RUMOR BECOMES A LINE (MOTHERS’ DAY)

after the poem “!” by Anne Simpson

Yasmina Rossi in Mothers’ Day (2009)

The remains of a film script
Men go to War because it is the only thing that makes them look serious. It is the one thing that stops women from laughing at them.

—John Fowles from The Magus

SFX:
Water lapping

The Mythological Greek Queen Hekuba murdered her son's killer, The King of Thrace. For her crime the gods turned her into a black dog.

CASTLE DAWN:
on the flagstone floor Hekuba's feet echo waves

Hekuba flings the shutters of her room open

SFX: A WAR CRY . . .

her cry becomes the howling and barking of a dog.
RUMOR BECOMES A LINE (MOTHERS’ DAY)

Yasmina Rossi in Mothers’ Day

Boy-Toy digitally altered product
A black dog barking into Hekuba's eye

*whimpering* *sniffing*—*barking furiously*

Hekuba stares at the calm,

SFX: *muffled roar of marching*

_Oars in and out of water_

Child's laughter

Soldiers' boots on the beach

Bloody

Empty

Boots

landing

on a sandcastle

Hekuba crowned

Greek ships bob.

On waves

A girl's screech (yelp of fun)

Another time on a grassy cliff

A child queen frolicking . . .

at the edge

naked

she leaps off of the cliff

splash

treading water.

smiling . . .

grinning ear to ear

not even imagining

Miniature soldiers

on a beach

plastic warriors

in the palm of a Queen's hand
the girl flung her white robes away before she leapt
they landed elsewhere
on the edge of white shrouds.

Blood-stained parcels dumped on a grey beach

SFX: military fanfare

Hekuba trembling at her window
over her shoulder a ship edges onto the horizon

old hands place the crown on her head old hands place the crown on her head old hands place the crown on her head

and she smiles

her smile disappears.

soldiers marching

on a sunny, beautiful beach.

Priam (a king) appears behind Hekuba

his hand on her shoulder tenderly

her face terror

Remember . . .

The girl queen screaming as she leapt into the water.

Priam takes what he needs
Hekuba stares at nothing
Blackening clouds

SFX: Priam’s grunts become the sounds of battle filling the beach

SFX: War cries bruises

A toy soldier has a spear through its chest

SFX: silence.
Waves lapping children’s voices

A caged soldier screams
A woman’s scream

Fallen toy soldiers in pools of blood
black dogs licking scarlet pools

A Queen ravaged

Ships bobbing in water

Blood stained water lapping at heels
Rushing back and forth
A Queen stumbling through granite
Falling falling falling falling    fallen
overhead

Hekuba
stands    with her back to the shutters

Priam’s hand touches her

SFX Intake of breath    intake of breath    intake of breath

On the beach
The Queen has    a toy soldier in the palm of her hand

Shutters
shut from the outside

Blood
seeping through the shutters

A black dog
    on a beach
sniffing pulling    at a taut leash

Hand releasing the leash

SFX: water lapping

A city street
A black dog appears
and    disappears amidst a sea of commuters

SFX: exaggerated marching sounds
a dog licking water    a girl screaming in delight
DIRECTOR’S NOTES: In the film *Mothers’ Day* (2009), I set out to do a brief motion picture sketch of the subjective image that exists in an audience’s mind when a character (often a woman) melodramatically closes windows or doors behind her back. The intimate space between the door and the character’s back and hands that we never actually see intrigued me. Somehow the image of those hands is present in the mind because of cinema’s powerful influence on the psyche. Near the end of production I came across the actual roots of the holiday now celebrated as Mother’s Day and it helped complete the story.

Founded by mothers who had lost their sons in the United States civil war “Mother’s Day for Peace” was initiated with a proclamation written by Julia Ward Howe also author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. Originally observed as a call to peace it was celebrated as such for thirty years until commercial enterprise started lobbying the government. Organizations like the Florists Association stated that “this was a day that could be exploited” and in 1914 Woodrow Wilson officially changed the holiday to “Mother’s Day” honoring Mothers without any reference to peace.