perhaps we shall then get out of the valley? So, let us be ready.

ALL HOBBLERS: So be it! Let us shave off our beards!

ALL SHE-HOBBLERS: So be it! Let us comb our

hairs, wash our bodies.

The First Hobbler is still biting his crutch.

The crutch is bitten away.

Splinters are all around him.

His mouth is full of slightly red spittle.

The lame ones are looking for a razor.

They find it.

They stand in a row, one after the other.

A lame one shaves them.

The razor breaks.

The lame ones search for another.

Once more they stand in a row.

They continue to shave.

The She-hobblers arrange their hair with their own fingers, childish fingers.

The youngest hobblers wash their bodies with an invisible stone dust.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair oversees it all.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Up there, when we get out, we must be more beautiful than the rest. We must dazzle them all with our beauty and purity so they will accept us, and not stand in our way.

THIRD SCENE

The lame ones are shaven.

The She-hobblers have combed hairs, clean bodies.

They sit around the First Hobbler.

He has stopped biting his crutch.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair is nursing his bloody lips.

The crutch that was not bitten through is lying at his feet.

The youngest hobblers are weeping.

FIRST HOBBLER: Don't, my lame children,
Don't. Perhaps I shall bite it off
sometime... Be still now. This too shall
pass.

A THIRD HOBBLER: Perhaps such a destiny
awaits us as well?

He takes a roll of yellow paper fro his bosom.

He unrolls it.

The young hobblers approach him.

They are curious.

A THIRD HOBBLER: Shall I read to them, Oh
First Hobbler?

The First Hobbler, gazing into the distance, nods.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Children
of ours, you will hear our ancestor's love
songs. While you listen, think and imagine
what could happen to us when we get out of
this valley... While we are on the way to
our hut.

FIRST HOBBLER (TO A THIRD HOBBLER):

You begin, and the others will continue.

Silence.

They all look at the Hobbler.

He begins in a quivering voice:

A THIRD HOBBLER: The earth had the smell of
 air
 the earth had the smell of blood
 when you slayed my brother
 when you broke my legs.

The earth had the smell of pain
 when you ran away from me
 one year
 when I had to plead with you
 to return, to return to me.

*The she-hobblers are searching among the stones.
 They take out old handkerchiefs from under the stones.
 Twisting them tightly.*

A SHE-HOBBLER: For the tears our eyes will
 spill.

*A Third Hobbler hands the papers to the Next Hobbler.
 In the same voice, he begins:*

THE NEXT HOBBLER: It is autumn.
 Tired, I hobble with the rain
 choosing the prettiest of drops
 I pile them on the crutches slowly and
 carefully like fingers.

I have chosen five drops
 those
 that glitter, twinkle.

He gives the paper to the Next Hobbler.

In the same voice, he reads:

THE NEXT HOBBLER: It is autumn
 it is all the same
 weary
 I hobble from my gate to yours

 above you
 your face floats.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair strokes the First Hobbler.

He wipes the tears from her cheeks with kisses.

The other she-hobbler weep.

They wipe their cheeks with dusty handkerchiefs.

FIRST HOBBLER: I shall continue now,
 (BY HEART)
 I have been left alone
 and I am crawling

as if both of my eyes have fallen out
 as if I never had two legs.

With a gesture, he shows the Next One to continue.

THE NEXT HOBBLER: I am late
 is it because of the blood

I am holding in my palm

is it because
there is no difference
between blood and love

THE NEXT HOBBLER: I stand before your gate
which does not open
look, I am burning my blood
look, it is not horrible

it is horrible
that I am lame in my foot

that I am lame at all

*The young hobblers gather around the elders.
The elders embrace them like fathers.*

A YOUNG HOBBLER: (WHISPERING)

Let us stay in the valley. Give our bones
to it. The sound ones up there are
terrible!

*The First Hobbler raises his hand.
All is silent once more.
The next Hobbler continues:*

THE NEXT HOBBLER: Listen, I am looking at
your gate, which does not open
it is strange,
I am not cold, nor I am trembling
(yet there is snow)

I am not cold, nor am I trembling
 as if I do not know
 that through your gate,
 my madness will appear
 my death will appear

THE NEXT HOBBLER: I see, you are going out
 through the window
 your black hair dragging to the ground
 a dagger flashes between your teeth
 the blood in my veins turns into ice
 I know
 you will lead me to death
 to the cross-roads.

The First Hobbler rises.

The others rise.

The First Hobbler looks at the sun which emerges.

He starts toward the steep sides of the valley.

He catches on to the stone bulges.

He is climbing towards the top with great difficulty.

The other hobblers go after him.

And the she-hobblers follow them.

The young hobblers help them.

The young hobblers are the last to come out.

The First Hobbler stands at the edge of the valley.

*He watches the lame ones that are coming out of the
 valley like mice.*

he waves his crutch.

And shouts:

FIRST HOBBLER: O lame god, show us the way

to the hut. We have lain on sharp stones
for many years. We have washed ourselves
with stone dust. Fed ourselves with it and
ourselves! Dreamt of you and only you and
the hut.

FOURTH SCENE:

*The lame people have come out the valley.
They shake the stone dust from themselves.
And swing their wooden crutches.*

*Another light illuminates them.
Winds of some sort blow from all sides.*

*All around them the grass is green and swaying.
All around them the huge forest shows its greenness.
It sways and rustles.*

*The lame ones are bewildered.
They sway to and fro.*

*Some of them fall headfirst. They die.
Some sink to the grass. They die.
The young hobblers weep.
They hide under their mothers' skirts.*

*From all directions the wind brings a healthy laughter.
It also brings a song an incomprehensible song.*

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still. This too shall
pass. Just a little more, and we shall
proceed.

FIFTH SCENE:

*The lame people are standing by the valley.
They look at their lame feet with nausea.
They feel their cramped bodies with nausea.*

*The lame ones walk by the valley.
They walk slowly.
They sharpen their crutches with stone knives.
Without them, they would stumble.
They straighten their backs. And walks.*

*They stop suddenly.
And where they stop, where they happen to be, they
thrust their sharpened crutches in the earth.*

SIXTH SCENE:

*The lame ones are standing. Petrified.
It is night.
The moon is coming out.
The lame ones scream.*

ALL LAME ONES: We want the sun! We want the
red sun!

*The moon is bigger, clearer.
The lame ones' scream is even louder.*

*Tailed stars fall from the heavens.
There is horror all around the lame ones: the grass is
on fire, the woods are burning!
The lame ones pull their crutches out of the earth.
And hide them under their clothing.
They gather in a throng.
They moan and scream.*

The First hobbler shouts:

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still! This too shall
pass!

SEVENTH SCENE:

It is morning.

The lame ones are still standing.

They look at the burnt earth and the trees with horror.

The sun appears.

The faces of the lame ones brighten up.

They take their crutches out from their clothing.

SHE HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Take your
footwear off. Warm your feet. Light up your
crutches a little. We shall need hot blood,
we shall need good crutches... for our
travels.

A YOUNG SHE-HOBBLER: Oh, how I would like
to give birth to one of my children in the
hut!

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: So it
shall be. So it shall be, once.

EIGHTH SCENE:

The lame ones have warmed up their feet.

They lightened up their crutches.

They rise from the fire.

They stack the crutches into heaps.

They gather in a round dance.

They dance with one foot.

The ones lame in both feet kneel behind them.

They clap their hands. And they keep the rhythm.

The lame ones are dancing.

They sing an incomprehensible song.

They sing: first one and then the others.

The song is a cry rising from pained throats.

The flame around which they are dancing rises over their hands.

Along the burnt earth, and burnt trees - healthy shadows are refracting.

The lame ones dance and dance.

The rains circle around them.

The snows fall upon them, yet they dance and dance!

Spring falls.

The grass becomes green. The trees put forth leaves.

They are still dancing.

Words come out of their throats instead of cries:

ALL HOBBLERS: Soon we will, soon, have
sound legs? Soon we will, soon, find the
bamboo hut?

NINTH SCENE:

The lame ones are resting from the dance.

They wipe their sweaty faces dusty handkerchiefs.

And then the same, the same again!

The lame ones are standing by the fire.

They watch the flame diminish, turn into charcoal.

The sparks like fireflies flutter towards the stars.

The lame ones are sitting around the fire.

The young hobblers are standing in the dark.

The First Hobbler raises his hand up high.

FIRST HOBBLER: (TO THE SHE-HOBBLER WITH
FLAME-RED HAIR)

Tell them what you wish.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Daughters
of mine. Skip over this little flame... let
your hairs become as mine.

The First Hobbler issues a command with his hand.

The circle which their bodies made parts.

Everyone turns to the Young She-hobbler.

*The first young she-hobbler hops on one foot with all
her might.*

She jumps over the flame.

Followed by another, then another, and another...

Their black, light, grey, yellow hairs become red.

They become flame-red.

Turning into heat.

Around them, cries of joy.

Tears of joy are spilled.

The First Hobbler speaks up:

FIRST HOBBLER: Blazen up, heat. Stand on
our side. Be stronger than our lameness. Be
stronger than the sound ones. From them and
all evils protect us.

TENTH SCENE:

Suddenly the darkness falls, in the midst of the lame circle.

Enrapturing music is brought.

The lame people rise.

They cannot make a step.

They stand like dazed.

As if they were petrified.

The darkness falls and rises like mist. (It swings)

The lame ones are frightened.

They try to hide within their own embraces.

They sway to and fro.

Slowly, they are starting to move.

They take up their crutches.

Trying to pull them out of the earth.

They cannot.

A few crutches blooming with leaves can be glimpsed through the darkness.

The lame ones, desperate, fall to their knees.

The darkness is thicker and thicker.

The lame ones can hardly be seen.

They raise their arms. And shout:

ALL HOBBLERS: There, there! Rise! Coming
from the darkness, the music is louder.

They scream out of fear.

They scream out of pain.

Laughter is heard from the darkness through the music.

*Suddenly, the music stops.
The laughter stops suddenly as well.*

*The darkness rises, tuft by tuft.
Lightens in greying tones.
The lame ones turn to each other.
Horror is on their faces.*

ALL HOBLERS: (ONE AFTER ANOTHER)

I cannot see you! I cannot see you!

ELEVENTH SCENE:

*The lame ones pulled out the crutches from the earth.
The broke off the blooms, the leaves.
They star to beat their heads with the crutches.*

ALL HOBLERS (ONE LOUDER, THE OTHER LESS
LOUD. SOME SCREAM. SOME LAUGH MADMEN)

Let us fight! To restore our sight, to
conquer the darkness!

*The lame ones beat themselves on the head.
They fight hard, thoughtlessly, bloodily, without any
regrets.
They fight every which way.
Blood streams down their faces in the spurts.
Trickling down.
The lame ones throw away their crutches.
They gather the blood on their palms.
Licking it.
They smear it over their bodies.
And fall into a trance.*

They sway, embrace, kiss.

ALL HOBBLERS: (SINGING)

There are no differences between blood and
love!

TWELFTH SCENE:

The darkness rises above the heads of the lame ones.

Wear, they lie upon the burnt earth.

The first Hobbler is the first to lie down.

Before he lies down, he says:

FIRST HOBBLER: We have conquered the
darkness! We have rescued the crutches from
life! Sleep well and dream of The Way
awaiting us.

(COURTIN)

ACT THREE

FIRST SCENE:

(THE LAME PEOPLE ARE SLEEPING. THEY
HAVE MADE A PERFECT CIRCLE WITH
THEIR BODIES. THE DARKNESS IS THE
SAME, IT IS A STILL DARKNESS)

The first Hobbler wakes.

He rises, slowly, using his crutch.

He looks at the sleeping hobblers.

He sees: the flame smoulders inside the circle.

FIRST HOBLER: Blazen up heat. Awaken my
lame ones.

The flame swells.

It lights up the faces of the lame sleepers.

The lame ones awaken. And rise.

Leaning on their crutches they watch the First Hobbler.

They look into the flame.

ALL HOBLERS: Blazen up, heat, blazen up.
Warm us. Tomorrow, or some other day, we
must go.

The flame swells.

It rises above their heads.

Chasing away the darkness.

On their faces, there is hope.

They stroke their crutches.

They are all confused, restless.

Only the First Hobbler is not.

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still. Do you not see - many sufferings have ceased to be!

A YOUNG HOBBLER: (AS LOUD AS HE COULD)

No! Nothing has ceased to be. It is all a trick! It is all the same... the same! The same darkness. The same fire. The same hobbling... The way is nowhere to be found! The hut and sound legs are but a fairy tale! The sound ones around us are sharpening their daggers. The sound ones around us are making a marsh.

The lame ones make a commotion.

They whisper among themselves.

They watch the First Hobbler.

He raises his crutch, as peaceful as usual.

He smiles!

And thunders:

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still. Nothing repeats itself. It too shall pass like everything else.

The First Hobbler swings his crutch at the young Hobbler.

The others swing theirs as well.

He moves away.

The crutches crash into each other, breaking.

The lame ones moan.

They look at their broken crutches.

FIRST HOBBLER: In the fire with him! Let him burn, turn into ashes!

ALL HOBBLERS: In the fire, in the fire!

With crutches, with broken crutches... and without them, the lame one step toward the Young Hobbler.

They catch him.

Dragging him to the fire.

The young one struggles.

Yet they are stronger, they push him into the fire.

The First Hobbler is watching all this from aside.

As well as the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

The Young Hobbler burns in the fire.

The flame lights up all the lame ones.

The darkness has vanished. The shadows have vanished.

The lame ones are still.

They stare dumbly into the purple flame.

A HOBBLER: Yes. This is what he deserves! I hobble all my life and hope, and yet he wants changes immediately!

THE NEXT HOBBLER: I knew this would happen...

THE NEXT HOBBLER: He burned quickly.

A SHE-HOBBLER: ...and not fed the fire with his youth!

The First Hobbler is leaning on his crutch (which is whole).

He watches the lame ones, smiling.

She is smiling also.

FIRST HOBBLER: The fire cleanses! The fire destroys as well. There is no glow without

fire. We cannot do without glowing... We shall remember him as a dear one, progressive one... but hot-headed as well! It is difficult to attain a sound walk!

SECOND SCENE

The flame is becoming smaller, more red.

The Sun appears through the branches of the still burnt trees.

The lame people kneel and bow in worship to it.

They lay the crutches and pieces of crutches beside themselves.

They raise their arms to the sky.

ALL HOBBLERS: O thank you O lame God! Just show us the way to the hut. Help us! Protect us from the sound ones... and let our way be clear, let it be the only one! So we do not stray from it, so we do not wander.

Suddenly the darkness falls.

A black cloud covers the Sun.

A crash is heard.

The flame is put out.

The fire - the red-hot coals split.

The lame ones are frightened:

Some without, some with crutches, they start to move away.

They crawl in all directions.

Some have coals like red-hot fireflies stuck on them.

They pluck them off in panic.

FIRST HOBBLER: Be still...

He is interrupted by the lame ones' scream.

He is interrupted by the lame ones' moan.

The spirit of the Young Hobbler appears from the ashes of the quenched fire.

The spirit, borne away by its own lightness, vanishes into a black cloud.

ALL HOBBLERS (EXCEPT FIRST HOBBLER): (IN A WHISPER)

Our destiny is death! Our destiny is death!

Taking the spirit into itself, the black cloud bursts.

The Sun appears again.

Everything is once again under a piercing light.

FIRST HOBBLER: I said, be still! Our destiny is The Way. Our wishes, a sound walk.

ALL HOBBLERS: Let us leave this valley. Run from this fire... Perhaps the sound ones had sent it?

THIRD SCENE:

The lame people are standing by the valley.

The She-hobblers are behind them.

The young hobblers are behind them as well.

The First Hobbler makes the rounds and inspects them

carefully.

When he finishes the rounds, he stands in front of them.

FIRST HOBBLER: We must be strong. There is pain and suffering awaiting us on our way.

ALL HOBBLES: We are strong, O First Hobbler. Let us leave. The sound ones can come!

FIRST HOBBLER: Very well, collect your things!

The lame people collect their things.

They collect: broken crutches, stone tiles, stone axes, stone knives.

They put all this in their bosoms, hands, pockets.

They throw earth, dump stones on the quenched fire, on the ashes, the scattered coals.

They bury the splinters from the broken crutches in the earth.

Suddenly, coming from the woods, below the Sun, the sound of drums is heard.

The lame people are still.

They are listening.

The sound of drums is heard again, and then it is lost in the distance.

A HOBBLER: That is the direction of our Way. Let us go, O First Hobbler.

FOURTH SCENE:

The First Hobbler goes.

He is headed toward the direction of the sound of drums.

The She-Hobbler with flame -red hair follows him.

Followed by the lame ones.

And the She-hobblers.

And the youngest Hobblers.

They lean:

Some on whole crutches.

Some on a piece of crutch.

Some lean on another lame one.

And some crawl, they crawl.

The lame ones are going.

Going into the woods.

The further they go, the thicker the woods are.

There are no traces of a fire.

A bit of sunlight shines through the woods.

The lame ones get around with difficulty.

FIFTH SCENE:

A clearing.

The lame ones are resting beneath a dome of a sunlight.

Some are naked to the waist.

They are sunbathing.

The others make crutches out of branches.

Suddenly:

The humming of invisible hornets is heard from all

directions.

The lame people are frightened.

They protect themselves with their hands, crutches, rags.

They scream and moan.

They run, run in a mortal fear.

Many forget their crutches.

SIXTH SCENE:

The lame people gather around the First Hobbler.

They gather at the ends of the woods, by the great marsh.

They are half-naked.

Without crutches.

And some with crutches.

The she-hobblers weep.

The lame ones comfort them clumsily.

The young hobblers are confused.

They hang on to the elders' skirts.

A HOBBLER: Where to, now, First Hobbler?
Where to, when the marsh is all around us,
when the mud is all around us?

ANOTHER HOBBLER: When the woods behind us
is full of hornets.

The First Hobbler is confused for the first time.

He starts to weep.

He falls to his knees.

The other lame ones fall as well.

FIRST HOBBLER: Why did you not tell us of

the marsh and mud, O lame God? What now? Is
our life to end in the mud?

ALL HOBBLERS: O lame God, help us! Take us
out of the marsh. Lead us to the hut - show
us a dry way.

The First Hobbler rises.

The other hobblers rise.

They face the woods.

It glimmers, lighten up by the sun.

It turns into flame again.

*The shadows of the sound people in the distance
disappear.*

A HOBBLER: The sound ones again...

THE NEXT HOBBLER: ...have hindered our
travels.

The woods are in flames.

A SHE-HOBBLER: The marsh is in front of us,
the fire behind us! Death is everywhere...

THE NEXT SHE-HOBBLER: ...around us. Soon it
will enter our suffering souls.

A YOUNG HOBBLER: He was right... and yet we
threw him into the fire! It is all the
same... it repeats itself.

THE NEXT HOBBLER: Only our places of
hobbling are different! Only our hobbling
is worse, more painful!

The woods are in flames.

*The woods are consumed by fire.
The lame ones are petrified.*

*The First Hobbler raises his hand.
All is still.*

FIRST HOBBLER: Kneel. Fall to your knees.
Beat your heads against this piece of
land... So the marsh dries out, so the way
to the hut shows itself to us.

SEVENTH SCENE:

*The lame people are kneeling.
Only the First Hobbler is not kneeling.
And the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.
The two of them watch the cloud of ashes which the wind
blows on them.*

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: I shall
take off my robes, to cover all the rest of
you.

The cloud blocks the Sun.

*The She-hobbler with flame-red hair takes off her
robes.
Her flame-red hair covers up her nakedness.
She and the First Hobbler cover the lame ones.
They too crawl under the robes.*

*The ashes are falling on the covered lame people.
A lot of ashes fall.
A lot of ashes, and a little light.*

*The lame ones kneel under the blanket, under the ashes.
It all resembles a grey slab.
Above them there is a small Sun.
High above that one there is a big Sun.*

EIGHTH SCENE:

*The First Hobbler gets out from the ashes.
He looks in all directions:*

*The woods darken.
The marsh is even bigger.*

*The First Hobbler sees the small Sun.
He waves his crutch at it.
The Sun moves.
Stops above the marsh.
Shines brighter.
Below, on that place, the marsh dries up.
The First Hobbler shouts joyfully:*

FIRST HOBBLER: Rise, rise. The marsh is
opening before us.

*They come out - the lame ones crawl from under the
ashes.
They stumble on cramped legs.
They stumble with crutches, and without them.
They straighten their backs with difficulty.
Looking at the marsh in disbelief.*

*Some lame one looks at the She-hobbler with flame-red
hair in lust.*

Naked, she holds out her hand to the small Sun.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Always be before us. Open the way for us, and I shall give you my body. I shall braid my flame-red hair into your rays... to make you stronger, to be the Sun of Suns!

FIRST HOBBLER: Nooo! You will give yourself to no one. Only one Sun exists in the sky. Thos small one is a lie! This is our desire! Only in the valley, in another world are there four suns. No. You will give yourself to no one. You are mine. You are the woman of the First Hobbler. You are the mother of all the lame ones... You are lame as well... and the Sun, it needs a sound woman!

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair weeps.

She takes her robes from under the ashes.

And puts them on.

And stands among the other lame ones.

FIRST HOBBLER: You have forgotten... you have forgotten when we were told to wear halters, to trot... to neigh?

ALL HOBBLERS: We have not. We have not, O First Hobbler!

FIRST HOBBLER: Then do not seek a new destiny! Do not seek new paths! This one has been given to us. So... be still! So... let us gather our robes. Let us gather our crutches, clear everything of ashes and let us go our way.

ALL HOBBLERS:... before it gets soiled.

NINTH SCENE:

The lame ones stir up the ashes.

They take out their crutches (the ones who have any).

They take their robes out.

They take out shovels, pickaxes, spades, axes, saws, hoes.

They clean the tools of ashes.

And tie them into sheaves.

FIRST HOBBLER: Do not forget the small Sun!
Put it on your shoulder. To dry the mud. To dig out the marsh easier.

The lame ones look at each other in wonder.

ALL HOBBLERS: How shall we do it?! Our hands, our legs are not used to labor. O first Hobbler, this you have heard from the sound ones!

He is silent. He watches the marsh.

The other hobblers are silent as well.

They clean and patch up their robes.

Fix their crutches.

They give the ones lame in both feet the best crutches.

To the ones who have one sound foot they give a crutch or a hoe, or anything.

ALL HOBBLERS: We are ready! Lead us!

They are standing in a procession.
The First Hobbler is at the head.
Followed by the She-hobbler with flame-red
hair.
And by the lame ones.
And the she-hobblers.
And the youngest hobblers.

TENTH SCENE:

*The lame ones set out.
They come to the edge of the marsh.
Behind them, the woods turn into blackness.*

*The First Hobbler halts.
The other hobblers halt as well.
The First Hobbler looks at the dried-out path in the
marsh.
He measures it with his crutch.
With his eyes.
He steps forward.
Thrusts the crutch into the undrained marsh by the
path.
Plunges his sound foot into the undrained marsh.
The crutch starts vanishing into the mud.
The foot starts sinking into the mud.
The foot starts sinking into the mud.
He cries out in fright.*

*The lame ones throw the small Sun off their shoulders.
It disappears into the infinity of heavens.
The lame ones hobble quickly towards the marsh.
They hand the First Hobbler his crutches. They pull him
out of the mud with them.*

FIRST HOBBLER: Take your clothes off! Take off everything you are wearing. Step into this marsh. Throw the mud around with shovels. With pickaxes, hoes... with all and everything, dig to the sound earth. Dry this marsh out. So the sound earth appears! To dig one grave for all of us in it! (HE WEEPS) The way to the hut will never show up. We shall always have lame feet... Of the sound... we shall but dream.

The other hobblers weep as well.

The small Sun that was thrown appears then vanishes, appears and then vanishes, an the light is always the same!

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair cleanses the mud off the First Hobbler.

Cleanses the mud off his crutch.

Kisses his cheeks.

Sobs.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Where have we gone wrong? Which words should we not have spoken?

A SHE-HOBBLER: We threw our brother, son, husband, lover into the fire, into the red flame!

THE NEXT SHE-HOBBLER: As if there are of us as there are of the sound ones!

FIRST HOBBLER: Oh, don't, don't! All paths leave a trace. All suffering must carve itself into the soul... Songs will be sung, stories told about him one day...

A HOBBLER: You sin! From the time we left

the valley, you have not gone to the cross-roads. There were another three paths on the cross-roads. Perhaps we would have been lucky with one of them? Perhaps one of them can take us to the hut?

FORST HOBBLER: All paths are secret. To choose the right one, one needs to be wise.

NEXT HOBBLER: But you heard the voice coming from the light.

FIRST HOBBLER: Oh don't, don't!

A SHE-HOBBLER: Ah, but death will come for us soon.

Silence among the lame ones reigns.

They are all watching the earth, the marsh.

Quietly, slowly, they unite the tools.

They take off their robes.

Net to the marsh, as in front of a firing squad, they stand.

ALL HOBBLERS: Help us O lame God! At least now help us. To dry out this marsh, to lead the water to infinity. To dig out a sound grave.

ELEVENTH SCENE:

The lame ones dig, they are burrowing the marsh.

They throw the muddied earth around.

They are digging: first one of them and then the others.

All of them carry the soiled earth.

They carry it in their shirts.

*They carry it in their robes.
They lay it on the edge of the marsh.
There they spread it out.*

*The small Sun flickers, drying the earth.
The water from the mud, from the marsh, flows to
infinity, to aimlessness.*

TWELFTH SCENE:

*The lame people are digging.
Some of them are in shirts, some are naked.
They have dug out half the marsh.
Dried out half the mud.*

FIRST HOBLER: We have dried out half the marsh. Dug out half the mud. We have come to the sound earth. A couple of us shall remain here to complete the task. The rest of us shall go to the woods. To cut it... to fell it, to make a big coffin for ourselves.

THIRTEENTH SCENE

*The lame people are setting out.
The ones who are remaining look after them.
They dig out the remaining marsh slowly.
They sing:*

THE REMAINING HOBLERS: Soon we shall, soon, have a sound grave!

FOURTEENTH SCENE:

*The lame people go.
They are going through some woods.
They carry saws over their shoulders.
They carry saws over their shoulders.
They carry axes over their shoulders.
And paring tools in their hands.
And a meter.
And hammers.
And nails as well.*

FIRST HOBLER: Look carefully. Find the longest, thickest, most beautiful trees. We must make a coffin. For all of us to lie in.

*The lame people are walking through the woods.
They are looking around it.
They measure, assess each tree.
They are pulling down: the longest, the thickest, most beautiful trees.
Hauling them in one place.
They take off the branches, the bark, they cut the trees to boards.
They choose and place the longer boards to one, the shorter to the other side.
They feed the fire with little branches and splinters.

Sometimes they warm themselves by the fire.
Sometimes they sleep.*

FIFTEENTH SCENE:

The lame people are making a coffin.

*They put together boards for a bottom.
 They smoothen them down.
 And nail them down.
 The bottom becomes wide, long, big.*

FIRST HOBBLER: A few of you stay here... to finish the coffin. The rest of us shall go to a field in search of a place to plant the hemp. To sew a white shirt for all of us. For all of us to wear, when we are buried.

SIXTEENTH SCENE:

*The lame people are starting out.
 The ones who are to remain look after them.
 They make a coffin.
 They sing:*

THE REMAINING HOBBLERS: Soon we shall, soon, have a coffin.

SEVENTHEENTH SCENE:

*The lame ones go.
 They are going across a field.
 They are walking wearily.
 Even with the crutches they are weak, helpless.

 They are carrying saddle-bags on their shoulders.
 They are carrying ploughs on their shoulders.
 Mows as well.
 And forks.
 In their hands they carry sickles.
 A few of them carry a hemp-crusher.*

Several of them carry a loom.

The First Hobbler halts.

The other lame ones halt.

They lay the tools beside themselves on the ground.

They set up the loom.\And look down the field.

FIRST HOBBLER: Rest. A lot of strength is needed for this field. It will be a long time before we sew the shirt...

EIGHTEENTH SCENE:

The lame ones are ploughing the field.

The First Hobbler shows them the direction of the furrow.

It is difficult for them, the ploughing.

Some are harnessed, some are holding the ploughs.

They take turns.

In a day, the furrow is ploughed.

(THE CHANGING OF DAYS AND NIGHTS)

The lame ones are still ploughing.

The ones who are harnessed neigh like horses.

The ones holding the ploughs:

The ones behind and beside them; trot with two, three limbs...

They are weary.

The whole field is ploughed out.

The lame ones sow the field with hemp seed.

The First Hobbler shows them how to throw out the seed.

The Youngest hobbler set scarecrows around the field.

Scarecrows, in human form, for birds.

They fly from all directions and land on the field.

Many scarecrows, resembling many things (for the sound ones), whose laughter can be heard from all directions.

The hemp is growing.

The lame ones are sitting around the field.

Admiring the slender stalks.

Th First Hobbler rises.

The She-hobbler with flame-red hair rises as well.

They walk through the hemp-field.

They examine each stalk.

Sniffing the ripe leaves.

They return to the lame ones.

Stumbling back and forth. Gathering round in a circle for a dance.

The First Hobble starts singing:

FIRST HOBBLER: The hemp is ripe, the hemp is ripe! It should be cut, soured in water... It should be basted, without weaving.

They catch the First Hobbler and the She-hobbler with flame-red hair under the arms.

They put away their crutches.

Laying them slowly on the ground.

The two of them lay next to the fire.

Covering themselves with their robes.

A HOBBLER: The hemp has enraptured them.

ANOTHER HOBBLER: We must weave the linen by the time they awaken.

*The lame ones take up the sickles.
 They arrange themselves along the field.
 They cut the lame hemp.
 The She-hobblers tie the sheaves.
 The young hobblers take the sheaves to the water.*

(TE CHANGING OF DAYS AND NIGHTS)

*The field is cut.
 The lame ones are standing on it, like trees.
 The She-hobblers weave linen on looms.
 They all sing:*

ALL HOBBLERS: Soon we shall, soon, have a
 shirt.

NINETHEENTH SCENE:

*The First Hobbler and She-hobbler with flame-red hair
 awaken.
 They look at the deserted field in disbelief.
 They look at the weavers with wonder.*

A SHE HOBBLER: O She-hobbler with flame-red
 hair! Pray tell, what shirt should we sew.
 SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: All our
 people must fit into one shirt... Not one
 hobble must die without it!

*The She-hobblers are sewing.
 The hobblers burn the scarecrows.
 They burn the mowed hemp-field.
 They mend the old crutches, and make new ones.
 All together they sing:*

ALL HOBBLERS: Soon we shall, soon, wear the shirt.

The She-hobblers have sewn the shirt, they are spreading it in the field.

They spread it above their heads.

The shirt is big, fluttering in the wind.

FIRST HOBBLER: We have come out of one womb. The shirt will be like a mother to us... It will take us in its womb!

TWENTIETH SCENE:

The lame people are coming back.

They are leaning on one crutch.

They wear the shirt on their shoulders.

They set across the fields, the meadows, the stones.

They come to the woods where the lame ones made the coffin.

The lame ones are standing around the coffin they had made.

The coffin is very big, huge even.

FIRST HOBBLER: We have seen the shirt. We have made the coffin. Let us go to the marsh. Let us put the shirt into the coffin. So it does not soil, so the sound ones can see it.

The lame ones lay their shirt into the coffin.

They lay it gently, with respect.

They put the coffin on their shoulders.

And they go.

TWENTY-FIRST SCENE:

The lame people have come to the marsh.

The ones who had dried it out come to welcome them with open arms.

They shout at the typo of their voices.

THE REMAINING HOBBLERS: We have dried out the whole marsh. We have led the water to infinity. Dug out a grave.

The lame ones stand by the grave.

The grave is huge, gaping.

FIRST HOBBLER: Lower the coffin from your shoulders slowly. Take the shirt out. Spread it over the field... let it gather sunlight. Lay the coffin in the grave, so it can get used to the ground. And let us go to the clear lake. To bathe, so we can - clean and beautiful - die together!

The lame ones take the coffin off their shoulders.

The She-hobblers take out the shirts from it.

They spread it across the field.

The lame ones lay the coffin into the grave.

Putting the cover beside the grave, laying it on the sound earth.

They gather in a round dance by the river.

And they sing.

ALL HOBBLERS: Soon we shall, soon, be able

to die wonderfully.

TWENTY-SECOND SCENE

The lame people are setting out.

They come to the lake.

They have soaps, towels, combs in their hands.

They take off their old robes.

Going into the lake.

Washing themselves.

They come out of the water.

They wipe themselves off, comb their hair.

Gather the old robes in a pile.

They burn them.

And wait for them to burn out.

The night falls slowly.

FIRST HOBBLER: There is one more thing for us to do, and all our sufferings shall pass.

ALL HOBBLERS: What, what, O First Hobbler?

He watches them.

FIRST HOBBLER: Naked, clean and beautiful as we are now we must go to the cross-roads. We must go to the graves of our ancestors to worship them and tell them we did not get to the hut! To tell them we did not get sound feet... and that we... Oh how terrible it is... did not have even one

sound little man!

A HOBBLER: That we did not drink of their blood. And that we wandered and wandered all over the world.

THE NEXT HOBBLER: And that we were seduced by the Sun... that we were frightened of... unknown shadows.

SHE-HOBBLER WITH FLAME-RED HAIR: Let us go. We shall say everything by their graves... How no one wants us. How they all hound us. How only the womb of the earth can be our home... our shelter and our forgetting.

The first Hobbler goes.

Followed by the She-hobbler with flame-red hair.

And the Hobblers.

And the She-hobblers.

And the youngest Hobblers.

(THE CHANGING OF DAYS AND NIGHTS)

(IT IS MORNING)

The lame ones are at the cross-roads.

They look about themselves.

There are no woods around the cross-roads.

Everything is deserted.

The lame ones look at the mound.

Instead of the crutches which were a cross over the mound, there are two crossed, branched oaks.

FIRST HOBBLER: Say nothing. Let us pray for them. Let us pray for these oaks... for the crutches that will be made from them. Let us pray for the other lame ones who will follow us, that they should have more luck

in their hobbling.

The lame ones are standing at the cross-roads.

They are speechless.

The darkness is falling.

The lame people leave.

TWENTY-THIRD SCENE:

The lame people are coming home, using the old paths.

They pass by the valley.

It is changed; Stones cannot be found. All the trees are huge, with branches coming out of them.

There is grass around the valley: huge, impassable.

There are woods around: nowhere are there traces of the former life... beauty of greenness is everywhere.

FIRST OBBLER: We had no happiness in life, and yet all around us, and behind us has become alive with our spirit. Let us be happy. We have given our beauty unto others.

TWENTY-FOURTH SCENE:

The lame ones have come to the dried-out marsh.

They stand petrified.

Where the grave gaped open - all is covered with dust.

Covered by a thick layer of dust.

The shirt is covered with dust.

Only sleeve peeks out from under the dust.

The lame ones throw down their crutches.

They fall to the ground.

They raise their arms to the sky.

ALL HOBBLERS: O Lame God, what have you
done to us?

The lame ones weep.

Beside them the crutches disappear into the dust.

Silence is all around them.

Their sobs stop.

The First Hobbler rises.

He looks about.

He looks at the other lame ones.

FIRST HOBBLER: In this land we cannot even
have death. We cannot even be buried in
these parts. Nothing is given to us. So, we
place trust in ourselves. Instead of
crutches, let us lean on each other. Let us
cover ourselves with our arms, our hairs.
We do not need robes. There are no more
sound ones! Let us find The Way ourselves.
Let us find by ourselves The Way which
hides beside us, behind us... all around
us... (TO HIMSELF) and is full of snake-
pits!

The lame ones look at the First Hobbler.

He weeps. He raises his head to the heavens.

He curses:

FIRST HOBBLER: O lame God, you son of a
whore!

ALL HOBBLERS: O First Hobbler! The darkness

falls!

So, the darkness falls.

Only the sobs of the lame ones can be heard.

(CURTAIN)