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OBLIQUE* THEATRE (OR A WRITING BRIEF)

Dramatis personae

OM (Oblique Motion)
OO (Oblique Order)
OL (Oblique Line)
OS (Oblique Shock)

The stage consists of two enormous verso/recto pages, slanted at a steep angle as though the stage (i.e. the "book") is about to be closed shut or is just being opened. The characters have fallen into the gutter and are struggling to extricate themselves by using various (linguistic) strategies and (more or less effective) tactics.

OM: I think we need to catch this blank terrain unawares. So maybe you three could vibrate in a line while I veer off in unexpected directions.

OO: No, no, we should push forth as one and by sheer strength of repetition obliterate all opposition in our path.

OL: You're all awry. We should create a slant, a type of ladder, and gradually attain some sort of edge.

OS: Or we could simply rock and vibrate ourselves into a frenzy until we create a shock wave that propels us out of here.

They all mumble and dither while pondering these options.

OO: I've always admired brute force. I mean, why are we in this if not to conquer?

OM: To offer alternatives? To stray form the standard path?

OS: Hmm, maybe, but there'll always be forces (like this interminable page) confronting us, trying to overpower or lead us askew.

OL: So we push our way through the mire at an angle.

In turn, they attempt OM's strategy. They fail. They attempt OS's strategy. They fail. They attempt OO's strategy. They fail. They attempt OL's strategy. They fail. Dejected, they slump further into the gutter.

OS: Let's take sharp turns.

OO: Let's make a fist.

OL: Let's go slanty.

OM: Let's stray.

Time passes. A minute. A few days. Some months. A year or two . . .

OL: What if we move, i.e. write, as though building a ziggurat?

OS: Been there, done that.

OM: In going from the synthesizer to the modulator, vocables jar like electricity.

OO: Is conflict a given? A bare necessity?

OM: In listening to the chaos, we become productive.

OS: Or at least reverberate into new patterns.

They look up to the far reaches of the stage in unison.

OL: In time, the architecture, i.e. the syntax, will become overgrown with foliage and vegetation, i.e. its music. We can see this as a new form of symbiosis . . .

OS: . . . a confluence of difference that . . .

OM: . . . we can scale to the upper . . .

OO: . . . edge and then jump off into . . .

ALL: . . . the unknown, i.e. exeunt.

*A brief foray into the standard definition (via Merriam-Webster) yields: neither perpendicular nor parallel, inclined (as adjective); not straightforward, indirect, or obscure (also as adjective, but more metaphorical); devious, underhanded (also adjective, but darker, more ominous); a line or a muscle or a slash (as noun). The idea of the slant and slanting, the askew, the awry and the crooked, the lopsided and the tilted, off-kilter. The oblique case (linguistics), oblique motion (music), oblique type (typography), oblique correction (particle physics), oblique order (military formation), oblique shock (gas dynamics). The "standard" turns out to be more convoluted, varied, inclined in several directions.