

CUT TO:

INT. AN OPEN WOUND, DAY, CONTINUOUS.

WHIPPED open a fraction of a second before the cut. With the cut. In that very instant. A RIDE CYMBAL receding. The afterimage of a departing blade; a memory of TAUT skin now slackened, SURRENDERED. The first bead of blood SWELLING beneath a flimsy meniscus, giving way to a tiny SPATE of too-dark blood. A trickle. An arterial PUMPING just visible in the DRIFT, now diminishing. Signs of mechanics OFFSCREEN. On closer inspection of the wound: a surprisingly RAGGED lip – bashed-in cells, FRAYED particles etc. – around a LAGOON of red. Twigs of tissue floating, BUFFETED by the tide. A tiny archipelago of MATTER as flotsam KEELING over the edge towards... The whole thing like a hot spring only slower. A tar pit, maybe – the thought of subsequent COAGULATION. Perhaps magma, SCABBING slightly already, glimpsed DISTORTED through heat haze – celluloid BUCKLING – filmed in OMINOUS SLO-MO. VIGNETTED. Something drowning in there – drowning and burning at the same time. The SURGING HISS of steam, then:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STROKKUR GEYSER, ICELAND, NIGHTTIME, CONTINUOUS.

ERUPTING at the moment of the CUT – inside the CUT – the CUT transformed from void into GUSHING fissure. Wet, BOILING celluloid. Steam. The scene illuminated by a quad of halogen site lights, each gelled in BLOOD-RED. In the centre – from inside the EXCLAMATION of water – a WHITE STROBE PULSES, intermittently FREEZING, capturing the image of an icy tree trunk, POLLARDED, in winter. Or a wet, monochromatic firework, animated on a ground of BLOOD-RED. Or a VAST white crystal, growing at a terrifying, TIME-LAPSED rate. WET, SQUELCHY BASS ritualises this, through references to BLACK, DOOM, SLUDGE, DIRGE metal; geological SCRAPING, CHIPPING – tectonic movements understood solely in this projection. As the last BLURTS of water SLAP back against the surrounding rock – exposing the STROBE, perched on a tripod straddling the cleft – the BASS distorts, dry again, and:

CUT TO:

EXT. A COPSE OF BLACK MAPLE, CANADA, NOON, CONTINUOUS.

Dark sap SPURTS out of a metal flue protruding from a black maple tree. Too THICK to sound. Slowing to a HEAVY trickle, then a dribble, then a quiet rhythm of drips. Caught by a battered bucket beneath. Someone whistling OFFSCREEN. Something TUNELESS, hackneyed. Through teeth, no-doubt broken. Whisky hanging stale and LEADEN on the breath. An ELDERLY tremolo. A KICK drum forces out another SPOUT of sap, landing with a TAP of HI-HAT in the bucket. The spigot like a CATHETER. Sap like PISS from a desperate, DEHYDRATED bladder. Tart, not sweet. Whistling transforms into HUMMING, a voice: UN AMOUR SI GRAND QU'IL NIE SON OBJET by Ghédalia Tazartès. An incredible DISLODGING. A PARCHED throat CREAKING like the concertina joint in a drinking straw. Again, the scene DRY UP. This for at least a MILLION fucking YEARS, til sap becomes amber.

SNAP TO BLACK