Diplopia
FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Two, mud-covered, wading boots, walk, limping through a thick haze.

A hand pushes at bare branches, clearing a path.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

An old, time-worn, houseboat sits aground in what used to be a river. On its stern, BOO, 6, rolls a pant cuff up, drops a foot down, pretending to immerse it in water.

Behind him, His mother, TITUBA, 28 and pregnant, smiles.

TITUBA
Child, whatchu doin'?  

BOO
Fishin'.

TITUBA
Is you ... ?

Boo flicks his wrist -- pretends to cast a line.

TITUBA
You ain't gonna like whatchu catch.

Tituba looks at the dry river bed, examining it.

TITUBA
Not in this river.

She sees something, shrinks back, stiffens.

TITUBA
Boy, get up!

She grabs the back of Boo's shirt, lifting him.

BOO
Momma!

TITUBA
You best stop pretendin'!

She looks back at the river bed. It's filled, if only for a moment, with water -- a body, purple and bloated, floats toward the boat.
EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The boots stop, turn. A bucket is lifted.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tituba stands, holding open Boo's left eye.

    TITUBA
    Sometimes the right can't see what
    the left can.

    BOO
    But, momma, I didn't see nothin'.

    TITUBA
    No water?

Boo shakes his head.

    BOO
    No, momma.

Tituba nods in the direction of a back room.

    TITUBA
    You get now.

LATER

Tituba sits, legs crossed, holding her belly.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - DAY

Boo's at a window, holding a hand over one eye.

    BOO
    Momma?

Tituba, at a stove, cracks an egg, depositing it into a pan.

    BOO
    Momma, what might my left eye see?

    TITUBA
    Hush.

    BOO
    But momma ...
TITUBA
What?

BOO
I'm thirsty.

EXT. SHED - DAY
A garden hose winds around the lopsided wood structure.

Behind it, NOCK, 80, stands -- filling a bucket. He looks at the houseboat. He has but one eye, its pupil a dead, milky white.

NOCK
It'll float.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - DAY
Boo, at a table, sits across from Tituba, eating.

BOO
I didn't see daddy. If that's what you thought.

TITUBA
Boy, I don't want you thinkin' 'bout that man.

BOO
Momma, where is he?

TITUBA
He drown.

BOO
But ain't no water. Ain't never been water.

TITUBA
Was when you was little.

BOO
Did you make it go away?

TITUBA
Boy, eat your food.
EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Nock, bucket in hand, mumbles. His words, a bizarre frenzy of indistinct sounds.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tituba sits, as if listening. She moves to a window, slides it open.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Water splashes from the bucket onto Nock’s wading boots as he pushes past bushes and branches.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tituba’s at the window, rubbing her belly.

TITUBA
You can't have this one either! You hear?!

She moves to the:

BACK BEDROOM

Boo's on the floor moving toy cars about -- mumbling like Nock.

TITUBA
Child, whatchu doin'?

BOO
Playin'.

TITUBA
Pretendin'. That's whatchu doin'.

She picks up his toys, takes them.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - DAY

Boo hands Tituba a folded cardboard box.

BOO
Why we movin'?
TITUBA
Baby, we can't stay here no more.
Ain't safe, never was.

EXT. STERN - NIGHT
Boo stands, peeing off the back of the boat.

EXT. RIVERBED - NIGHT
Nock pours the bucket of water onto the dry river bed.

EXT. STERN - NIGHT
Boo, still urinating, looks at the mud-colored ground. The image shifts, jumps left, changes. The river is full, still.

BOO
Momma...

He turns his head. His left hand covers his left eye.

BOO
Momma, it's not the left eye, it's the right.

TITUBA
Boy, you close that eye!

BOO
But momma, it's back. The water's back. Can't you see it?

TITUBA
Ain't no water!

BOO
There's a man. It's --

Tituba grabs Boo's hand, pulling it away from his face. The river, again, is dry.

BOO
It was daddy.

TITUBA
Ain't your daddy!

BOO
He's alive!
TITUBA
He my brother. And he dead.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT
Tituba ties Boo's hands together.

TITUBA
You got it. You got the eye. We all do. But you got it most ... Got it from your daddy.

BOO
Momma -

TITUBA
He pure evil. Black magic.

BOO
Momma, you gonna leave me here?

Tituba pulls a length of packing tape, wraps it around Boo's head, covering his eyes.

TITUBA
No, baby.

BOO
I'm scared.

TITUBA
Can't nobody hurt you.

She reaches back, grabs a knife off the table.

TITUBA
Not if ya can't see.

She examines the knife's point.

BOO
I love you, momma.

TITUBA
I love you, too, baby.

She places one hand on his head, the other on his back.

TITUBA
Lay down.
BOO
Why?

TITUBA
Do as I say, now.

He lays back.

TITUBA
I'm gonna take this tape off.

BOO
Thank you, momma.

TITUBA
When I do, I don't want you openin'
that eye. You got that?

BOO
Yes, momma.

TITUBA
You keep still.

She drops down, places the full weight of her body on his.

BOO
Momma, you hurtin' me.

She starts to remove the tape that's wrapped around his head,
covering his eyes.

TITUBA
You needs to know who your real
daddy is. It ain't T.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT (FLASHBACK) - DAY

T, twenty-four, sits on the stern, fishing with two year-old
Boo.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tituba pulls the last of the tape from Boo's eyes, they blink
open. Boo sees the knife in Tituba's hand, and beyond it, a
man, T, stick thin and sallow -- drenched in river water.

TITUBA
Boy, I done told you keep that eye
shut!
BOO
But momma, I saw him. He here.

Tituba whips her head around.

TITUBA
You ain’t his daddy!
(to Boo)
Where he be?

Boo covers his left eye.

BOO
He in the chair.

Tituba jumps up, moves to the chair, drives the knife into the seat cushion.

TITUBA
You already dead!

Nock enters, drops the now empty bucket -- stands in the door frame.

NOCK
I ain’t.

He winks his one eye.

NOCK
C’mere, son.

BOO
Grandpa?

Nock shakes his head.

NOCK
I is your daddy.

BOO
No, you’re momma’s daddy.

NOCK
Her’s too, boy, and T’s.

He looks at T who sits, unharmed.

NOCK
My first born.

T moves to Tituba.
TITUBA
Baby, you can make him go away.

T unzips his pants.

TITUBA
If you don’t look, T can’t be. You’re the youngest, the baby. The last born son. You gots the double vision.

She pushes the knife, sending it across the room to Boo.

He picks it up.

TITUBA
Do it. Cut it out. End it.

Boo picks up the knife, looks at it, trembles.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

The boat floats down stream.

FADE OUT.