

Shadow Tag, an evening of disturbance.

Part Two of the Trilogy *Topography*.

The first play in this triptych, *Circles of Light*, was produced at the Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York City in June, 2003.

By Dr. Temi Rose

Introduction

This play is dedicated to Lisa Steinberg who was the victim of two educated, perhaps even intellectual parents who abused her to death.

Dear Ones, Freedom is a creative act. There is nothing "natural" about freedom, except that our need for freedom arises naturally from an awareness of the ease with which others enslave us. Freedom is a work of art, like Notre Dame, but free from the limitations of time and space, a cathedral we build collaboratively to reflect the longing that drives us towards realizing something we know can be real. Lisa was too little to be able to create freedom for herself and those charged with her health and welfare interpreted their freedom as self-indulgence, irresponsible and destructive. This work for Lisa and Freedom, may they one day meet and create in the peace they so dearly deserve to experience.

Isaiah Berlin made a distinction between freedom-from and freedom-to and from this distinction he derived an ethical paradigm. Freedom from oppression is a first stage, a socio-political equivalent of Abraham Maslow's person-centered concept of a basic need. Concepts of freedom could and should and often do extend beyond freedom-from to creative thoughts. Plans and deeds that create progressively more satisfying intra- and inter-personal futures - satisfy socio-political higher needs, specifically our desire to be free enough to experiment with and experience our becoming; our freedom to create the world in our image comes with the realization that we are already doing so.

And, is there a viable basis for exciting plot structure that is not based on revenge and polarity thinking? Plots could derive dynamism from character liberation journeys. These experiences are inherently dramatic and conflictive, even occasionally competitive. The purpose driving the characters can be self-responsibility and personal power not power-over others. Humiliation, the subjugation of others is not winning. People who participate in humiliating others have descended into a Dantesque hell in which further descents are more likely than possible ascents to any imagined or longed for halcyon.

There is one essential stage production note - The commotion is continuous. Any time there is a lull, a stillness, a silence, it must stick out like a sore thumb. In this context then, will stillness and silence signify times of great import. Again: Commotion is the norm, punctuated by significant moments of stillness and silence.

With regard to casting - My intention is that the angels, the women and the couples are all opposites along a particular value scheme. For instance, one angel might be tall, the other short. One member of a couple might be heavy and the other thin, etc. different genders do not count in this sense. I tried to write the play so that any gender and any race could play any role. Some pronouns might need to be altered here and there but the names of the characters should not change.

The play takes place in the late 1980's in an apartment in Manhattan.

The play requires three directors of activity: a traditional director responsible for the overall production values and for coordinating all activities and of course responsible for the interpretation of the script for the actors; a choreographer responsible for the actions of the angels, for the baby's movements and all acts of violence between He & She; and a director with experience with sign language and theater to work with the deaf actors.

The deaf actors improvise throughout. The nature of their improvisation can be determined by each production. The actual lines and stage directions for the deaf actors is not even a tenth of the work they must do onstage. Our first production, at the Ensemble Studio Theatre in the summer of 2004 was blessed with Alexandria Wailes, Hillary Heard, and Guthrie Nutter who together created the deaf actors as parents to He, weaving their stage lives into the flow of the whole.

All the actors in the original cast helped develop this play and I include their names here to honor them and their shared heartfelt creativity.

Characters in order of Appearance and the Original Cast

Angel 1: Quick witted and graceful. *Todd Parmley*

Angel 2: Poetic and strong. *Rahsan-Rahsan*

She: Hardworking, delicate and very sad. *Marina Lutz*

Old Woman: Deaf. Lively. *Alexandria Wailes and Hillary Heard*

Old Man: Deaf. Mellow. *Guthrie Nutter*

He: Handsome. Strong. Touchy. *Mark DeLaBarre*

Baby: A role for an adult mime. *Elena Bayrock*

Woman One: Elegant and emotionally intelligent/aware. *Lucy McMichael*

Woman Two: Appealing. Tender. Energetic. Funny. *Stephanye Dussud*

Act One/Part One: Who's on first?

I. I Scene 1: Aperitif

Act one opens with the angels playing with a basketball or a baseball or with both at once, sport jugglers, working with two types of balls. They accentuate, punctuate, extend, elucidate and illuminate their words with their ball-playing actions and strategies. They are enjoying themselves, relaxing, loosening up.

Who's on First? by Abbott and Costello (abridged)

Angel 1 (A1): I'm going to New York. The Yankee manager gave me a job as coach for as long as you're on the team.

Angel 2 (A2): If you're the coach, you must know all the players.

A1: I certainly do.

A2: Well you know I've never met them. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing with me on the team.

A1: Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players nowadays very peculiar names.

A2: You mean funny names?

A1: Strange names, pet names... Well, let's see, we have Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know on third...

A2: That's what I want to find out.

A1: Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third.

A2: You gonna be the coach?

A1: Yes.

A2: And you don't know the players' names.

A1: Well I should.

A2: Well then who's on first?

A1: Yes.

A2: I mean the player's name.

A1: Who.

A2: The guy on first.

A1: Who.

A2: The first baseman.

A1: Who.

A2: The player playing...

A1: Who is on first!

A2: I'm asking you who's on first.

A1: That's the player's name.

A2: That's who's name?

A1: Yes.

A2: Well go ahead and tell me.

A1: That's it.

A2: That's who?

A1: Yes.

(pause)

A2: Look, you gotta first baseman?

A1: Certainly.

A2: Who's playing first?

A1: That's right.

A2: When you pay off the first baseman every month, who gets the money?

A1: Every dollar of it.

A2: All I'm trying to find out is the player's name on first base.

A1: Who.

A2: The player that gets...

A1: That's it.

A2: Who gets the money...

A1: He does, every dollar of it. Sometimes his wife comes down and collects it.

A2: Who's wife?

A1: Yes. What's wrong with that?

A2: Look, all I wanna know is when you sign up the first baseman, how does he sign his name?

A1: Who.

A2: The guy.

A1: Who.

A2: How does he sign...

A1: That's how he signs it.

A2: Who?

A1: Yes.

(pause)

A2: All I'm trying to find out is what's the guy's name on first base.

A1: No. What is on second base.

A2: I'm not asking you who's on second.

A1: Who's on first.

A2: One base at a time!

A1: Well, don't change the players around.

A2: I'm not changing nobody!

A1: Take it easy.

A2: I'm only asking you, who's the guy on first?

A1: That's right.

A2: Ok.

A1: All right.

(pause)

A2: What's the guy's name on first base?

A1: No. What is on second.

A2: I'm not asking you who's on second.

A1: Who's on first.

A2: I don't know.

A1: She's on third, we're not talking about her.

A2: Now how did I get on third base?

A1: You mentioned her.

A2: I mentioned the third baseman's name. Who did I say is playing third?

A1: No. Who's playing first.

A2: What's on base?

A1: What's on second.

A2: I don't know.

A1: She's on third.

A2: There I go, back on third again!

(pause)

A2: Look, you gotta outfield?

A1: Sure.

A2: The left fielder's name?

A1: Why.

A2: I just thought I'd ask you.

A1: Well, I just thought I'd tell ya.

A2: Then tell me who's playing left field.

A1: Who's playing first.

A2: Stay out of the infield!!! I want to know what's the player's name in left field?

A1: No, What is on second.

A2: I'm not asking you who's on second.

A1: Who's on first!

A2: I don't know.

Together: Third base!

(full text can be found at <http://rob.kogan.com/>)

While the Angels do the routine - She is making dinner and setting the table. Old Woman(OW) and Old Man (OM) are doing the same routine in sign language with one

another. Generally, OW translates A1 and OM translates A2. Baby is in her crib. W2 has been an usher and is minding the main aisle.

Blackout

I.I Scene 2: Taster's Choice

Lights up to full on the apartment. She is quietly readying dinner and the old couple are chatting about the weather. "Do you think it will rain today?" He comes in the apartment suddenly, throws down his hat and briefcase. She wipes her hands on her half apron and walks over to him. He strides past her, throws himself on the couch, puts his feet up, closes his eyes.

He: Get me a drink.

She quickly reverses direction, goes back to the kitchen to make an old-fashioned-movie-type martini, complete (replete) with metal shaker, martini glass, olive. She brings him the martini, careful not to spill. If the actress does spill, she must look momentarily panic stricken. In any case, she delivers the martini. He opens his eyes and looks at her, at the drink, then at the table and she places the drink carefully on the coffee table. Operative adverb is carefully. She returns to the kitchen. The old couple are playing a board game or a card game. They are enjoying themselves. He slowly sits up, sips his martini thoughtfully. Dinner is served. She takes off her apron. They sit at the table. Each eats. He eats normally. She eats carefully.

A2 (from offstage somewhere in the audience, thinking out loud): Every act is a moral act.

A1: (to the old couple): Bad things happen to good people means that karma isn't a single arithmetical cosmic procedure. At the very least, co-signage must be involved. If we take the party of the first part and divide her by the party of the second part and share the remainder with everyone else then what will we have left? (The old couple agree)

The next section: concurrently: the old couple sign/translate as He and She speak. OM signs what He says. OW signs what She says. They also sign other people's words and things they hear and comments on what they hear, add-libbed or worked out in rehearsal, according to the interests of the actors and their directors.

She: It was raining. I wish it were still raining. I like the sound of the rain. (She keeps talking while he berates her with the following. The illusion is as if He is speaking out loud and She is speaking what's going on inside her head)

<p>She: I thought the reason that he didn't seem to love me, that he didn't seem able, that he seemed unable, to love me, to be kind to me, to exhibit compassion, anyway, I thought it was because I was not lovable.</p> <p>He neglected me for so long. When he decided to love me it was too late. I had already learned how to live alone. Inside myself. Some days I hate myself. Some days I like myself, I never like him. Sometimes when I'm hot, he looks good to me: luscious, mouth watering, then we play our mating game, a bottle of beer, a joint, a pathetic pleading look or two, then we do it, make it, have each other. And it's all over in a spasm. He never looks happy when he's having sex.</p> <p>Could I make this man happy?</p> <p>Once he said he'd like to see me dead.</p> <p>Sometimes I think of loving. Of opening my eyes. Of feeding on charged air. Of moving in unison. Sometimes I dream. Dreams of wretched violence, dismemberment. I throw a wrench at your head. You blink I miss you by an inch.</p> <p>I can see my heart, there is a hole this big where you chewed me up.</p>	<p>He: When are you going back to work?</p> <p><i>pause, as if he hears an answer to his question</i></p> <p>Why don't you stop biting your nails? It's a revolting habit.</p> <p><i>pause, as if he hears an answer to his question and comment</i></p> <p>How can you stand yourself?</p> <p><i>another similar pause</i></p> <p>I told you: get your fingers out of your mouth!</p> <p><i>(She does)</i></p> <p>Sometimes I wonder if there's anything inside you. Are you all surface? You eat. You shit. I put food in you and it comes out again.</p> <p>I had other lovers. Before I knew you.</p> <p>I hate this fucking place. You never make anything good to eat. You're always on a diet. Your ass is getting bigger. You're going to end up looking like your mother.</p> <p>You do this deliberately. You make yourself desirable and stupid. God, are you stupid. Never anything half human to say.</p> <p>Your unconscious hates me</p>
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He slaps her face and then yanks her hand away from her mouth and kisses her on the mouth, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, and pushes her back towards the

kitchen where she puts herself back to cleaning the dishes and talking to the wall cf. Shirley Valentine. The old couple and the angels are attentive to the moments of violence.

She (*to the audience*): I like sex. I like the excitement of it. I like to feel whole and connected. I like that. Sweat. My muscles tense. And release. If I can come before he stops or before I have to become careful. If he's too excited sometimes he can hurt me. He doesn't mean to, of course he doesn't mean --

He (*overlapping*): -- Aren't you done yet?

She: Just a minute.

He: I'm ready. Hurry up.

He has been turning off lamps. When he gets near the old couple they stare at each other, caught between wonder, fear and loathing. At last He breaks the staring and goes into the kitchen. He touches her gently, strokes her, carefully takes off her apron and then, seductively, her dress. During this, the old couple watches the young couple as if it were a soap opera. They might even discuss what's going on in sign language but no one translates their dialogue. The lights go to a soft darkness while He and She have sex on the kitchen floor. At the same time, the two angels sit on the couch in circles of stage light, having the following conversation:

A1: One time he came in, slapped her and then they went at it. Just like that.

A2: Disgusting.

A1: Why do you have to be so judgmental?

A2: Oh, here we go --

A1 (*overlaps*): Oh, yeah, here we are again because you never listen, do you?

A2 (*overlaps*): Because, yeah, what's the point of listening to the same shit over and over again?

A1: Because I am going to keep saying it til you hear me..

A2: But if I hear you on this then I will be obliged to listen to you about all the other shit that you think is wrong with me. And you don't even know how wrong you are.

A1 (*self-satisfied*): Exactly. (*pause*) I can't remember what I was going to say. (*A2 leans back and smiles, looking satisfied*) I'm feeling irritated. I'm not supposed to get irritated.

A2: Aw, poor you. You don't like to lose.

A1: I didn't lose.

A2: Right.

A1: I just forgot what I was going to say. I'm getting old.

A2: Bullshit. Angels don't get old.

A1: I wish you wouldn't swear so much.

A2: Oh Christ.

A1: Stop that.

A2: Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ....

A1 (*overlaps*): Stop. Shut up. (*and any other expletives that aren't curse words*)

The angels' argument turns into a wrestling match on the couch; they go over the back of the couch, end up on the floor, knocking things over... all the while, He and She are having sex on the kitchen floor and the set has gradually gone to black except for a flickering light coming from the tv set the old couple are watching. Suddenly there is the sound of a baby crying shrilly. Lights become quite bright as all the apartment lights come on at once. Everyone looks up, startled. He looks angry. She looks worried. The angels untangle themselves, straighten the furniture and look abashed. She looks towards the baby who can't be seen from onstage but the audience can see the baby who is hungry, wet and tangled in her bedclothes, crying desperately for help. She tries to go to the baby. He stops her.

He: No. She has to learn to comfort herself.

Blackout

I.I Scene 3: DamnNation

Overlapping with the blackout so that there is only a brief silence between I.I Scene 2 and I.I Scene 3:

A2: It's not really sex.

A1: Sure it is.

A2: No, I don't think it is.

A1: If it's all wet and sticky, it's sex, trust me.

A2: Because you're so fucking experienced?

Lights come up on the angels kneeling and squinting up into the lights, trying to appear beatific and at the same time restless and bored of waiting and searching the heavens for god. They have wings and are dressed in angel clothes. They are in heaven, on a cloud.

A1: Oh here we go again. Can't you communicate without cursing?

A2 (*singing*): It's a fucking long way to Tipperary.. the ants go fucking marching one by one ... (*as if taking an oath*) we, angels, are an army of goodness, soldiers on a perpetual march, the fucking servants of the fucking lord. The eternal flame. And it's not really sex if nothing comes of it.

A1: Oh, I see: this is an argument for breeding. The human animal has to procreate blah blah blah.

A2: No, you idiot. I didn't mean children of the flesh.

A1: What other children are there?
 A2: Never mind. You are just never going to get this.
 A1: Try me.
 A2: I am having trouble trusting you.
 A1: Our relationship has been going through a change.
 A2: I was hoping we could be real partners but partners can't afford to have secrets and counterplots. Partners can't be out for numero uno --
 A1 and A2 (*together, but A1 making fun of A2, they've been through this before*) -- they must have a sense of the whole.
 A1: It doesn't matter. I know you don't really love me. Anymore.
 A2: When you have a face like an angel, maybe you don't need to really be an angel.
 A1: What's that supposed to mean? Are you saying I'm just a pretty face?
 A2: Well, beauty is a kind of courage. We have a lot of trouble communicating.
 A1: We would communicate a lot better if you weren't an inarticulate.
 A2: An inarticulate? What are you talking about?
 A1: You swear too much. You get too excited. You are like a runaway horse all the time. A horse with a really foul mouth.
 A2: Give it a rest.
 A1: Formality and distance are prerequisites for a reasonable conversation.
 A2: Formality and distance are preliminaries to war.

The angels are still on their knees, hands in prayer position, waiting for god who hasn't shown up yet. During the following they get up and brush themselves off, maybe take off their angel regalia and get rid of the clouds and help return the set to the apartment.

A2: He's not fucking showing up.
 A1: You're probably right.
 A2: Depressing.

He enters the crib and stalks Baby who tries to avoid him. He taunts her by threatening to take her teddy bear. She doesn't see what's happening in the crib..

<p>Baby (<i>repeats til the others are finished with their speeches</i>): Leave me alone. Leave me alone. Leave me alone. Leave me alone.</p>	<p>She (<i>to the angels and the audience</i>): "I sit here on the perfect end of a star." That's what he said to me before the first time he raped me. He was quoting. From a poet. I didn't really know I was being raped. I had heard that sex was painful: this was painful. I had heard that love hurt: this hurt. It all made sense. The pain. The hurt. When I was a little girl, people told me that the earth was round, like a ball, they said, "Like a ball." And I looked up and saw that the sky was like the inside of a sphere so I thought that we were on the inside of the ball</p>
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fascists because they're fascists. Maybe we came to associate cruelty, suffering and pain with love. Maybe that was the tree of knowledge. When you realize what is lost and what is gained in any given interaction between people – you will one day, learn to do the math, the new math. The math of absolutely corrupt power. The fetish of power.

He (*to She as she exits the crib. She ignores him*): You made me feel like a man but then when I became a man, you no longer loved me.

He and She re-enter the main stage area walk across it and exit to their bedroom. A2 is reading a magazine. A1 is pacing.

A1: Well, people are depressed these days. The stock market, republicans, the lack of a general, socially cohesive value system.

A2: Electricity, running water, food in cans, frozen and zip locked. For heaven's sake - what could people possibly have to be depressed about?

A1: They want to be happy.

A2: Oh. That. People died building the great bridges. Why is it unreasonable to expect people to suffer, even die building interpersonal bridges?

A1: Sure. But we're already dead. They're in the process, you know, dying. It's different.

A2: You are a statistical improbability.

A1: Now, why would you say a thing like that?

A2: I'm reading it. Here. In this. It says that they did a study and angels are a statistical improbability.

A1: Let me see that.

A1 grabs the magazine from A2, glances through the article then starts flipping through the pages.

A2: Hey, I was reading that. Give it back.

A2 grabs the magazine back and hits A1 with it which causes A1 to try and grab it back. They begin to chase each other around the theater. The old couple wakes up from dozing, they stand up and translate their dialogue. Baby is in her crib softly crying, trying to put her teddy bear back together.

A1: How do you let horror come?

A2: You just let it come, that's all.

A1: But how could we have let it?

A2: We didn't let it. It came and we are dealing with it.

A1: But we are supposed to change it because we helped create it.

A2: Who told you that?

A1: I am telling you that. That's what responsibility means. He, She, we - responsible people don't let horrible things happen. And, if horrible things do happen we, She, He are responsible. We take responsibility.

A2: How old are you?

A1: What does that have to do with it?

A2: A lot. I'm trying to give you the benefit of the doubt. Maybe you don't know better.

A1: Better?

A2: Better than to believe that you have control over any fucking thing at all.

A1: Oh there it is. There it is. The random universe argument. And there was no reason at all to add an expletive, a dirty, foul expletive.

A2: Fucking is sex. What's foul about sex.

A1: How can you say that? Look at them. They're a mess.

A2: Not because of fucking.

A1: How do you know?

A2: Shut up. Give me back the magazine.

A1: I was looking at it.

A2: It's my magazine. You grabbed it from me.

A1: You wanted to show me something in it.

A2: You are such a cunt.

A1: Dick.

A2: That's my name, don't wear it out.

A2 finally catches A1 and they wrestle but A1 escapes with the magazine which is a little (or a lot) the worse for wear.

A1: Ah. Ha. Ha.

A2: A temporary setback.

A1: That's what all losers say.

A2: You should know.

A1: What is that supposed to mean?

A2: That means that you are the most incapable fuck I have ever had the unfortunate luck to work with. You were incapable in life and now, given a second chance by a very late but benevolent god, you are progressing rapidly in your incapableness.

A1: Incapableness? That's great coming from an inarticulate like you.

A2: Why are you so scared of words?

A1: I'm not scared of anything.

A2 catches A1 and they wrestle some more and A2 gets the magazine which is even more the worse for wear, and runs away from A1.

A2: What if there is nothing wrong with anyone? What if everyone is doing the best they can?

A1: Then what are we here for?

A2: That's what I want to ask him when, if he ever gets here.

A1: He never shows up for appointments.

A2: Not with us anyway.

A1: You think he shows up on time for other angels?

A2: Oh yeah. Sure.

A1: Gee, I never thought of that.

A1 stops to consider this. A2 also stops.

A1: You think he likes them better than he likes us?

A2: He makes that pretty obvious.

A1 (*to god*): Do you hear how he talks about you? Why don't you get down here and defend yourself?

A2: If he hasn't already come, what makes you think he's listening to you?

A1: He knows all.

A2: Then he knows you aren't going to say anything new so there isn't any point in listening to you.

A1 attacks A2, really angry. A2 has to defend himself and manages to overpower A1.

A1 (*in some way held down, or back, or up in the air by A2*): Do you ever wonder why we got stuck with each other?

A2: All the time.

A1: The law of opposites.

A2: Opposites attract?

A1: No. You are my shadow, my dark side.

A2: Oh, that's just stupid. You are my dark side.

A1: Yeah, that's my point.

A2: No. That wasn't your point. Your point was that I am your shadow. My point is that you are mine.

A1: That's right.

A2: No, we can't both be right. Either you're the shadow or I'm the shadow. We can't both be the shadow.

A1: We are each other's shadow.

A2: Oh for Christ's sake.

A1 (*excited*): Exactly!

A2 (*giving in, sort of*): Only the shadow knows.

They have set up a chess game with a timer.

A2: What could possibly have the attractive power to replace pain and war to give us those razor sharp challenges that we crave?

A1: Passionate playfulness is a distinct possibility. In controlled studies, it consistently ranks higher than fascist dictatorships and anarchy for customer satisfaction.

Act one/Part Two: Fourth Base

I.II Scene 1: What ground of inhumanity are you standing on?

Part two begins when the two angels begin playing timed chess but there is no visible change. This scene simply follows the last. The chess game is played fast.

A1: What ground of inhumanity are we standing on? *(A2 doesn't answer)* I never had your luck with women.

A2 *(seriously, not meaning to be insulting, more like a consulting physician)*: There's definitely something wrong with you. *(A1 is insulted)* Well, obviously it's just a question of the total reorganization of your soul.

A1: What?

A2: The total reorganization of your soul. *(A2 looks at A1, not understanding. A1 continues, pleased to have A2's attention)* Alignment. *(pause, still no comprehension from A2)* Harmony. Attunement. Never mind.

A1: Oh. Yeah. Right. Getting a groove on.

A2: Yeah. Whatever. I think the problem is that she keeps everything to herself.

A1: He doesn't say much either.

A2: True.

A1: Definitely a communication breakdown --

A2 *(overlaps)*: -- in the sense that no one is softening --

A1 *(overlaps)*: -- or growing as a result of the interactions --

A2 *(overlaps)*: -- static positioning, hardening their shells --

A1 *(overlaps)* : -- keeps them playing the same game --

A2 *(overlaps)*: -- silencing each other --

A1 *(overlaps)* : -- and themselves.

(pause)

A2: What ground of inhumanity are we standing on? What if we gave them new dialogue.

A1: Where would *we* get it?

A2: True.

A1: What if we give them new positions?

A2 (*tentatively*): That could be promising.

A1: Not sexual positions.

A2: I didn't say that.

A1: You were thinking it.

A2: You will never know.

A1: Do you think madness is the same thing as despair?

A2: It looks similar.

A1: A problem concentrates the mind.

A2: A problem focuses the heart.

A1: A problem raises the spirit.

A2: For the purpose of the reorganization of your soul.

A1: I so don't know what you're talking about.

Blackout

I.II Scene 2: Upon what peak of human excess do you perch?

Again, this change of scene is seamless as far as the audience is concerned. She comes in, dressed in black leather skirt and jacket. She throws off her jacket and dumps her briefcase on the floor. He goes to meet her at the door but She strides right by him, drapes herself flirtateously on the couch.

She: Get me a drink.

He quickly changes direction, goes back to the kitchen and blends a pina colada - decorates it with pieces of fruit and brings it to her. When He puts it on the table, some of it spills and She glares at him, then taps the table with her fingernail and He quickly, deferentially, wipes up the spill and puts dinner on the table.

She: Today at the office. Tomorrow at the office. Every day at the office. What's the point anyway? What are we accomplishing?

He: Society. We are building society. You are building our society. Right now I'm unemployed.

She: Tell me something I don't know.

They move to the table to eat dinner. She is very relaxed and bold. He is tentative and almost pleading for her affection and attention. She doesn't look at him when She speaks.

She: Do you think Shakespeare ever got depressed?

He: He wrote tragedies, didn't he?

She: But feeling tragic is different. It's noble. Depression is like dirty dishes in the sink. Tragedy is bloody. Depression is bloodless, pale, ghostly, haunting...

A1: Vacuous.

She: Vacuous.

He: Well... yes. I see what you mean. But I think his tragedies are depressing.

A2: He's got a point.

A1: Shh.

A2 is angry that A1 feels he can speak in the scene but A2 isn't afforded the same privilege.

She (*with contempt*): They're supposed to be inspiring, shocking, motivating.

He (*thoughtful*): Motivating.

She (*rising from the table*): Yes, motivating. Seize the day. Make something happen. (*She slaps his face, hard. He winces*) You wouldn't understand. (*She grabs his hair and pulls his head back to look down on him*) You're so pathetic.

He: Would you like me to put the dishes away?

She: No. (*sinister*) I'm in the mood. Go change.

He exits into the bedroom. She slowly takes off her outfit. A weird sort of striptease. Finally she is only wearing her black S&M underwear/gear.

A2 (*to A1, accusingly*): What's going on? (*A1 looks sheepish*) What did you do?

A1: I changed their positions. Their sexual positions.

A2: Oh no. That's what you meant? I thought you meant we were going to talk to them about their inability to be flexible in their gender roles. And you meant you were just going to get them to change positions? Musical chairs, genders? Stop! What chair are you in? What fucking gender role??? That's it? That's not going to change anything.

A1 (*sheepish*): Well, ok. I admit I don't have as much experience as you do but --

He comes out of the bedroom dressed in slave regalia. He turns down the lights, lights candle. She turns on seductive music.

She: You are a slave.

He: Yes.

She: What do slaves deserve?

He: Punish me.

She: Bring me your whip, slave. (*He does*) Kneel. (*He does*) Kiss my feet.

He kisses her boots, licks them, fondles etc. She hits him some. Then, after establishing a believable tone of seriously attempting to be dominant. She cracks up laughing. She

comes out of her sadistic character and gets really silly. He remains as though hypnotized - in love with her boots. He can't let go. She keeps trying to get freedom of movement as she is laughing and stumbling around. He won't let go. She tries to kick him away but when He won't let go, She more or less ignores him. As she crosses the stage to go and speak with A1, He is dragged along with her because he is clinging to her boot.

She: I really don't think I can do this. I don't feel very sexy. This isn't very sexy to me.

A1 (*abashed*): I know. I'm sorry. It's not working out the way I planned.

A2 (*furious*): I thought we agreed last time that we were not going to do this again. You promised me (*quoting*) that we would never again --

A1 (*joining in*): -- directly interfere --

A2 (*in unison with A1*): -- directly interfere. (A2 *alone*;) Role reversal (A2 *leaves it hanging so that A1 can complete the sentence, like a verbal quiz*) -- ?

A1: -- doesn't ever work.

A2: Because -- ?

A1: -- because the pattern itself doesn't change. Victim. Rescuer. Perpetrator. Repeat: Rescuer. Perpetrator. Victim. Repeat. Perpetrator. Victim. Rescuer. Repeat. Ad nauseum. I feel sick. I'm really sorry.

Meanwhile, in her attempts to extricate herself from his grasp, She has gotten silly again (maybe her feet are ticklish) and He and She, tussling, are making quite a bit of noise. He is trying to hump her boot. She finds this hilarious, alternating teasing him and hurting him. He seems to be on another plane entirely, very turned on and erotically focused.

A2 (*fiercely to the couple*): Stop it. Shut up. (*They quiet down, sit up and look at him. He now has one of her boots*)

She: What do we do now?

A2 walks away. She follows him, expecting an answer. She is wearing one boot. He is caressing the other one.

She: It was a good idea.

A2: No. It wasn't.

She: Maybe it's me. Maybe I didn't do it right.

A1: It might have worked.

A2: It can't work. It can never work. Don't you get it? Don't you understand what it means to be "caught on the wheel"? Over and over and over again til every bit of joy and life is crushed by the repetition of these injuries? Every bit of spontaneity and pleasure ground down to dust. It doesn't matter who is doing the hurting. It matters that hurting is being done in the name of love.

He: Same shit, different day.

All the men collapse in despair. She is the only one left standing. She looks around incredulous.

She: You're kidding me? (*no response*) That's it? (*the men look miserable*) That's the best we can do is just to go around in circles and end in despair? Dust to dust. That's pathetic. That's it? You're giving up.

A1: Well, actually, that is sort of what does happen, if you want to be really literal about it.

A2: We are stardust and we evolve and develop into all these varieties of life, forms, whatever.

A1: And then we reorganize ourselves into other patterns but we can only use the stardust that we started with in the first place.

She: So it really is dust to dust only it's stardust to stardust.

The baby starts wailing simultaneous to a partial blackout on the others. The baby cries in a soft light of one color while the old couple hold each other in a soft light of a different color.

I.II Scene 3: What don't you see?

Lights return on the apartment. Time has passed. The room shows wear and tear. Evidence of attempts to rewrite their lives. Food has been eaten. People have been working on trying to extricate themselves- by writing a new script - from a cycle of abuse. Everyone looks disgusted or bored or angry or frustrated. He is still holding her boot. She is now wearing her S&M outfit with one boot, one shaggy sock and a man's workshirt partly unbuttoned as a sort of bathrobe. The baby whimpers now and then throughout the scene.

She (*as if beginning back at the beginning, something that they have been doing for quite awhile by now- to A2*): You said that it was a question of power.

A2: That is correct.

She (*to A1*): You said that people have to be equal.

A1: That's right.

She: So then you said, since He had all the overt power -

He (*interrupting*): No! I don't know why you never incorporate what I'm saying. I DON'T HAVE ANY POWER AT ALL. I am a figurehead. A puppet. You USE me. I am the one being abused here. Why don't you get it?

A1: It could have something to do with your tone of voice.

A2 (*starting at the same time as A1*): Because you never hear *us* when we inform *you* that (*louder, slower, and more articulated than the last*) you - are - projecting. That the lack of power that you insist that you feel is a perverse reflection of your insatiable - obsessive - sadistic (*really loud*) POWER TRIP!!!!

He: Wow. That was harsh. Why do you have to be so harsh? Does god know that you're so harsh with people?

A2 (*bored, he's heard this before from many "clients." This same exchange might even be in the angel training manual*): God knows everything.

He (*pouting*): Well, I don't know why He would want me to be humiliated in public.

She (*re-interrupting to return to her flow and stem the possibility of A2 and He going on a tangent which is clear they have done before*): Since He exhibits many symbolic representations of having all the power –

He: What's She talking about? I'm not rich. I could have been rich if She'd ever really gotten behind me, really supported me but no, not her, Miss I-have-to-have-a-career-too. Miss You-never-take-me-seriously.

She (*overlapping in order to keep the floor, only stopping for a brief second to shoot them each a "shut up" look*): He is functioning as a BULLY (*the word, "bully," gets He to look up for a second and send She a suspicious look*).

A1: Isn't She wonderful once She gets going?

He: Ok. Ok.

She: And I am functioning as the Victim.

A2: Yes, yes.

She: And you two are functioning as the Rescuers. And it's those roles that keep us in the cycle of hopelessness and despair.

He (*simultaneous with She above, so He doesn't hear what She's saying*): Why, why why? Why do you always agree with her? Why can't you see that I'm a victim too?

She: We're doomed.

He: Fucked.

A1: Watch your language.

A2 (*to A1*): See what you did?

A1: Me?

A2: You.

A1: What did I do?

A2: The dying is drowning out the living. At least before we were doing something. Now look at us: we're paralyzed.

He: I don't feel good.

She: I feel like shit. It feels like the end of the world.

A1: It is always the end of the world.

A2: Shh.

She: What do you mean?

A2: See?

A1: Sorry. We're not allowed to talk about that to mortals.

A2: It's not important. It doesn't affect your experience in space/time. Trust me.

She (*cynical*): Right. I might be inclined to trust you if I hadn't already trusted him (*indicates A1*) and see where that got me?

He (*to She*): There's something wrong with you. With who you are.

She: Of course there is.

He: That's not what I meant. I meant that they made us feel like there's something wrong with who we are.

She: As individuals?

He: Yeah. And as a couple too. We didn't need a bunch of angels telling us what to do.

She (*tired*): But there *is* something wrong with who we are if we never get real or close with each other.

He: That doesn't really exist.

She: What do you mean?

He: That vision of love and life is just liberal propaganda. There is no such thing as an undefensive, noncompetitive intimacy between people.

A1 (*to A2*): Oh great. Now romantic idealism is liberal propaganda.

A2: Of course it is. So are statistics. Fairy tales.

A1: I feel sick. I'm going to throw up.

A2 (*pointing to the intermission/theater bathrooms*): The bathroom's over there.

A1 (*from the audience, on his way to the bathroom, trying to be brightly*): Well, the darkest hour is just before the dawn. (*the rest are despondent. A1 calls from the bathroom, after we hear him throwing up, we hear him washing up. He has left the bathroom door open while he throws up so he won't miss anything*) You have to hit bottom before you realize you have a problem (*no one responds*). We have a problem. That's a step forward.

She: We are the problem.

He (*suddenly sees his opportunity to blame someone else and get out of this sense of guilt and responsibility that has been descending on him*): Yeah, yeah. That's right. Before you guys turned up, we were doing fine (*She shoots a horrified look at him. He raises his voice til He's yelling, holding the boot and gesticulating*) Fine. Fine. Just fine. Me. My wife. My child. We get along fine and then (*to A1*) you had to barge in here and fill her head up with ideas. A serpent in angel wings, that's what you are. Equality? "E" quality? A-B-C-D-E-quality? X-Y-Z-quality. Reverse the power arrangements. Like somehow that was going to bring you some kind of fucking --

A1 (*back onstage now, overlapping He who does not stop. They speak at the same time*): --There is no need to curse. (*A2 starts laughing at A1's petty obsession with "bad"*)

language) Sh, sh, hush. Calm down now. We'll get through this. (*til the end of the scene A1 tries to calm He down*)

He (*continued from above, without a break*): -- credit. Do you get your wings? Is there some stupid bell that's supposed to ring now? Oh. Of course not. Because you failed. Failed. Failed. You see a fucking Christmas tree around here, buddy? Because I don't. There's just me. I'm the guy in charge. There's no Santa Claus in this house. I have to feed them and clothe them and pay the fucking bills. It's all on me. So, if I have to take it out on someone, sometimes. So the fuck what? Leave us alone. Don't interfere.

Suddenly, He spins and slaps She so hard that She staggers and perhaps even falls. A2 is furious and lunges for He. Baby screams.

Blackout

I.II Scene 4: Baby Face

Lights come up slowly on the crib. He and She are in the apartment, not doing much. The old couple listen to Baby.

Baby: She opened her eyes, again perfunctory even in this ritual of awakening. She moved briskly, from her first small motion, eyelid raising, legs kicking, until... no one notices, they move around you, never touching you once - then all of a sudden they bang right into you and keep on moving.... We wade through the sludge of other people's wilfulness -- (*screams:*) What don't you see? -- (*quietly:*) When does it get easier? -- (*sings:*) Tell old pharaoh...-- (*speaks:*) I will not go down with this ship. -- (*continues the song:*) to let my people go. (*to the audience*): Of course I forgive you. I swim in an infinite sea of forgiveness.

Lights up on the angels sitting in the audience.

A1: The world is a blasphemy of disaffection.

A2: Of imperfection.

A1: Imperfection is not blasphemy. The attempt towards perfection is the blasphemy.

A2: I always get that one mixed up with the other one. What's that other one?

A1: What other one?

A2: You know the one. The one I always - wait (*A2 gets out a little red book and quickly turns pages looking for a quote*)

A1: Mao?

A2: Browning.

A1: Robert?

A2: Elizabeth.

A1 groans.

A2: *I wish that he could see me bare to the soul. I love him.* You have a problem with that?

A1: Who was your trainer?

A2: Please. Let's not get into that again.

They start walking, talking.

A2: What if god is just a perspective?

A1 (*aghast*): We work for a perspective? I guess he's not coming then. No wonder we never get paid.

A2: There's no time like the present. No future like the past.

A1: Ok. Ok.

A2 (*looking up from his book*): Hey, I have an idea. Let's have a party.

A1: A brainstorm.

A2: Maybe we can break down some barriers.

He (*to She*): You're going to leave me, aren't you?

She: Where would I go?

A2 (*to A1*): It's a possibility.

INTERMISSION

Act Two: The Monster Speaks

II Scene 1: Dare we dream?

The angels are playing shadow tag as the audience returns from intermission.

A1: Do you think he'll ever come?

A2: No. He doesn't like appearing in plays.

A1: How do you know that?

A2: I heard that he used to like to show up sometimes. He liked the deus ex machina.

A1: You're kidding, right?

A2: Well, make up your own mind: He has to be the hero, right? The solver of insoluble plot problems, the lone ranger, Zorro, you, me, god, we're all out here trying to create the world in our own image.

A1: But when the Greeks became cynical, they invented scientific rationalism to justify their greed. Gods retreated from their passionate involvement in human affairs and became simply personifications of emotional and political manipulations and --

A2 (*interrupting*): -- god demands an adoring crowd.

A1: He doesn't like to work for it.

A2: That's our job.

A1: Worker bees.

A2: Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

A1: For us.

A2: For anyone.

A1: Oh, ok. It's not like you weren't feeling it too.

A2: Time goes really slowly when you're exercising, when travesties (*he is referring to himself and A1*) are looking after inadequacies. (*he is referring to He and She*)

A1: Where do those words come from in you?

A2: Death enhances itself. Life depletes itself.

A1: Perspectives change.

A2: I can't remember.

A1: What if everything is always perfect and the divine is benign?

A2: I need space so I can consider myself free.

A1: How many times have you been to heaven?

A2: Not that much really.

A1: I am who I am.

A2: I am so that I can become.

A1: God is a rock of inscrutable character. God is the fundament of unchanging truth and eternal purpose. Disrespect in essence, in *the* essence is a crime.

A2: Yes, crime is disrespect, that's why it's good. Why it's necessary. It's the necessary antithesis.

A1: Disrespect is a criminal act.

A2: What are you talking about?

A1: The origin of the crime, the originating animus of criminality is someone's realization that they must refuse to respect something that is fundamentally inimical to their purposes.

A2: Save your sob stories for someone who still feels compassion for these people. For the living. People are mean and petty and vindictive and pathetic. They do nothing but hurt each other over and again in the name of love and god and perfect, unattainable ideals and perfectly insidious lies. (*beat*) I've given up on life.

A1: You haven't given up on life.

Before A2 can answer - there is a huge crash at one of the theater entrances. Raised voices are heard as follows:

Woman One (W1): Don't try to stop me, dear, you won't be able to.

Woman Two (W2): I have to stop you.

W1: I am expected.

W2: Do you know where you are?

W1: It's not wise to insult your elders.

W2: We're in a theater. There's a play going on. You can't go in there. You aren't in the play.

W1: Oh, don't be naïve. No one could get along without me for a nanosecond. I am in every play. I'm very good in movies too. Now let me go.

W2: Madam; this is the second act. If you were in the play, we would know it by now. Serious plays don't introduce new characters in the second act. It's too late. You can't be here. Why don't you come back tomorrow. On time. And see the show then?

W1 (*bored with this conversation, pushes past the usher and enters into the theater. The usher follows her*): Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow creeps at such a petty pace. I'm so late. You see, I got lost. Wandering city streets. Why can't they put the good theaters in the good neighborhoods? It's not easy being blind. It's one thing and then another, cycling around...

W2 (*interrupting*): You're blind?

W1 (*friendly, light*): Well, I don't miss much, if that's what you mean.

W1 listens for the angels who are standing amazed. When W1 senses where they are, she turns to them.

W1: There you are. Do you know how hard it is to find this place?

A1 (*to A2*): He's not coming.

A2 (*to A1*): I told you: He doesn't do plays anymore.

A1 (*to A2*): But he sent *her*.

A2 (*to A1*): Yup.

A1: I hate her.

A2 (*to A1*): Yup.

W1: I heard that.

W2 wants to be an actress, when she finds herself onstage she is momentarily struck dumb to see the audience, recovers herself and her sense of occasion, summons her courage.

W2: Madam, you can't be here.

W1 (*kindly, to W2*): Well, I am here. And so are you. (*to A1*) Do you know why you hate me?

A1 (*to W1*): It's a long story.

W1: Begin at the beginning.

A2 (*emphatic*): No, no. (*looks for a watch on his wrist but he doesn't have one, looks around to realize no one on stage has*) No: we don't have time for that - he's mad because you tricked him into sacrificing his life. (*to A1*) It's ancient history! Let it go.

W1: Oh, bosh: he had sex with seventeen young women before he was put to death. And the hallucinogens were excellent in those days, much better than they are now. There were more minerals in the soil in those days. Everything was a lot more powerful, electrified, intense.

A1: Ok, ok.

W1: You died in utter exhausted bliss. No artificial nonsense, no ICU's, just pure earthy transcendence in self sacrifice and death. LifeDeath. You didn't seem to mind at the time.

A1: Oh right. I thought I was heading for eternal life, eternal bliss.

W1: Ah. Yes. Well. One assumes that people understand that these proffered extensions of life are not corporeal possibilities. And, when someone doesn't understand: it's probably not a bad idea to give them a good strong lesson so that they can realize and never, ever make the same mistake again. Right? You're not likely to forget again (*it seems that she is done but then she finishes with:*) that each corporeal, sensate being is unique. Utterly. And gets only one journey inside that singular uniqueness.

A2 (*cutting them off*): Not now, you two. We really don't have time. (*to an audience member*) Do you have the time? (*an audience member gives the time – if the audience misinterprets the sense to be, do you have time to stay and watch the play, the actor will need to ad lib a clarification such as, “no, sorry, I meant etc.”*) You see? We are late. They (*indicates the audience*) aren't going to sit there forever (*if an audience member had indicated that they would stay, the actor will have to adjust the line to something like, “well, some of them might etc.”*) while we fuck (*Both W1 and A1 notice the curse word*) around trying to unravel knots of bitterness we've been carrying inside us due to the wretchedness of our individual pasts, and blah, blah, blah...

W1 (*interrupting in order to start on a new foot*): Right. Well, to begin again: I'm sorry I'm late. I'm sorry he isn't here since you are obviously all expecting him. But I'm here.

A1: It's not the same.

W1 (*trying to be patient*): Well of course not. If he were here, the play would be over now. A simple ending - a blaze of glory.

A1 (*overlapping, cutting her off*): -- while you, on the other hand, will use subterfuge, ambiguity, falsehood and general orneriness to further immerse us in physicality. (*A1 sits dejected*) It's all just a big trick.

W2 (*to A2*): What should I do?

A2 (*shrugs, flirts*): Stick around.

W2: I should be at the door... people need to know how to get to the bathroom... (*she starts to go, he holds her gently but firmly*)

A2: No, I think we need you.

W2: It's my dream to be in a play here.

A2 (*smiling*): Well, there you are! (*to the others*) Hey, we're in her dream! That's cool. That's really wonderful! We've found the dreamer.

W2: I'm a dancer.

A2: That's even better: that gives us much more flexibility...a plenitude, the plethora of possibility I was waiting for...Do you have anything prepared?

W2 (*excited*): Oh. Oh, yes.

A2: Well, go ahead.

W2 (*suddenly disappointed*): Oh, gee. I didn't bring my tap shoes.

A2 (*magically producing tap shoes*): No problem.

W2: What if they don't fit.

A2: They fit.

II Scene 2: Frankenphoenix

W2 transforms into a showgirl. The old couple helps. A2 puts on her shoes for her. She begins a cheery, energetic tap dance then abruptly, in its midst she stops to speak. Her words are a slightly altered version of the Monster's dying words from Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The whole routine is done with audition level intensity and focus and stands outside the style of the play up until this point.

W2: Oh, it is not thus - not thus... Yet such must be the impression conveyed to you by what appears to be the purport of my actions. Yet I seek not a fellow-feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. Though what I first sought was love, love of virtue, feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed. I wished so badly to participate. To be a part of this beautiful life. But now that life has become a torment - happiness and affection have turned to loathing and despair, what should I seek? You hate me, but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I nourished my self with high expectations of honor and devotion. But now I am degraded beneath the meanest creature. No guilt, no mischief, no misery can be found comparable to mine. I am alone, a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless. I have strangled the innocent. I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. The fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. But fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me nor be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, unquenched. Polluted, and torn with bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death? Farewell!

A2 (to W2): I could love you.

Done with her speech, W2 dramatically finishes her tap dance, all smiles and high energy. Everyone (except A2) claps enthusiastically, as if the monster speech had never happened).

A2: *(to A1)* I'm losing it.

A1: I can't even remember our assignment. I haven't had a vacation in so long. I can't concentrate.

A2: We're losing it.

A1: I keep thinking about warm apple pie and freshly made vanilla ice cream.

A2: Sandy beaches, beautiful women....

W1: Ok, so remind me why we are here again? What am I supposed to be helping with?

A1: What is.

A2: What might be.

A1: What was.

A2: What could be.

A1: What should be.

W2: What might have been.

A2: What will be.

A1: Ok, ok, I remember. I remember our assignment: We must alter the path of deleterious consciousness that has turned in upon itself. We are to engage with a couple who is presently trapped on a vicious circle and aid them in transcending to the next level of their spiral evolution. Angels who successfully guide humans, who participate joyfully in this ritual of transformation will earn a minimum of a million lightyears of pleasure. It sounded good at the time.

A2: It still sounds good.

A1 *(sits, somewhat forlorn)*: You know *(pause)* I'm not really sure what it means.

He *(suddenly bursting into the room, talking to She who is following close behind him)*: Why can't you understand me?

She: You make me feel anxious, jittery, all tied up in knots.

He: You're picking up on my anxiety.

A1: Don't you hate it when anxiety exacerbates to the point where it peaks in terror, explodes and ...

He *(to W1)*: Who are you?

A1: She's his consort.

He *(assuming "his" refers to A2)*: He has a girlfriend?

A2: Not yet.

A1: No. Him. He.

He: Oh Him. (*beat*) what's a concert?

She: Where you go to hear music.

W1: Yes, dear. That's it exactly. You see, the sun was the original superpower. We are created and sustained and just as easily destroyed by the very same energy.

He: I hate her. Who did you say she was?

She: She's a goddess. Maybe even the goddess.

He: So what's she talking about the sun for? You know my idea about the sun? I'll tell you what the sun is: It's a great big huge radioactive atom bomb continuously destroying itself. What we ought to do is send all our radioactive waste in trash missiles to the sun.

She: Oh, yeeha! Let's attack the sun.

He: It's better than attacking each other.

W1: Icarus on steroids. Missiles full of radioactive waste might land anywhere. The challenge is in the realm of creativity and luckily that is my specialty in fact, the only thing I am prepared to discuss. (*to A2*) The challenge is to create something that is structurally coherent enough that it can flexibly withstand the onslaughts that fate inevitably hands out to everything foolish enough to take form. (*to the old couple*) He loved me with all his soul. He poured his life into mine with all the passion that was his to command. I wallowed in the insatiability of my need for him. And I can't honestly tell you whether it was a problem of the mind, body, flesh or spirit. I became all longing and lost any sense of the present tense. (*to She*) People go to great lengths to avoid what they fear rather than to face their fears and attempt what they desire to do, to be. (*to He*) You must face your fear, dear.

A1: How?

W1: Start living out loud.

A1: I'm dead.

W1: You're not dead. You're an angel. You are a life form, silly. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to realize you.

A1: Why are deities always so cryptic?

W1: You'd like me to be a more chatty deity?

A1: Sure. Why not? It would make things a lot easier to understand. Why don't you help us with the party?

W1: Are you inviting me to your party?

A1: Sure. Why not?

W1: I haven't had a date in a long time.

A1: Hey, this isn't a date.

W1: Whatever you say. I'd be delighted.

He: Could someone please explain to me what's going on?

A2: We're going to throw you a party.

He: For what?

A1: We think that if we are having more fun, we'll have some better ideas to help you.

He: Could someone please tell me what's so wrong with us? (*no one answers, they all look at him, until -*)

She: I see what He means: We're only human and it's human to be destructive and hurtful.

W1: Destruction is meant to be a small part of life, not the dominant feature. You live as if your fire alarms were on all the time and yet you show no inclination, interest or intention to put out the fire. The dysfunctionality of that is making us all rather edgy.

She: Finally you stop asking for help because you know that help never comes.

W2: We have to learn to outrun the speed of dark.

She: It might be too late.

W1: There are no guarantees.

He: That's exactly true.

A1: No guarantees.

W1: One can never know.

A2 (*to He*): You have a spirit in you that's begging its own becoming. You want to be loved. You deserve --

He (*interrupting*): Maybe. But you're wrong about the begging. I never beg.

A1 (*to He*): you will never, ever get yourself loved if you continue to brutalize yourself and everyone else with this bizarre, vicious paranoia.

He (*taunting everyone*): This little light of mine...

Baby & He: I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, all the time.

Blackout

II Scene 3: Culminating - Serions Beaux

Everyone is participating in decorating the room for a party. W1 comes up with many living things and symbols of living things. She is gradually producing a cornucopia of life. The room is fully ready for the party by the of the scene.

W1: Are you ready to give up suffering?

A2: *Freedom, though your banners are torn they fly still like a thunderstorm against the wind.*

A1: Browning?

A2: Byron. *I do detest everything that is not perfectly mutual.*

A1: Greer?

A2: Byron. Words are things, a small drop of ink falling like dew, produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.

A1: Benjamin Franklin?

A2: Byron.

W2 (*has been talking with She and suddenly her voice is heard*): Tremendous, shattering, resounding, release. (*now abashed because everyone is looking at her*) She asked me how I lost my virginity.

He: My babysitter seduced me.

W2: I'm sorry.

He: No, it was awesome. She was seventeen and I was only twelve and she towered over me, her breasts seemed like the most amazing....

W2: She took advantage of you.

He: I wanted her to. She knew how much I wanted her and she did me a favor.

She: If the roles were reversed?

He: Yeah. Well. I don't know if I believe all this shit about women and victimization. I think they could end their suffering the minute they stopped wanting it.

A1: What about childhood?

He: What about it?

A2: Shouldn't childhood be free from the imposition of adult sexuality?

He: Why?

A1: You don't have sympathy for children whose parents have sex with them?

He: Not really. Not that much.

She: He thinks that people deserve exactly what they get. That's his interpretation of eastern philosophy.

He: We turn on the wheel of life and it's a roulette wheel on a good day and on a bad day it's a torture rack pulling your spine to pieces.

A1: Oh my.

A2 (*to He*): What about you? What do you do to the people you love.

She: We deserve what we get.

A2: Oh. It's your need to be hurt that makes him hurt you?

He: That's it. Right there.

She: I have an appetite for it now.

He: Needing to be hurt is very powerful, very yin.

She: It pulls you in. It's very seductive.

He: And it's impossible to fight the need to punish someone who is cringing.

W1: Can you hear yourself?

He: What about it?

A2: In your opinion, when is it appropriate to show mercy to another living being?

He: Not often.

A1: But if he felt that he could benefit by helping someone else -

He: That's different, yeah: that's good healthy American self interest at work. (*He exits to the bedroom*)

A2: Evil is palpable.

W1: It's the smell of life unraveling.

A1: The deconstruction of innate biological integrity.

W2: Evil spelled backwards is live.

A2: It's the smell of souls rotting and flesh caving in from the immensity of their inner vacuity. That smell really gives me the creeps.

A1(*overlapping*): Ok, stop. I'm feeling nauseous.

The following conversation is made up entirely of clichés which are the morals to Aesop's fables.

She: Sometimes pleasure is worth the pain.

W2: Appearances are deceptive.

She: Don't make much ado about nothing.

W2: Every man for himself.

She: There is always someone worse off than yourself.

W2: The gods help those who help themselves.

Baby: Little friends may prove great friends.

She: Those who seek to please everybody please nobody.

W2: Do not trust flatterers.

She: Misfortunes springing from ourselves are the hardest to bear.

W2: Grasp the shadow --

She: I supply my enemy with the means of my destruction.

W2: -- and lose the substance.

She: Might makes right.

Baby: No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

She: Even the wildest can be tamed by love.

W2: Birds of a feather flock together

W1: Some men can blow hot and cold with the same breath.

OW: Do not attempt to hide things which cannot be hid.

She: Any excuse will serve a tyrant.

A2: Words can be deeds.

W2: Vices are their own punishment.

A1: Whatever you do, do with all your might.

W1: You can't please everybody.

She: Yield to all and soon you will have nothing to yield.

W2: The connectedness.

Baby (*sings the whole Hank Williams Sr. song while the others carry on with their dialogue*): I'm so lonesome I could cry... Hear that lonesome whippoorwill ...

He: Other houses have pitter patter. Not my house. In my house children are kept under control. In my house you don't hear any pitter patter. You won't hear the sound of tiny sadistic feet in the hall. Children looking for cats to torture, fires to start, other children to bully. You hear her? She's singing. In my house, there's singing.

She: While the adults look on passively. Lending our blessings to the survival of the fittest. We make new people. People who respect limits.

W1: An exercise in the diminution of sensitivity.

He: We breed soldiers.

W2: And the mothers of soldiers, the wives of soldiers, whores for soldiers, think tanks for soldiers, bombs for soldiers, metallic tanks for soldiers --

A1: -- snacks for soldiers --

A2: -- entertainments for soldiers --

W1: -- education for soldiers: You persecute people who do not wish to participate in war. You use ridicule when people try to abdicate from rituals of antagonism.

He: Why are conscientious objectors put in prison? For what? They didn't do anything, right? Well, that's it. Don't you see? It's the crime of cowardice, the refusal to participate. Everyone must have the courage to die for the greater good.

A1: Sure, sure, but who decides that?

W2: And who benefits from all these erections of missiles and these descending bombs? Who pays the price?

A2: You know, I think that courage is living a life you value.

A1: Post-modernism and revolutionary consciousness try to make us aware that there is actually no need for an underclass to suffer or die in order for an elite to have more and more.

A2: A postmodern consciousness is not scared to call a duck a duck.

W1: Ok, pop (*pops a balloon*) quiz: What's another name for abusing the earth?

W2: Why do we fight ours nature?

W1: Spitting into the wind.

She: How can you people believe that nature is on your side? How can you think that God is on your side?

W1: He doesn't mind. It's all good. People can think what they like. He never feels obligated.

A2: Everyone makes truth claims and value judgements fog up the air -- (*pretends to have a coughing fit*)

W2: -- with carcinogenic pollution from local factories --

A2: -- spewing out the latest --

W2: -- absolutely necessary --

A2: -- new chemical product that must be procured --

W2: -- distributed --

A2: -- and consumed --

OW and OM (*in unison sign*): -- before it's properly tested.

He: Because we don't want to waste time. What's so hard to understand about that? I don't understand what you don't understand about market economics. It's very simple. The faster products move, the more money you make. Period. Hello. Earth to you. What could possibly be wrong with this model?

Baby (*recites an excerpt from a poem by Connie Ross. OW & Baby dance. OW translates Baby's speech into sign language*): I, Water Dragon, build waves among still pools, flood shadows with light, float mortal dreams through streams of eternal hope and passion, guarding treasures of heart and soul, secrets carried deep within caverns sheltered by an armor built to last through time and memory, held snug by scales still kept not shed. I, Water Dragon, flow within you, warm your blood with fire, burn your desires with a breath, (*W1 joins in*) cleanse your heart of old debris, wash your spirit in a rain of peace. (*everyone is quiet, then we hear W1 and A1 conversing together on the couch*)

A1: Here is my wretched attempt at self referencing verbiage: I want to tell you something about myself. In terms of what is available in connectivity and things like that, it's easy to look backwards and find everything to be very logical and ordinary. Things happen within parameters. But parameters can change. Do change. All the time.

W1: It's difficult. Alone. He's so busy. Doing good works. I understand. He has a very demanding schedule. I don't know. I suppose He doesn't really need me.

A1: Even in absolute terms, infinitesimally small interpersonal events exceed in importance any odyssey of ancient times.

W1: The issue of timing is probably more poignant than distance. Visits between star systems. Meetings are a possibility.

A1: A particular activity at a particular time -

W1: -- such as one person seeking another --

A1: -- while the other is seeking an unknown...

W1: It could be chance, a random anomaly.

A1: Right.

W1: Seems that at times like this, time cannot possibly move as fast as the heart. In the geography of love, there is no time dimension. There is only now. Love takes over and creates an ocean of feelings.

A1: Storms rage within and without and all of my concentration is focused on maintaining a semblance of equilibrium.

W1: The way consciousness, when it elevates and frees the emotions of their more petty restrictions --

A1: -- that I have learned to tolerate, emulate, even appreciate.

W1: And I bound and I roar into a daylight so tender, fragile, permanent and true - that my eyes long to close, to be blind to my mind so that my sensations take over...to live by sensation, like some primitive fertility of love. Such strong tenderness caresses, and cannot be compared to anything - there is no metaphor for truth. *(pause)* What's problematic here is the definition of what the circumstances actually are.

A1: They have attained a particular shape in his/ and her/stories.

W1: Individual patterns shift at infinitely variable rates.

A1: New instances of activity might be unusual but more possible to achieve during phase shifts. In between --

W1: Where one phase of living is fading and another is emerging.

A1: What I want them to learn is the power of desire.

A2: Amen. Now let's party!

He turns on the party lights and the party music begins.

II Scene 4: Participating - Boirons

W1 acting as hostess, unobtrusively. W1 serves a variety of drinks to the character. Not to put too fine a point on it, she's getting them drunk. Baby gets an enormous baby bottle.

W2 *(as if in the middle of what she was saying)*: -- but still, it matters, who you are in the dark. They are all the same man. I've met him over and over again and I try to convince him that life is valuable, that love is worth preserving. And at first it's only a conversation and then when it becomes clear that he is not listening and his intention is to never, ever listen to anything that might make love more than a means to an end, it becomes an argument. See, when they realize that I know what I'm talking about - they get tense. And when they get tense - I get rigid. And tense and rigid make really shitty or nonexistent sex.

W1: There's no such thing as frigid in my experience. But there is rigid and it's not sexy as an attitude but it's necessary. You can fuck a weeping woman but it's practically impossible to get inside a rigid woman. On the other hand, if a man isn't a bit rigid then you aren't going to get very far.

She: If the sex stops I want to beg for it. I feel like prostrating myself at the feet of anyone who gives my body pleasure.

W1: Prostrate to his prostate.

W2: And begging to be part of waves of universal life releasing.

W1: Begin the peace by taking a piece of me; reach across the water of misunderstanding.

She: No. Pour oil on the water. Kill everything that lives in or on it. There is no such thing as peace. There is no end to misunderstanding. And there is no god.

W1: One day I will build a bridge over the river denial.

W2: Did you ever hear this early American poem? Builders or Wreckers Be? *I saw them tearing a building down. A gang of men in a busy town. With a ho heave ho and a lusty yell. They swung a beam and the side wall fell.*

W1: I asked the foreman, are these men skilled as the men you would hire if you had to build?

W2: He laughed and said, no indeed, just common labor is all I need I can easily wreck in a day or two what builders have taken a year to do.

She: I ask myself as I go my way which of these roles do I try to play?

W2: Am I am builder who works with care, loving each moment, each moment aware -

W1: - or am I a wrecker content with the thrill of tearing down? Oh, yes. I have done a lot of begging. I did it a lot. Too much. I begged so much I popped through it to a Zen rage laughter ticklish place and all of a sudden I couldn't beg any more. I knew that if I even wanted to beg it meant that I was never going to get it because in order to receive anything worth receiving I'd have to get up off my knees to receive it properly, and with all my dignity, with my self in tact.

OW (to Baby): Long ago they begged me. No one begs me any more. They think I don't know anything. They are repulsed by me because I am an old woman.

Baby: Vivid possibilities of very bad things flow through my brain. Stampede my heart, until I crawl exhausted onto my mat and fall asleep.

OM & OW: Rest your self in the hands of my soul and rest in a place of unconditional love.

Baby: Am I getting closer or going around in circles?

W1: Light up the sky.

A1: *Choose your favorite - John Cusack or Nicholas Cage. (The game will interrupt these statements when someone needs to take their turn in the game which is being played simultaneously.)*

W1: Illuminate precious existence in the minute proportions of the light of infinity	A1: Cusack. A2: Cage. W1: Cage. W2: Cusack. He: Cage. She: Cusack.
--	---

She: Surrounded by Faith...

He: JFK or Joe Dimaggio?

She: Stalked. Enraptured. Love leads,	A1: Kennedy. A2: Kennedy.
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enters, moves the spaces between us, creating distance and the sparks to overcome the distance.	W1: Joe D. W2: Joe. He: Joe She: Kennedy.
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Baby: Experimenting with irresponsibility... Bridges, Bridges. Or Bridges?

Baby: A tempest blows in my soul/Knock the trees down - make way for highways/Knock the shit out of shanty town.	A2: Jeff. W1: Beau. A1: Beau. He: Lloyd. She: Jeff. A1: Lloyd.
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She: Faith defines the perimeter of passion.

W2: And we face our fate with strength...

W1: Florence Nightingale or Dante?

W2: ...with the strength of those who resist with all the passion and strength at their command the forces that use force as a replacement for honor and dignity.	A1: Dante. A2: Galileo. A1: Galileo isn't a choice. A2: He should be. A1: For heaven's sake -- W1: Florence. W2: Dante. He: Galileo. She: Dante.
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She: Desperate rebels face life alone.

A2: Together they lose their desperation – Don Juan or Don Quixote?

She: -- become allied with the infinite in themselves –	W1: Juan. W2: Quixote. A1: Quixote.
W2: -- and broach the subject of their own infinity –	He: Juan. A2: Juan. She: Quixote.

W1: -- of their own power.

She: Destroyed –

A1: -- we move forward in peace –

W1: -- to create a new beginning

W2: Who am I to make a contribution? To be discovered? No one.

W1: Just one.

A2: A one who, alone, cannot bear the silence - at least not all the time - and so she fills the void with voice –

Baby: Euripides, Aeschylus or Aristophanes?

W2: -- flowers, seeds, reeds and thistles of her imagination	A1: Aristophanes. W1: Euripides. A2: Euripides. He: Aristophanes.
A2: and then she gardens.	She: Euripides. W2: Euripides.

W1, W2, She (*together, quietly*) -- my secret garden.

A2: Life or death?

A1: Death.

W1: Life.

W2: Life.

OM: Death.

OW: Life.

She: Life.

He: Death.

Baby: Deathlifelifedeathdeathlife. Lifedeathdeathlifelifedeathlife. Deathlife deathlife lifedeath lifedeath (*Baby keeps going as one by one the actors join her, in a round*)

Sudden blackout and utter silence. Then, in blackout still, Baby cries out as if calling to an old friend to come and save her.

Baby: Euripides!

II Scene 5: Fragmenting - Mangerons

Everyone is eating.

Baby: My biggest problem is loneliness. (then, *simultaneously with the following*) Don't tell. Don't tell. Don't tell. Don't tell. Don't tell...(continues as long as it feels right to do so)

She: How did you become blind?

W1: Blinded by the light. (*She doesn't get it*) God. Pure light. I hang out with god a lot.

W2: Yeah?

W1: It's bright. He's bright. Blindingly bright. Pure love. Pure light.

She: Oh. Yes. Yes, I see. (*thinks it over*) Isn't that sort of abusive of him? To be so bright? I mean, if he's god, can't he turn himself down a little bit so you can hang out with him without losing your eyesight?

W1: I don't know. I never thought of it before. And now our days of wine and roses are pretty much over so I probably won't get to speak with him for awhile. But you can always contact him directly. He doesn't always respond but he does hear everything.

W2: It's your right to defend yourself and your boundaries are exactly where your defences need to be.

W1 (*to She*): Defense at your core is a bit too late. I mean, look at me: I gave up everything and then when he got tired of being creative, when he became content with inertia, well I had to pick up and carry on by myself.

She: Sometimes I feel that men have raped the world, trying to get from her abundance with force something she would gladly give to anyone who would treat her with respect and kindness.

W1: I think you're right: I mean, I have certainly felt that he took the relationship with me to mean less to him than (*W1 realizes that she's getting too personal, interrupts herself and changes tone*) The challenge we face is abundance. How can we experience abundance without greed? It's not an easy problem. (*giving up on her official goddess persona, she returns to her gossipy self*) So he withdraws from me because he thinks we can't go on without losing ourselves in bliss and forgetting to struggle and it's in the struggle that he gets his name, his potency and his power and he doesn't believe that it exists within and among his creative partnerships. He thinks he has to suffer alone to be as he is. He is not ready for joy.

W2: God is the ultimate democracy; every moment, every being gets a vote and the aggregate vote each moment is god in that moment. So we could all vote for joy. Like pick a joy day, May first or September 7th or Halloween or whenever and that would be joy day and everyone would agree to think happy thoughts at just a certain moment on a certain day --

A2: Ok, take it easy tinkerbelle. We all believe in fairies.

A1: Speak for yourself.

W2: So if more women voted, every day --

W1: Maybe.

W2: Somebody has to create the future. Why shouldn't it be us?

He (*simul with W1's above response*): She's pretty but can she cook?

A2: Beauty and truth are the only things that will satisfy the deepest appetites of your soul.

He: Yeah. Yeah. But how long since you've had a blow job where she swallows your cum and then you pull out and come all over her face and she puts her hand in your cum and she rubs it gently into her face and down her neck, into her breasts...

A1: Sometimes stupidity feels like brutality. There is something coarse about coming into contact with obtuse generalities.

A2: No. You mean there is something coarse about sex.

A1: No.

A2: Well, that's what you said.

A1: Maybe, that's what you heard. What I meant is that I think love can be any sort of connection between any sort of beings. I don't think love has a particular ritual that it clings to more precisely than some other ritual. Love is an action carried out with the intention of generous fullflowing towards the other and an equal willingness to be flowed into by the other. It's a mutuality. Some mutualities are more specific and some are more general. Some are diverse, some are more focused. You never know until you are with someone what shape your love will take. It's a frightening thing because

He (*interrupting*): Obviously you guys don't appreciate me.

W1: No one appreciates me either. So I absent myself. Then, if I am no longer an actuality, then you can miss me, you can pine away, be lonely for your idea of me. I modelled this approach on god's of course.

He: That's not what happens at all.

W1: I know. Mostly you just forget about me altogether. Do fish notice the ocean? I doubt it. (*to A1*) Don't you find it ironic that the ones who cause the most damage are the ones who perceive themselves as needing defense against the rest of us? Oh, that's the definition of paranoia, isn't it?

A2: They build up strategic defenses and auxiliary offenses.

A1: Self-protection -

W1: - against life

A2: I can understand that.

W2: Me too. Life is threatening, chaotic, demanding.

A2: Nothing makes you feel as much as though you were dying as life flowing just a little too quickly through your veins.

W1 (*to She*): God is conscience not consciousness.

A2: Perpendicular.

A1: Parallel.

He: Paralyzed.

W2: Peculiarized.

She: Victimized.

A2: Heroicized.

W1: Aerobicized.

A1: Farfetched.

A2: Particularized.

He: Patented.

Baby (*quietly*): Dead. (*screams and throws her bottle*) I'm dying over here!
 She (*coming over and entering the crib*): That's right. Don't tell anyone that we keep you locked up. They wouldn't understand. (*Baby whimpers*) Don't cry. You'll understand better when you grow up. People are horrible. Always trying to trick you and hurt you.

The following three speeches are spoken simultaneously, timed so that the audience gets the gist of each one but the actors should not appear to be hearing each other. She has her head in her hands in despair and doesn't notice He being sexual with Baby.

<p>Baby: Sometimes my bones ache wanting to be held. I am so lonely. I think I will evaporate trying to stretch my molecules til they connect with someone, any one. I think that love would feel like liquid light falling into my skin soaring through my veins and crashing into my heart which would open like a beautiful flower. Soft petals.</p>	<p>She: I wish I could feel. Anything but numb. Like the sides of my tongue are all swollen. I can't speak. If I can't speak I don't know what I think. Words bombard my mind but I don't know what they mean. Escape. Vanish. Kill them? Kill myself. I'm hungry. I'm tired. Lost.</p>	<p>He: You've got to appreciate what you've been given. Don't waste a second of it. Feel it all. Feel it deeply. Let it cut through the ice in your soul. Sear you. Pain is an illusion. Don't worry: It's all just sensation. You've got to try to get as much as you can out of life. More.</p>
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Baby & She (*in unison, reciting phrases they have recited often before*): You can't let anyone know what's really going on with you. They wouldn't understand. You have to look clean. And happy. (*Baby stops*)

She (*continuing to Baby*): Always look happy. When anyone's looking, look happy. You have to let men be men. They can't help it. Brutality is the way of the world. That was depressing.

Everyone (*but not simultaneously, scattered, polyphonous*): I don't like this game. I don't want to play anymore.

He (*leaving the crib*): We're all brutes. You might as well enjoy it while you can.

A2: (*Caliban's speech from The Tempest translated to contemporary prose*) I must eat my dinner. This island is mine and you took it from me. When you first got here you said all kinds of nice things to me, made me feel that I really mattered to you. You gave me water with berries in it. You taught me to name the stars. And I loved you. And I showed you all my magic places: the river walks, the spot in the forest where the sun breaks through the leaves making a cathedral of green. I took you high to see the views and deep into caves to see the dark. And then you kept me tied up, your prisoner, tied away from the sights and sounds that I first gave to you.

OM: Would you like to dance?

OW: I'd love to.

W1: I don't seem special to them because I'm always available. He plays hard to get and he's always in demand; everyone can't stop thinking about him. *(takes a deep breath)*

Well, the ideal which is what god ought to represent, can't ever be realized inside any dimensional representation of reality because dimensions are already a choice, a simplification of the all-that-is-that-is-god whereas me, I am dimensional, his perfect complement. His perfection is of course, only perfect in its entirety each element being distinct and distinction being its own diminishment ... But I can tell you one thing: the reason they say that love conquers and heals all is that the act of love is a lingua franca, a self authorizing language that is learned as the soul comprehends its alphabet. So, we act out our love, we find out whether it's love or exploitation: We see the results measured out in joys and sorrows. Are you happy? Is he happy? Are you hurting? Do you voluntarily or arbitrarily or accidentally hurt others? And then are you sorry? But then it happens again? And again?

She: I can't be happy. *(pause)* I don't know how.

Everyone is dancing now except She who is in the crib rocking the baby. The music has stopped but no one seems to notice. They dance in silence until -

A2 *(to W2)*: Don't be afraid. This island is full of noises, sounds and sweet music that delight and hurt not. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum in my ears, and sometimes voices that, if I then had just waked after a long sleep, will make me sleep again, and then, dreaming, the clouds open and show riches ready to fall on me. And when I wake I cry to dream again.

Blackout

Act Three: A Party of Animals

III Scene 1: Buddha's Belly - Pensecons

In this scene, drugs make their influence felt.

A2 *(to She)*: The synchronized syncopation of the room right now. Can you feel it? Can you hear it? Can you at least imagine it?

A1: What do you have to lose?

She: Well, I think it's something to do with privacy. I don't want to share myself because I'm ashamed of myself. And my shame is my private business.

A1: Because?

She: Because people want to rank you. All the time. All the time you are being measured. Taken apart, weighed, to determine your value. Shame is negative value.

A2: She's right.

He: What?

W1: The shame is negative value because it stops interactions.-

She: - it holds me back.

W1: -the shameful moment is gone, vanished -

She: It doesn't vanish. It replays.

W1: Yes. Shame is a deterrent

She: When you're hungry, angry, lonely or tired...

He: Well, I'm at least one of those every day since I turned eighteen. It's called being a grown up.

She: Cut it out.

He: Too cynical for you? You enjoy your life more than I do mine? Is that what you are implying? That's why you take these (*dumps pills all over*) Because you are having so much fun? Because you have no shame?

A1: You know, there are laws that protect people from disclosing their medications.

He: And why do you think that would be? And how hypocritical of you. You are the one who thinks that the way forward for us is to relieve ourselves of our deepest darkest secrets.

She: My pills are not a deep, dark secret.

He: Oh, I see, just a superficial, opaque secret?

She: Yeah, that's right.

A2: Ok, ok, you two. Well maybe it isn't the pills themselves that are the problem. (*to He*) These are yours right? (*A2 pours pills.*)

He: Yeah.

As they all put the pills back in the bottles, they surreptitiously or openly take some

W1: Let's see if we can level the playing field here. (*W1 puts all sorts of candy, herbs, vitamins, any healing items you can find, on the table*) Here you go: a pharmacopoeia. Help yourselves.

Baby: It goes like this: I hate myself so much that I want to die. I want to die because I hate myself. I hate myself because I make people hate me. I know I make people hate me because one moment there I am with them enjoying some kind of delight and sparkling lights are decorating the world and soft rains are falling and then the next moment they are denigrating the availability of joy. Sampling the turds that lie around waiting to be tasted, licking the vomit that was spewed on their shirts by those who wish to be cleansed

and yet cannot manage to pick up a sponge on their own and clean. I don't know what I'm talking about. I can't even figure out how to get out of this crib.

OW (*to Baby*): I know what you're talking about.

OM (*to Baby*): Me too.

She: Men like to hurt me. Because I'm soft. I've tried to be tough. But the problem with that - well, no matter how you create your persona, the person you are remains the same. Grows or degenerates but remains the same. So, when you fuck, if you want to have a good time, and not put on a show, not have to fake it, when you fuck, if you want to have a good time, then you are putting yourself out there, engaging, relating beyond ritual and form, beyond exhaustion and sense. And then you know them. And they know you. And forever after they will know how to hurt you.

He: When I became a man, you no longer loved me.

W1: My ideal partner doesn't have to look any particular way. He can appear to materialize in a whole lot of different patterns - lots of things appeal to me but it's more in the way it all goes together. Or doesn't. Does her left hand know what her right hand is doing? Are his feet pointed in the same direction as his eyes? Will I be want to use both my hands?

W2: I think people are loathsome shameful beasts who simply prey on one another. Their idea of social organization is that I should allow them to prey on me or else I should get my act together and prey on them. They would rather I killed them for greed than to experience a creative act with me, working in unison to the sound of the music of the spheres.

OM: There isn't any music of the spheres.

OW: Oh yes there is. You just can't hear it.

He (*suddenly very high. Perhaps he can climb up above the stage/audience somehow*):
...feeling totally freaked... send news of some kind... don't shine that light on me...I guess I should at least be grateful that I know I am a monster.... I know (*he can't remember what he was going to say*)

W2: Are you really an angel?

A2: I guess.

W2: So you're dead.

A2: Not really.

W2: So you're alive.

A2: Partly.

W2: When you kiss me, can you feel it?

A2: Yes.

W2: Does it feel good?

A2: Yes.

W2: Ok. Thanks. I was just curious.

A2: Could you love me?

W2: Easily.

A2: Would I be enough for you?

W2: Absolutely.

A2: What if I could be more real?

W2: That would be good.

A2: More - physical.

W2: Yeah. That would be great.

A2: I was just curious.

The old couple are kissing romantically.

OM: I love your kisses. (*Baby echoes*)

OW: Your kisses are my life. (*Baby echoes*)

He has climbed up high and calls down.

He: Catastrophe! I think I'm going to fall for loving you. It's really all toooo pluperfect. Tense. I'm tense. Yes. I am. Love? Love is, up, down, low, high, here and now, pain-torture-grief-despair, building-up-tearing-down, peace, war, running away, running towards.

She (*to He*): I love you.

W2 (*to A2*): I love you.

OW (*to OM*): I love you.

OM (*to OW*): I love you.

A1 (*to A2*): You are an angel.

A2 (*to A1*): You are an angel.

A1 (*to A2*): You are a most beauteous angel.

A2 (*to A1*): You are a most wondrous angelic beatificence. (*note to the actors, "beatificence" is a made-up word, a combination of beatific, and beneficence - and a little magnificence*) I think I'm in love with her. I think she knows it too.

A1: What are you going to do about it?

A2: I'm not sure yet.

A1 (*to A2*): I'm so tired of trying to be good. I am never going to be good enough.

A2: This is good enough.

A1 (*to A2*): Don't forget me.

A2 (*to W2*): Dance with me.

W1 (*to A1*): Play with me. I want to free you

W2 (*to A2*): I feel lucky when I am with you. I've never been lucky. It's a new feeling.

W1: If I simply relied on the evidence, I would have to say, no, there is no such thing as love. The scientific method. I appreciate science but I don't believe in science. Science believes in me, studies me, (*humbly amused*) makes all its wisdom from interpreting *me*. So there, you see? It's simple. Really. If you are alive you know that you are made of love. And that, when you are the most connected to love is when you realize how enormous love is - so far more powerful than any thing else will ever be. And how small we are.

He: I'm feeling fragile but I'm not completely shattered but god, I hate living alone... I just hate living alone.... I need to share my life with someone. Someone who doesn't bring me down. I need to be in good hands when I float to nirvana. (*at this He falls from wherever He was perched*)

A2 and W2 are kissing.

A1: What did you just say?

W1: Now they can go together wherever they like.

A1: I see.

W1: Will you miss your partner?

A1: I don't know. I have mixed feelings.

W1:?

A1: I'm glad to be rid of him. And I can't remember who I am without him. (*In the program should be a note that reads "In case of rhythmic emergency, you will find percussion instruments under your seat. "The actors aid the audience in rhythm-making which continues until She makes everyone stop. During the dancing, Baby manages to escape the crib and join the dancers*) So the idea of him leaving makes me feel as though I were losing my identity. No, worse: my self.

A2 (*to He*): Maybe one day people will create ear devices that work like glasses. First, your hearing will be tested to determine whether or not you can hear the fabulous music of the ether and the harmony of the spheres.

A1: And, if you can't, then contrived sounds will allow us to accurately determine which receptors in you were born, uhm, less sensitive and we will compensate for the particularities of your specific deafness and there you go --

A2: -- to hear the music that is right now playing all around you.

W2 (*to Baby*): The hearts of all these people are beating in slightly different rhythms. Shall we see if we can hear it. We can try to feel it.

The music should be loud now and audience members are encouraged to come onstage to dance and everyone can play for 3 minutes or longer if it gets going, it could stretch to five minutes, then -

She: Stop! (*everyone is silent*)

A1: What are we waiting for?

A2: The synchronized syncopation of the room right now. Can you feel it? Can you hear it? Can you at least imagine it?

Blackout

III Scene 2: Dancing - Aimerons

Time has passed, the party is almost over.

W1: Because all gods pass when it comes to sacred sighs and dirty diapers.

W2: That's harsh.

W1: That's true.

He: I hear you.

A1 (*to He*): That's a miracle.

He opens his coat to reveal fake boobs and a fake penis rigged so that when the coat opens, tits and penis rise and face forward. He loves this tick and does it again and again from a variety of angles, heights and positions. He tries to caress his fake boobs and fake penis but the coat stays open only when He holds it open via his hands in its pockets or on its lapels. He tries but can't touch himself.

A2: It's a dirty job but someone has to do it.

He: Cunninglinguist.

She: They say I never smiled.

A1: There's not much to smile about - usually.

W2: You have to work at it.

W1: Whew.

W2: My therapist said that we carry a bucket around our necks and it's our job to keep our own bucket full of self love. But when our bucket gets leaky, if we don't keep it filled up with self love, someone might come along and puke in it. And, if someone pukes in your bucket, you gotta clean it out and fill it back up with self love. But the point is - You are *never* to take a spoon and eat their vomit out of your bucket. That's what she said, isn't that gross?

Baby: I thought therapists weren't supposed to say anything at all.

W2: I know. Like my head doesn't have enough twisted and sick images floating around, like I need one from my therapist.

He: I don't have any umph. I don't have sex properly because I'm depressed. Things depress me. And a cunt just doesn't lift my spirits anymore. And now I don't even want to be lifted; I want to be degraded. As if it's too great a distance to the release point, the high point. But I could almost reach the bottom and release from there. But I don't have any umph.

A1: I am going to puke again.

A2: Me too.

W1 (*very goddesslike - omnipotent - her word is law. The music is silent for a brief moment while she yells then rushes back into the void like the Red Sea after Noah*): NO MORE PUKING!

A2: Ok, ok, I have a joke. This is Jesus on the cross (*A2 puts his feet together and his arms out*). God, god, please let me down, please. (*one of A2's arms seems to become freed from the crucifixion*) Thank you, God, thank you! (*another one of A2's arms seems to become freed from the crucifixion*). But his happiness quickly turns to fear as he realizes his feet are still nailed to the cross) The feet! The feet!

A1: Well, that whole thing with the seventeen virgins. That was my first time. It was wild.

She: My first time was on a boat and I kept feeling nauseous. Rolling up and down and around and around. It was nuts.

W2: My first time was in water too. It was in a river. It was sensuous.

A2: My first time was under a waterfall. It was exhilarating.

He: My first time was with my babysitter. It was mindboggling.

OW & OM (*together*): My first time was with you. It was the beginning of my life.

She (*overlapping*): -- a sadist is a sort of hypnotist --

W1 (*overlapping*): -- who convinces you that there is a stable element to your relationship with him --

He (*overlapping*): -- or her --

A1 (*overlapping*): -- so you can anchor somewhere --

A2 (*overlapping*): -- because it isn't change ... change is ok, it's kind of exhilarating, but the unsteady feeling of not knowing where to put the next step forward can be disquieting.

She (*overlapping*): -- and people will do anything --

A2 (*overlapping*): -- including sell themselves into slavery --

He (*overlapping*): -- and forms of pseudo-slavery --

She (*overlapping*): -- in order to be anchored in process.

W1: So there we were, all decked out and golden. Loving every minute and then the world shifted on its axis and it got cold and we didn't want to stop loving. We thought loving was the central fact of existence and we wanted to keep on loving. So we did, because we were good at it and we used our love to convince other people to work for us,

to kill for us. To keep us warm. To get us food. To clean up our mess. So we could concentrate on love. We were golden and delicious and concentrating on love.

W2: I like to know how my world works.

III Scene 3: Power - Transformerons

The dregs of the evening. A pre-dawn luminescence.

She: You become what you hate.

W1: Trusting ourselves we can explore our creative potential in the moment, our godlike selves. Well, yes. The next part is so depressing. I hate to tell it. How the Goddess lost the respect of earthly religions. Laziness. Our Achilles' heel is laziness. Can you believe it. All lost for laziness. A stitch in time saves nine. But did we do any stitching? No. We ate cake. We were loving and love should fix everything, right? Wrong. Love is diaphanous enough without elbow grease. A lot of elbow grease. Lunges. Leg lifts. Situps. Work. Work. Work. When work and love become separated, then we are doomed. So - many millions of wardead later, here I am, doing errands, trying to work my way up, while he tries to figure his way out of a paper bag. His Achilles' heel? Logic of course. Look what's become of him since he lost his mytho-poetic side. It's sad. To watch him try and figure all this out. I mean, he can't find his own socks for Christ's sake. Laziness and logic; quite the pair, us.

A1 (*passing a large 3-4' in diameter earth ball to W1*): Happy Birthday.

W1: Oh, yes, I forgot, thank you. (*W1 passes the ball to A2*)

She: Every day is your birth day. (*A2 passes the ball to W2*)

Baby: Do you get presents every day? (*W2 passes the ball to W1*)

W1: Oh yes. I live in the Garden of Eden. Gifts abound. (*W1 passes the ball to A2*)

A2 (*turning the earth ball as if contemplating a crystal ball*): There is no particular generality to directionality. (*A2 hands the ball to A1 who starts a gentle game of catch which can include the audience*)

A1: What we mean by above is simply how we characterize a somewhere else that we respect.

A2: There is no generalizably real concept up. Up is only ever a relational concept conferring respect.

A1: It's not about directionality.

A1: There's no such thing as up.

W2: I wonder what that concept would do to the viagra industry?

He: Nothing at all. Viagra is not about a concept. It's about a reality. Stay erect or women will humiliate you beyond what you can bear.

W1: Procedural issues are handled ritually when the dynamic is sadistic.

A1: Process does not then require creativity or spontaneity.

W1: A ritual is a rigidification of a process.

W2: I didn't know that.

A2: The enemy is spontaneity. Just kidding.

A1: Lock it or break it.

W1.: *(a song interlude begins here: Baby, sings Amen/Awomen)* First He was going to send our baby Jesus down with His own special lucky socks, the ones he wore the day we created elephants and giraffes. That was an amazing day. Ostriches. Pelicans. Birds of Paradise. All created on the same day. That was a great day. We had such a good time that day. Anyway, he couldn't find his socks and in those days I was relegated to holy ghost so I was being contrary and ghostly at the same time, refusing to participate in the daily life of our little heavenly family choir. So, because god and goddess were so out of sync we lost him. Only one son of god and gone in the wink of an eye. Forever gone. Do you think we're dysfunctional? Gee. That bothers me. I mean, I know he fucks around while I'm out doing his dirty work. But that doesn't bother me as much as the fact that we're just not getting any more intimate, the creativity is gone. We have utterly stagnated.

(beat) To whom should I bow? I am what I am because of the love that I have experienced. That is all that I am and all that I ever will be. My creative acts are acts of love, attempts to answer the mating call of grace, to enter in. Because the whole thing is god, not just as each element but the whole, the process as well as the products.*(as she speaks she makes her quantum leap realization)* So we don't have to wait for him anymore. He's here. He's the flow in the between part. He's his own holy ghost. The tripartite god is father, son and holy ghost. The tripartite goddess is maiden, matron and crone. So inquiring minds want to know: Does the father wed the maiden, the matron or the crone? And the son, who does he hook up with? Well, we know, because it is written, that the holy ghost entered the maiden to produce sweet christos, so that leaves the father and the son to be with the matron and the crone. My guess is that the father will first wed and then abandon the matron for a life dedicated to a desiccated duty. And the son will go for the crone, what do you think? *(W1 gets up to leave. She turns back to give A1 a very sexy kiss. She says, then, to him:)* Not fragile but resilient. Be present. Don't forget. Don't forget anything. Forgive everything. *(W1 kisses A1 lightly and leaves. The lights are slowly fading as A1 realizes that he can't live without her and he runs after hr, coming back for his wings before his final exit)*

A1: Wait for me!

Blackout

III Scene 4: Don't tell - Libererons

Lights come up on the apartment in shambles. The old couple is asleep in the crib. W2 and A2 are curled up with Baby on the couch. He is sprawled on the floor. Daylight streaming in the windows. A bright sunny day. She is awake and pondering.

She (*to He*): It's not your stupidity that makes you hateful. It's your hatefulness that makes you stupid. You have so ravaged my soul in search of your own. I can never trust you again. I will never not love you. But unless you are able to bring together your pride with your humility, then you won't be strong enough to handle the challenges that life inevitably hands you.

(*to Baby*): I don't want to scare you. But I don't want him to hurt you. And I don't have the courage to protect you from him. Oh I know the Wizard of Oz says we all have courage but in me it's not there. Not yet.

(*to W2*): You do deserve what's happening to you, otherwise it wouldn't happen, you are onstage now and you were great and just because some talented people are arrogant, selfish show-offs, experts at manipulation - doesn't mean that all your life in the theater has to be that way all the time. We had this night. And some of us are here to illuminate and sustain the human spirit.

(*to He*): You told me once that Freedom was a lot of work. And that most of us are too lazy to be free. You said that freedom only works when people work at being free. Ok. But you want to be forced to good to me. I can't steal your love. And you won't give it freely. Freedom isn't about getting rid of everything that stands in your way. The nature of freedom is love freely given, freely available, ever reinforcing, it is the actuality that the word cornucopia attempts to describe. And maybe the path of the work of freedom is a path of faith, faith that there is enough love in me that freedom won't become a bloodbath.

(*to herself*): I don't have courage but I do have faith.

(*to He*): I can't stay here but I will always love you. This isn't a trick. I'm not coming back.

(*to Baby*): I am sorry for all the horrible things I've done to you: the ones I know and remember and the times I never realized. I have damaged you because I didn't know how to love. I didn't understand that love causes people to become free to be themselves. I just didn't get that. I thought love was the power that held us all together. Like a vice (*she realizes her accidental pun and is intrigued by its connotations. Baby stirs, remains asleep*)

(*to everyone*): I am sorry for every hurt, for every cruel word done in my misdirected passion for life.

(*to He*): They reflected the levels of inequality between us, ways that I cared for you but you could never care for me. I can't wait for you any more without doing

permanent damage to my heart. I don't believe that god wishes us to damage ourselves - not even for love - if you just killed me, that would be one thing. But killing me slowly, and I know it, and I don't do anything about it, that's different. I can do something about that. You always insist that you are scared of me, well, then we shouldn't be together, I don't want to be with someone who is scared of me. I wish to be in peace with a lover not in fear. I want to live in peace. *(She gets up to leave. Turns back to He to say)* I will treasure what we found in us together that was good, thank you for sharing part of your life with me. For sure, I will never be the same as I was before I met you. *(She exits)*

The sound of a bird wakes everyone but He. Awake, they leave quietly, obviously leaving for good.

III Scene 5: Epilogue- it feels like the end of the world. Encoreunefois

He wakes up noisily and realizes that everyone is gone. He is groggy. He gets himself something to drink. Perhaps He throws and kicks things around. He goes and gets in the crib.

He: Pricks and imbeciles.

A multicolored spotlight comes up gradually on baby who is now much more adult looking, she is carrying a rose.

Baby: Not mighty deeds make up the sum of happiness. But little deeds of kindness which any child may show. A glass of water. An easy chair. A turning of the window blind, so that all may feel the air. An early flower unasked, bestowed. Deeds like these, little things, as fragrant atoms in the air, disclose the rose. *(Baby lifts the rose to offer it to the audience)*

lights fade to black

Fin

Lyrics

I'm so lonesome I could cry by Hank Williams Sr.

Hear that lonesome whippoorwill
He sounds too blue to fly
The midnight train is whining low
I'm so lonesome I could cry

I've never seen a night so long
When time goes crawling by
The moon just went behind the clouds
To hide its face and cry

Did you ever see a robin weep?
When leaves begin to die
Like me he's lost the will to live
I'm so lonesome I could cry

The silence of a falling star
Lights up a purple sky
And as I wonder where you are
I'm so lonesome I could cry