

*Lessening the Blows*

(for 2 or more players)

One child waits in the waiting room. Another child sits in the well-lit room & speaks into the microphone. The speakers in the waiting room distort the second child's voice into screeches. The first child holds his head in the parentheses of his hands. The second child continues speaking into the microphone & in the waiting room the voice is indecipherable.

Occasionally the light flickers. Mechanical beds thrum on the other side of the double-doors & the first child looks up to see if the door opens.

The second child must continue reading until he reaches the end of the script. Then he drinks a plastic cup of water & begins the script again.

The script begins: *Have hope. Have hope. Your waiting is almost done.*

*Tail End Charlie*

(for 4 or more players)

The night before they go in behind enemy lines the children write their names on their chests with permanent markers. They write their names on their shoes with grease paint. They carve hearts into the plaster beside their beds & cram them full of initials.

The children fall asleep repeating their names to themselves. They discover new names inside their names. The new names are the names their ghosts will have. They knot little nooses of dental floss around the names & tie them to their pinkies.

The machine gun bursts splashes in the sand, as if flaying it with whips. The sky is so blue that someone will have to give it a name like Tom or Beginning. One of the children finds that his gun is made of ice. Another child finds that his gun is made of dried dirt. A third child finds that he is the gun & he cannot stop killing. In Pittsburgh the children are burning the federal buildings tonight.

*Pop Goes the Weasel*

(for 4 children & an audience of voters)

One child must come from a family that sleeps in the caves. One child must come from a family that sleeps underground. One child finds a hollow tree & fills it with the stuffed animals he steals from the supermarket trash bins. One child bites into a doughnut & breaks his front teeth on a piece of sea glass. The children decide which child is it & the It child must run for president.

The It child walks into crowds of thousands, shaking hands with all the men & kissing the cheeks of all the women & rubbing perfumed oils on the foreheads of the babies. He must appear on TV & pretend like there is no camera in the room. He says words & then some of the members of the audience of voters repeat the words. Other members of the audience of voters go home & rewire their radios.

When the It child is assassinated backstage after a speech the other children write books about the It child. They appear on radio talk shows & discuss the mystery of the It child. They drop a bucketful of pennies into the dryer & listen to them clatter.