

You are where you are (2004)

Text by Yann Martel

Music by Omar Daniel

At the Office

At the Supermarket

At the Travel Agent

At the Voting Booth

At the Church

'You are where you are' is a series of vignettes depicting the undoing of an ordinary man by seemingly ordinary events. Simple daily tasks take on an ominous (or humorous?) tone as we witness the man unable to cope with simple decisions: everything seems to be beyond his control. A visit to a travel agent or voting booth results in paralysis; shopping becomes an exercise in cell phone futility; the office telephone is a source of panic, and sitting in church has the air of despair and hopelessness.

I always thought of this song cycle as a miniature opera/oratorio: the text is rooted in the convoluted drama of a single dramatic protagonist. On the surface, the tone of the drama might be interpreted as comic. But, the humour is disturbing in that we are smiling as we witness the psychological disintegration of this man. And, perhaps it is possible that the events do not exist at all, except as faded, disjunct recollections...

'You are where you are' was commissioned by the ARC ensemble, with the generous financial assistance of the Ontario Arts Council.

O. Daniel