

Fumbling Towards Ecstasy

Written by

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Black Screen: SFX RUNNING WATER from kitchen tap.

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

IRIS' hands. Drying them on the skirt of her floral waist apron, she walks towards the stove, paying particular attention to drying the finger with the gold ring upon it.

Iris takes the spatula and lifts the crackling bacon from the frying pan. She adds it to a fully-loaded plate of cooked breakfast. Iris lifts the plate onto a tray that already holds a cup of tea.

Iris turns, we see her face briefly for the first time. (In her late 50's, a devoted housewife. A slender figure whose soft lips compliment her thoughtful eyes. The silver strands of her fair hair escape her hair clasp, softly caressing her cheekbones).

Iris' back as she carries the tray towards the main room.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Iris' back as she enters the main room. Her husband TOM is revealed sitting at the table, head down in the morning paper with his back to the kitchen. Iris sets the tray down before her husband, he looks up at her and beams a smile as he lifts his fork to get stuck in. Tom (late 60's, his soft eyes framed with laughter lines; going bald on top, clad always in his white shirt and braces). Iris exits the room, we see her in the kitchen through the wall window, she reaches for something up on a shelf out of view.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Iris from behind as she stands facing the back door. Reaching behind her back with both hands, she unties the apron from her waist (holding a key in her right hand). She lets the apron fall from her hand to the floor. Iris then tucks a lock of hair behind her ear and unlocks the back door with the key. She opens the door and exits.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Iris steps out into the garden, nature's spotlight finds her. BIRDS morning song, LEAVES RUSTLING across the grass, the sound of the washing softly FLUTTERING on the line.

The soft crisp morning WIND catches her BREATH and blows back her hair to reveal her intoxicated gaze. We move slowly around Iris' head to the small of her neck, her hairs stand on end. Iris steps forward moving into the garden, we see her surroundings for the first time.

The garden is awash with colour. Due-kissed green grass embraced by an abundance of crimson roses and Irish wild flowers. The busy washing line sways in the wind beneath the vast blue sky. A medium height wooden picket fence separates Iris' back garden from her neighbour's adjacent garden.

Iris steps out of her shoes, her bare feet flirt with the damp glistening grass, she basks in the sublime feeling of it on the soles of her feet. She walks along beside the bed of tall roses, her hand caressing petals along the trail. CLANG of neighbour's garden gate.

Iris' curious face as she moves in closer to fence, she puts her hands against the fence. Iris' bare feet climbing over the soil to get closer. Iris' right hand gripping fence, her head rises to look through the gap.

We see Iris crouched behind her garden fence watching IVAN (a retired, stout little man with a spring in his step) walk up his garden he looks in Iris' direction and tips his cap.

Over Iris' shoulder as she drops to her honkers in panic, a little out of breath Iris' face alters, sheer relief and joy on feeling something with her hand in the soil. We see her pick up a yellow rose petal in the soil by her feet. She closes it in her fist, holds it to her heart, then puts it in her cardigan pocket.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Iris walks towards the main room with tray in hand.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Iris enters, Tom at the table with his back to the kitchen reading the newspaper. Iris sets the tray down before him, he looks up at her, beams his usual smile then lifts his fork to get stuck in.

Iris exits, we see her in the kitchen, through the wall window, she reaches for something on the shelf out of sight.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Over Iris' shoulder we see her flick through the pages of a little worn-out black notebook, every page contains a pressed yellow rose with a hand written date below it. There are many pages, many roses. Towards the back of the book, Iris pulls out a key. She closes the book and carefully places it back on the shelf, then exits frame.

(From behind, low-angle, in front of back door), Iris' apron falls from her hand to the floor, the key is heard unlocking the door, the door is opened.

INT. IVAN'S BEDROOM WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

(A BODHRAN DRUM SOLO plays throughout scene, builds to a crescendo supporting the action).

Point of view through the neighbour's window down into the gardens below. Iris suddenly appears in the neighbouring garden. She moves gracefully over the grass in her bare feet, carrying a basket of washing to hang on the line. With her back to the neighbour's window, she is illuminated by sunlight as she hangs her washing.

Close-up intimate moving montage of Iris...

the small of her lower back, as her soft sweater rises upon her reaching for the line...

her breathing bosom from the side beneath her tight sweater...

the sun on the back of her neck...

her fingers delicately securing a white shirt on the line with wooden pegs...

From the neighbour's window, as Iris secures her white nightgown up on the line, hot breath mists glass, a WOMAN's aged hand then intimately presses against the cold glass of the window and traces the outline of Iris in the distance with her ringed finger.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Conscious of being admired, the back of Iris' head lowers and tilts to the side, (both her hands remain on the washing line having hung up the nightgown). She smiles modestly beneath blush-kissed cheeks.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Iris approaches the table holding the morning newspaper. She is surprised to see that Tom is absent from the table. She curiously approaches his seat to find a tea-stained white shirt on the table beside a spilt china teacup. Iris puts the paper down on the table and quickly lifts up the cup. She moves anxiously to kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

SIZZLING frying pan. Iris enters the kitchen but stops in her tracks at what she sees. The china cup drops from her hand to the floor SMASHING on the kitchen tiles around her shoes. She is oblivious to the broken cup. She moves towards the back door.

Behind Iris as she rushes towards the open back door, she hesitantly peeks around it to look into the garden. Iris' face completely distraught at what she sees.

In the garden, Tom bare-chested is tugging at a fresh white shirt on the washing line.

Iris turns from the door in dismay, she can't bear to look. A little lost, she walks slowly towards the cooker, she lifts a slice of popped toast from the toaster and puts it on a plate.

Close up of Iris' hand firmly CRACKING an egg into the hot frying pan, SIZZLE.

Iris' face in profile, violated and upset, as she cooks the egg. Tom enters the kitchen through the back door. He approaches Iris and plants a sweet kiss on the side of her cheek as he moves on into the main room.

Closer on Iris' face. Her eyes well up with tears, jaw clenches as she composes herself.

Iris's hand aggressively slicing the toast into soldiers on the plate. The cooked fried egg is added to the plate.

Iris' shoes marching through broken cup towards the main room.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Iris' shoes marching into the room, she stops walking when the table leg and Tom's shoes are revealed. Slow pan up from beneath

table, tray is heard being put down, as we move up above the table, Tom is seen dipping a soldier into his fried egg and eating happily. In background, Iris is seen in the kitchen, rushing past the wall window, in direction of back door.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Iris' hand desperately grasps the back door handle, pushing it down to open.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Behind a white vest on the washing line, wooden peg in focus, Iris rushes into the garden, BIRDS DISTRESSED, she runs out towards the vest on the line and frantically pulls it down, Iris' face revealed in a bewildered rage. We then track along behind the washing on the line as Iris pulls each item down.

Behind Iris as she pulls the penultimate item from the line, (another white shirt of Tom's). When the shirt is pulled down, MAUREEN is revealed standing on the other side of the fence in the neighbouring garden. Iris, oblivious to Maureen's presence, bends down to put the collection of washing in the washing basket at her feet. Iris then senses that she's being watched. She rises slowly, and as she turns her head to look over the fence, Maureen comes into focus (early 60's, tousled auburn hair and pale beautiful skin). Maureen stands motionless gazing at Iris. The women hold each others eyes.

Close up Maureen's face, looking at Iris with deep infatuation.

Close up Iris' face, looking at Maureen with deep infatuation.

From behind Iris' hand as it reaches out (slow motion) for the wrist of the nightgown that hangs on the line before her. We follow her hand as it seductively moves up the inside arm of the nightgown and brushes over the shoulder of it, towards the peg.

Maureen's head falls softly to her shoulder, as though touched by Iris.

Iris' trembling knuckles gripping tight around the peg, dew from washing line upon them, she loosens her grip and tentatively looks at Maureen. Iris then shuts her eyes, her fingers slowly disappear from the top of the nightgown.

Iris' fingers moving down towards and trembling over the bosom area of the gown.

Maureen's eyes wanting Iris, her chest rises with desire, camera slowly moves down her body to reveal her fingers and thumb on her right hand intimately caressing a yellow rose petal.

Iris' trembling fingers as they move down from bosom of the nightgown towards the crotch area.

Maureen breathless, her eyes close.

High-angle, behind and above Iris' head, Iris flicks her head back in complete ecstasy.

From the front, full body, low-angle, Iris falls to her knees. Cut to black.

(CRESCENDO OF SOUNDS: hearts beating, breathing, the wind, birds, touching fabric etc).

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. BACK GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

SILENCE

Iris' knees in the soil by the fence, her hand in the earth. Short of breath she gazes with anticipation through the fence. Moving behind Iris we see Maureen kneeling opposite her on the other side of the fence. Iris' soil-dusted hand nervously hovers close to the gap in the fence, Maureen's hand rises to meet it. The women's trembling fingers touch and intertwine together.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.