

Working version December 2023

On The Way Home | Return Sign

A Performative Piece by Danielle Cohen Levy

Inspired by Yoram Eshet Alkalai's autobiographical book **A Man Walks Home**

English Translation: Adi Drori

Premiered as part of Tmuna Theater's Small Movement Festival, Tel Aviv,
December 2023.

Written and directed by Danielle Cohen Levy | Created and performed by: Chen
Alon, Zvi Sahar, Yotam Einstein, David Cohen Levy, Danielle Cohen Levy | Artistic
advisors: Naomi Yoeli, Noa Nassie, Rotem Elroy | Stage manager and producer:
Dana Molcho Fisher

Working version, first English edition. December 2024

© All rights are reserved to Danielle Cohen Levy. November 2023

Dcl500500@gmail.com

Characters in order of appearance

Noga

Yoram

Nurse (The Snipe)

Dr. Ben Aroya

Edri (A Soldier)

Itzik (A Soldier)

Lecturer

Nurse Swissa (Male nurse)

Ami (Noga and Yoram's friend)

Therapist

Dr. Eliraz (Military Physician)

The Rabbi

On page 52 Yoram writes in the footnotes: "I took the freedom to step into the shoes of some of the characters in the book and speak on their behalf. Therefore, what is brought here under their name is not an exact record of conversations I had with them, but of my experience of these experiences". I took that freedom for myself as well, this is a story in which there is much truth.

Order of scenes

1. **In the New House** - Yoram, Noga
2. **Transition** - Nurse
3. **Rehabilitation begins** - Dr. Ben Aroya, Nurse, Yoram, Noga
4. **The War Begins** - Edri, Yoram, Itzik
5. **Transition** - Noga (Voice over)
6. **Entering the hospital** - Dr. Ben Aroya, Nurse, Yoram (Not speaking)
7. **The Land Layers** - Lecturer
8. **Captivity in the Hospital** - Noga, Nurse, Yoram (Not speaking)
9. **Oath** - Edri, Itzik, Yoram
10. **In the Car** - Noga, Yoram
11. **Emerging from the Darkness (The Leg)** - Nurse, Yoram
12. **Letters** - Yoram, Edri, Itzik
13. **Shaving** - Nurse, Yoram
14. **The Canal** - Edri, Yoram, Itzik
15. **Transition** - Yoram, Itzik, Noga, Edri
16. **Learning how to get Dressed** - Nurse, Yoram
17. **Home Alone** - Noga, Ami
18. **The Next Day** - Nurse, Yoram
19. **Before meeting Dad** - Noga

20. **Golda** - Nurse Swissa, Yoram, Nurse Snipe
21. **An Egyptian Soldier** - Yoram, Lecturer
22. **Learning to read** - Therapist, Yoram, Noga
23. **A Commando Force on the Way** - Edri, Yoram, Itzik
24. **Emerging From the Darkness (Arbel)** - Yoram
25. **Falling Asleep** - Noga, Yoram
26. **Transition** - Noga (Voice over), Edri, Itzik
27. **Injury** - Edri, Itzik, Dr. Eliraz
28. **I Hitched a Ride** - Noga
29. **A Rabbi and Geology** - Yoram, Rabbi, Noga, Itzik, Edri
30. **Emerging From the Darkness (After the Injury)** - Yoram
31. **Finding a way/Almost done** - Dr. Ben Aroya, Yoram (Not speaking)
32. **Transition** - Noga (Voice over)
33. **The Land Layers** - Lecturer
34. **In the Hospital after the War** - Yoram, Edri
35. **Progress** - Dr. Ben Aroya, Yoram, Noga, Nurse Snipe
36. **Emerging From the Darkness (Injury)**- Dr. Eliraz, Yoram, Noga
37. **In the Watchtower/On the Way Home** - Yoram
38. **Video Transition** - Noga (Voice Over)
39. **What Now** - Yoram, Noga

1. **In the New House**

(Darkness, in the background are old radio recordings from the War. A dramatic soundtrack of reports, battle sounds, coming from every direction, enveloping the space, closing in on it. A small light comes on and a voice is heard in the distance)

Noga Yoram, are you coming?

Yoram?

(The stage opens, Yoram stands in the center with his back to the audience, Noga moves freely throughout the space)

The bedroom is over there, this is the shower and here there's a door to a shared yard. The kitchen still needs a dining table, I was lucky with the fridge and oven, Ami heard of someone who was giving them and he called me right away. Next week he'll stop over to turn on our gas and help with the shelves.

Yoram What do we need that for?

Noga Shelves? For jars? I don't know...

Yoram We don't need all this, let's go home.

Noga (A pause) We can't.

Yoram Can't what?

Noga It's on the second floor.

Yoram We'll manage.

Noga I thought it would make you happy, it's even closer to the center. Don't you like it?

Yoram I don't know anything here.

Noga You just have to get used to it.

Yoram When did you manage to do all of this?

Noga Rimona from the Security Bureau helped me with money and everything to get us settled, Ami came with a truck to help buy and move everything here. Yesterday we also bought this desk for your books.

Yoram What books?

Noga For your studies, you start next week. Ami said that if you want, he can come help you get ready.

Yoram I don't want Ami's help.

Noga Do you want me to make you something to eat?

Yoram No.

Noga It took me some time too, but now I like it, there's so much light. *(With sudden joy)* Oh! And I didn't show you Arbel's room. He has his own room here! Look how cute his bed is. Yoram, are you coming?

(Yoram moves the blanket, searching)

Yoram Where is he?

- Noga** Who?
- Yoram** He's not here.
- Noga** Who, Arbel?
- Yoram** (Angry) Where is he?
- Noga** At kindergarten.
- Yoram** What kindergarten?
- Noga** ...Tami's Kindergarten.
- Yoram** He's...?
- Noga** He's nearly four.

2. **Transition**

Nurse (From outside) Yoram, are you coming?

(She enters with a wheelchair. Yoram looks at it, sits down)

3. **Rehabilitation begins**

(Noga listens, a Nurse and Dr. Ben Aroya are speaking over Yoram who is sitting in a wheelchair)

Dr. Ben Aroya Can he button his own pants?

Nurse No.

Dr. Ben Aroya Button up shirt sleeves?

Nurse No.

Dr. Ben Aroya Tie his shoelaces?

Nurse No.

Dr. Ben Aroya Sit down?

Nurse Yes.

Dr. Ben Aroya Walk by himself?

Nurse A little bit, with a cane.

Dr. Ben Aroya Eat by himself?

Nurse No.

Dr. Ben Aroya Defecate?

Nurse Only in a bedside commode.

Dr. Ben Aroya Urinate?

Nurse Yes. In a bottle.

Dr. Ben Aroya Speak?

Nurse Yes.

Dr. Ben Aroya Find his way? (The Nurse looks to Noga for the answer)

Noga ...I don't know. Will he be okay?

Dr. Ben Aroya It's hard to know at this point. Head injuries take time. They're sneaky injuries.

Noga How long?

Dr. Ben Aroya (To Yoram) Take your clothes off.

Yoram Me?

Dr. Ben Aroya Yes, take everything off. (To Noga) Wait outside.
Please keep your underwear on.

Yoram So far they've been dressing me. I can't –

Dr. Ben Aroya Try.
Go on.

(Yoram starts taking his clothes off, slowly, others beside him begin dressing in army uniforms)

4. The War Begins

(Edri, Itzik and Yoram, before crossing the channel)

Edri Yoram, are you coming? (Yoram quickly begins to dress in his uniform) Itzik says this war stinks.

Yoram All wars stink.

Itzik Silence is a recipe for disaster.

Edri I'd rather get a good recipe for fish! In the end this will be over before we get one shot out.

Itzik Shut up Edri! And get some batteries.

Yoram How did you not bring another pair?

Edri It was either that or another pair of socks.

Yoram You'll end up coming back with only one leg because of that. (Itzik spits)

Edri They'll probably send some over in the next round of packages.

Itzik Let them send over some food and ammunition first, batteries are last. Come on, it's already six o one. (He gestures to Edri who turns on the radio)

Radio *"...an expansive reserve force draft. So far, over six hundred soldiers have been killed in the battles -"*

Itzik Turn it off, turn it off, we're late. It's not good to hear that.

Edri Wait! Let us hear a bit more.

Itzik There's nothing to hear, I told you this war stinks.
(A siren sounds. Everyone runs off to take cover. Yoram looks up)

Edri Yoram, are you coming? (Darkness, bombing)

5. Transition

(Out of the darkness a small video screen turns on. Only its light is flickering, the image on it can't be seen, from the video plays a sound of waves and Noga's voice)

Noga *(Voice over) Yoram?*

6. Entering the hospital

Dr. Ben Aroya Patient number 10557

Name: Yoram Eshet, Date of arrival 18.10.73

23 years old, born in Israel, married, one child, a guide in the Natural Preservation Society, Reserve soldier, left handed. Are you writing this down?

Nurse Yes.

Dr. Ben Aroya (Dictating as he checks) An X-ray of the chest cavity showed shrapnel in the center of the back, on the left a deep and irregular wound, crushed fracture in the left limb. In an X-ray of the skull multiple bone fragments were found reaching up to the midline, a 10 cm long open wound, exposed bone fragments and necrotic brain drain.

The patient is vaguely conscious, reacts to painful stimuli, responds in single words, disoriented, in psychomotor restlessness.

Nurse Yoram, can you hear me?

7. **The Land Layers**

Lecturer We must think of the land in layers. Each layer signifies a time period. Not a horizontal axis, but a depth axis. Imagine a slice of cake. Each layer bears witness to a story. This is where there was a

flood, here the land eroded, here there was a volcanic eruption while here the earth cracked and the layers of time collapsed into one another and you can no longer differentiate what came before and what came later.

For further reading contact

Dcl500500@gmail.com