



Source: Martin Kettle, 'Iraq's future now depends on how it plays in Omaha', *Guardian Unlimited*, 14/07/07.

Tags: [disenchantment](#)

Writer/s: [Edwin Rostron](#)

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We began our lives in the endless grey field which goes on forever right to the edges. I guess we lived there for a long time, but because nothing ever happened it's hard to tell. What it was. What it wasn't. It was just the same. Nothing anymore than anything. Forever there and not ever there. Not a single one of us knew what we were doing back then. Do you remember?

Then suddenly we were flying. Of course we were birds and birds fly so we flew. We flew like ragged pieces of material in the wet wind and we never landed. No more endless grey field. Now we lived in the endless grey sky. That lasted a long time as well.

We did our best never to land but in the end we had to. It was only meant to be a short rest but as soon as we landed our wings were removed and we were given shoes and things to do. The small jobs became bigger and then before we knew it we were off to work every day with no evidence at all of what we had been before.

We tried to walk like we flew, without ever stopping. Past giant hollow tubes of yellow plastic piping left out in the rain next to unfinished pits and bricks stacked and bound with orange plastic as the rain turned the earth to mulch and the metal fence rattled in the night. We tried to slow down our walk so we could see it all before we'd gone past it, but it was no use and we stopped. We stopped and looked and before we knew it they'd built a house around us and that was it. We were home.

I could sit on the floor with my back against one wall and touch the opposite wall with my feet. Do you remember that? And do you remember the way my eyes changed colour to match the walls when I did it? Our house was so small but we tried to forget what had come before and concentrate on the Now.

One time I remember you were stuck mid-air. Freeze-framed somehow—things like that used to happen quite often in that house. Beneath you and above you I could see the spores glint in the air. I know you have said that this did not happen but I remember it well. Possibly it was not you although I rather think it was you. I'd sooner say it

was you until you prove me wrong. I could never believe that those things were not real.

Do you remember how the roof became the floor when I stood on it? You had to strap me upside down so I could fix the missing tiles. In the darkness it felt like there was no up or down, and when I came out my boots were on my hands.

We would start a lot of things but never finish them. Everything left some small residue until bit by bit a cupboard was filled. But we never used that cupboard anyway, you said, so it became the place to store all the unfinished ends of our dreams. Then after a while you moved into it yourself and when I tried to come in you wouldn't let me.

Your voice began to fluctuate strangely. The tonal shifts would come and go within sentences and the weird thing was no one else could ever hear it. I recorded it though and then they admitted I was right. It got worse and when you said 'There's no need to cry anymore now that the night has come and the stars are all dead', I couldn't understand what you were saying, but I knew for damn sure it was not good.

One night while you were asleep I saw the chair beside the window walk a step towards me. It had a jacket over the back and some clothes on the seat. It terrified me more than I can say, and when you found me crying we were briefly bonded once again.

Then there was when we could only find a pulse in each others' veins if we were standing under a doorway. I held you standing in those places for as long as I could. It was no good though, eventually we collapsed into a heap on the worn carpet. I think that's when you atrophied. And shortly after that I ossified. Or maybe it was the other way round.

I don't remember anything after that.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Edwin Rostron.*