

**MASCARA FOR THE EYES OF GOD**

By

Cass Brayton

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48 Divisadero, San Francisco, CA 94117  
(415) 608-9808 • sfcass@aol.com

## **CHARACTERS**

SHE: Woman, mid- to late-50s.

HE: Her son, a drag queen, mid- to late-30s. He wears a patch over one eye. Most of the time he wears a wig hair cap, but no wig.

SHADOW: Male.

***NOTE:** Over the course of the play, HE delivers a number of "commercials". While speaking these lines, HE does not wear an eye patch, and he does wear a women's wig. The transitions should, as much as possible, be unobtrusive.*

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## **TIME**

Recently.

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## **PLACE**

A rundown apartment. Two vanity tables face each other, sharing a common mirror frame so that if the characters were sitting in their separate rooms, looking into their mirrors at the same time, on stage they would face each other directly through the frame.

*(A woman sits in darkness before a vanity mirror. A bird caw-caw-caws in the distance. Lights up as SHE leans toward the mirror applying mascara. As she considers her reflection, SHADOW enters behind her, puts his arms around her, hugs her, kisses her on the neck. SHE savors the memory.)*

*(Lights fade on her. Lights up as HE sits before his mirror applying mascara. SHADOW moves to where HE is. HE kisses SHADOW hungrily. They make out a bit. Lights fade to black. SHADOW exits.)*

*(Lights up on her as SHE leans into her mirror, but she can't see clearly enough. She picks up a hand mirror, examines her face closely and tries on different looks: pensive, regal, coquettish – all unsatisfying. She holds the hand mirror closer. A bird again caw-caw-caws in the distance. Her shoulders slump.)*

SHE

The issue—  
The issue—  
The PROB-lem  
has evolved beyond the merely cosmetic.

*(She smashes the hand mirror.)*

SHE

I shouldn-a done that.

HE *(from the darkness)*

Everything all right?

SHE

Compared to what?  
*(sighs)*  
There's a lot-a-things  
I shouldn-a done.

*(SHE pops the last bit of a Pop-Tart into her mouth, wipes her hands together, carefully folds the wrapper, then crumbles it into a ball and throws it away.)*

SHE

When has the time come to stop?  
 Has your coping strategy  
 already hit the fizzle?  
*(She keeps adding mascara. Checks herself again.)*  
 Not yet!  
*(Adds more. Checks again.)*  
 Too much?  
 Too little?  
 How do you tell?  
 When did certainty evaporate?  
 How long ago did it disappear,  
 along with that look,  
 a look you had that once whispered  
 "Come hither"—  
 maybe all husky and Bacall,  
 but still, you know,  
 a whisper.  
 But now  
 you find yourself saddled with a look that shrieks  
 "Flee!  
 Flee!  
 Flee for your life!"  
 Eye of the beholder,  
 I suppose.  
 Is it too much?  
 Over the top?  
 Excessive?  
 Hunh!  
 Don't you love excess, though?  
 For me?  
 Excess is the one thing  
 I never get enough of.  
 They've always said—  
 They've always said that I'm too much.  
 A wa-a-ay wa-a-ay wa-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-ay  
 too much.  
 THEY said.  
 "Hell yes!" I say!  
 Hell yeah! yeah! yeah!  
 I am, Babe.

I am too much.  
 And if—  
 if that's what you think—  
 if you think that I'M too much,  
 then chances are, Babe,  
 chances are that for you?  
 I am.  
 I AM too much.  
 One gone chick.  
 That's what they always said.  
 One real gone, far out chick!  
 And look—  
 you won't get an argument outta me.  
 Not outta me.  
 Nuh-uh.  
 'Cause I'm a lover, Babe,  
 I'm a lover, not a fighter.  
 Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.  
 R-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!

HE (*from the darkness*)

*Maman!*  
 Are there any more Pop-Tarts?

SHE  
 How the HELL should I know?

HE  
 Are there? I don't see none.

SHE  
 Keep looking!

HE  
 I did. Can't find none.

SHE  
 Then someone musta ate them all up.  
 Who coulda done that I wonder?  
 Hunh?  
 Who?  
 Now don't bug me.  
 (*softly*) I'm putting on my war paint.

HE  
*J'ai faim, Maman.* I'm hungry.

SHE

Then masturbate or something!  
*(softly)* Be normal, why dontcha!  
 For once.  
 "Take care of me!  
 Help me!  
 Help me!  
 Help me!  
 Me! Me! Me! Me! Me!"  
 God damn broken record.  
 Just like his old man.  
 Most likely.  
 Whichever one that was...  
 Having a kid,  
 let me tell you,  
 that's where—  
 I think that's where it all begins,  
 the long, long, long decline.  
 You start out tripping, right?  
 tripping on the possibilities.  
 "Wow!" you think.  
 "Babies, man!"  
 "I could—  
 I'd like to have one of those."  
 Wrong!  
 You don't have babies,  
 they have you.  
 Forever more.  
 And more and more and more, and still more!  
 They want this!  
 They want that!  
 They need! They need! They need!  
 Is there no fucking end to it?

HE

Hungry!

SHE

Eat some baloney!

HE

No bread!

SHE

Impediments! Impediments!  
 -- *(to HE)* Improvise! Have some escargot! --

Little geniuses of obstacle.  
 That's what kids turn out to be.  
 You find out ...  
 there's no end,  
 no fucking end  
 to those bliss-filled nights you spent  
 with The Stones 'n' The Beatles 'n' The Animals,  
 boffing,  
 boffing,  
 boffing till the sun comes up.  
 You roll over, you go to sleep  
 then one day there you are,  
 scrounging around,  
 trying to figure out  
 what happened to the god damn Pop-Tarts!  
 Yeah, Babe.  
 You can kiss those pretty nights goodbye.

*(He sits at vanity, turns, facing "the camera".)*

HE

How do I look?  
 Immaculate?  
 Luscious?  
 Salacious?  
 Fruit of the forbidden tree?  
 Sh-h-h-h-h-h.  
 My secret?  
 Mascara.  
 Don't let unsightly, emaciated lashes  
 scare them away.  
 Don't repulse or repel them,  
*(bats eyes)* ever again.  
 Entice them,  
 seduce and fondle them,  
 by merely batting your lashes.  
 Your luscious  
 entrancing  
 lashes.  
 It's easy with mascara.  
 Mascara.  
 For the eyes of a goddess,  
 the passion  
 of a god.

SHE

You wanna put out a fire?  
Look into his eyes  
when you tell your boyfriend  
you are pregnant.  
Watch how fast a spark'll turn to ice.  
No more flame, no more ember,  
and surely no smoulder.  
If you could squeeze that look into a jar,  
you'd have a flame retardant  
you could make a killing by selling to Monsanto.  
Before your very eyes  
your dreamy adolescent rebel studmuffin  
shrivels as he watches his future dissolve  
from hunter into gatherer.  
The light in those eyes disappears  
as surely as he will some day.  
It may take weeks, it may take years,  
but he is gone.  
Already gone, gone, gone.  
You grab for a life preserver  
as the slow-mo sinking of your ship unspools—  
it'll all work out,  
this blessing in disguise,  
these mysterious ways...  
But no one hears this soundtrack.  
Not him. Not you.  
The fetus? You wonder.  
The close-up on the eyes  
tells you all you need to know,  
all you never want to know,  
all you refuse, refuse to know.  
Blinds on the window of his soul  
—I need you!!!—  
now shut tight.  
Whatever he's thinking he keeps to himself.  
No more fumbling and groping of hungry hands  
under your sweater,  
probing cool fingers in your hot, sticky panties,  
at least, not without you dropping hints,  
inviting him, cajoling him.  
That doesn't last either.  
You,  
his succulent cherry pie,  
now his poison apple.  
That's you, Babe.

That is now you.  
 It's boiled down to the serious business  
 of species propagation.  
 Great hope of tomorrow.

*(He sits at vanity, turns, facing "the camera".)*

HE

I - feel - senSAtional!  
 'Cause hey fellahs!  
 I've got a party in my pocket.  
 Wanna play?  
 Take this sleek umber vial of pure pleasure,  
 slowly unscrew the protective cap  
 and pop it firmly up your nose.  
 Inhale, boy.  
*(Inhales)*  
 And again.  
*(Inhales)*  
 And again.  
*(Inhales)*  
 A-a-a-a-a-h!  
 Feel your head race you to another world.  
 A world of pure pleasure.  
 A world where nothing else matters  
 but how you feel right now.  
 And you - feel - senSAtional!  
 Blitz yourself with poppers.  
 For the boy of today.  
 For the man of tomorrow.

SHE

And let me tell you,  
 it's no party working—  
 no picnic when you find yourself adrift  
 and you try to work the streets  
 and you're four or you're six or  
 —so help me God!—  
 it's been eight months since you got knocked up.  
*(SHE improvises a look of pregnancy)*  
 And I mean,  
 let's face it,  
 you are exactly what they—  
 Your—  
 Your—

Your ...  
 tuMEScence—  
 It's exactly what those guys  
 are running away from,  
 what they are so desperate to flee,  
 some of them.  
 So desperate they're willing to shell out  
 for a little bit of action,  
 'cause they're just not getting what they need  
 from Lady Madonna whining and puking  
 back at the bungalow.  
 So tonight—  
 the way YOU look?—  
 they're not in the market  
 for what you have to offer.  
 Not now.  
 Face it, Babe.  
 There's not a lot of johns  
 who'll pony up for  
 an already knocked up tart.  
 They all—  
 they all pretty much avoid even eye contact.  
 Except for—

*(SHADOW enters, kisses her arm gallantly, hands  
 her some money, exits.)*

SHE

Serge.  
 Serge.  
 Even for those few fleeting moments  
 your aloneness  
 evaporates

SHE and HE

By the grace of God.

*(HE turns to face the mirror.)*

HE

Someday you're gonna spot me in commercials.  
 That's right.  
 Commercials.  
 Can you tell?  
 I never wanted to star in the movies

-so last century-  
 or sitcoms  
 -pfffffft!-  
 or read the news someone hands you  
 -liars!-  
 I don't even wanna do the weather-  
 though I could kinda go for  
 the wardrobe budget  
 they shower on the weathergirl.  
 No.  
 For me?  
 I want the fame-  
 the charisma-  
 the ultra-everything that comes with  
 "COMMERCIALS"!  
 The dream machine of tomorrow.  
 Where you get to be everyone's fetish.  
 Where they can't stop watching you  
 over and over and over again.  
 To me?  
 That's where REAL glamour lies.

HE and SHE

Everyone watching you.

*(SHE lies in a hospital bed, groaning the  
groans of childbirth.)*

SHE

What is it  
 you ate or drank or smoked or shot  
 that could possibly turn  
 a normal fetus so gloomy?  
 Nurses should not be standing there  
 telling you  
 "It's a boy.  
 And it's morose."  
 "It's not my fault" you cry.  
 "Understand!  
 I am a happy person!  
 I never cared for the Existentialists!  
 I never cared for Edith Piaf!  
 I like Dylan!  
 I like Chaka Khan!"  
 No matter.  
 You hear their guarded whispers

behind the curtain scrim  
before white wingcaps poke on through,  
warily approaching the bed,  
not really wanting you to hold  
this not-really-bouncing  
little bundle of woe  
lest you make him even sadder.

"Here" they entice.

"See?"

And they hold him at an angle  
like they're about to entertain bids  
on the Home Shopping Channel.

"This is what came out."

You reach for it.

"No, no, no" they say.

"Let's wait till you get back  
some of your strength  
before you try to hold him.

You must be oh-so tired."

"No.

Not really."

"We'll just put back him in the nursery for now."

And through choked back semi-sobs  
you manage to stutter

"But...

But...

But...

I - am - so - freakin' - happy!

Honest!

I like Runt!

I like Tommy James and The Shondells."

No matter.

They've already yanked the curtain closed,  
shutting you back in the alone  
of their antiseptic universe.

A place so unfamiliar.

While out in the hall you hear  
the recessionary incantation  
of departing nightingales:

"Oh you poor little thing.

You poor poor poor little darling."

Then some hapless drone  
drops off your post-partum breakfast.

"You got any escargot?

In France they give you

SHE and HE

escargot."

HE

You grow up thinking  
 every family is different from yours.  
 That no other kid  
 in no other house  
 on no other street  
 has to eat snails for breakfast.  
 Then over time you learn,  
 the shells, they may all look different  
 from house to house to house,  
 but every family stares down  
 at the same forlorn plate,  
 and chows down on the same fetid stew  
 of gelatinous protein.  
 Yuck!

SHE

"Go on"

HE

she says.

SHE

"Go on.  
 It's good for you.  
 You'll grow up big and strong.  
 Like your father."

HE

"Father"?  
 What father?  
 I didn't come with a father.  
 Huh!  
 Bad strategy, *Maman*.  
 Faulty assumption.  
 I stayed a skinny little kid.  
 Every child wonders  
 if the stork took a wrong turn.  
 Years upon year upon year  
 you live in hope,  
 expecting the mistake will soon get rectified,  
 till ultimately all hope evaporates.  
 You resign yourself

that you're forever from  
 this misshapen lagoon,  
 somewhere on the outer shoals  
 of the gene pool.

HE and SHE

And you wonder.

SHE

*(singing to herself from Jerome Kern's "A Fine Romance")*

"We should be like a couple of hot tomatoes  
 But you're as cold as yesterday's mashed potatoes."  
 Explosions make a lot of noise.  
 Lives implode in silence.  
 Whatever happened to the  
 pow-pow-pow kapow?  
 Succulent marrow of bangers  
 give way to soggy morass of  
 mashers from a box.  
 Somewhere has been lost  
 the dancing chiclet on the rise,  
 biker babe with boobs in leather  
 arching in the rush of wind,  
 speeding off to nowhere special,  
 anywhere is good enough.  
 Anywhere you hang a while  
 you get a party underway.  
 You have a blast,  
 you ARE a blast.  
 The future, well, will have to wait  
 beyond these moments and these nights,  
 these long sweet stretches of pleasure.  
 You find a way out of your shell,  
 the long, langorous unfolding,  
 a life of magic draws you away.  
 You try to find yourself.  
 But the future does not wait.  
 Not for anyone.  
 And especially,  
 not for you.

SHE and HE

But the hunger does not subside.

HE

Hard as you try

you never make it all the way  
 to satisfaction.  
 The hunger never subsides.  
 Gimme more and more and more and more!  
 One thing is for sure:  
 You have not put on enough mascara  
 till someone whispers  
 "Love your lashes."  
 "Really, Babe?"  
     Thwack!  
 A flick of your riding crop,  
 shiny, black and ultra-deep.  
 Like mascara.  
 Like kohl.  
 "Really?"  
 you coo.  
 "Prove it."  
 Some of them let out a nervous little laugh  
 and scurry on their way. ...  
 But some—  
 some stay.  
 Some stay and take off their shirt.

*(SHADOW enters, takes off his shirt and kneels.  
 HE toys with the riding crop on SHADOW's back.)*

HE

Now, this is where excess—  
 the question of excess —  
 can get a little sticky.  
 How much is too much?  
 Where does the straddle  
 lose its balance?  
 When does this cassoulet of pain  
 you are cooking up,  
 at what point does it get too hot  
 and so curdle this  
 crème brûlée of pleasure?  
     Thwack!  
     What are you feeling?  
 Oh, sure,  
 some will try to let you know.  
 But if you are someone with ...  
 with issues,  
 a someone who tangos with uncertainty,  
 you may not be all that good at—

you just may not be very adept  
at sniffing out the cues.

Thwack!

Feel anything?

If you never really got to learn,  
never really knew at the time—  
these things that would happen—  
were they something akin to love?  
intended maybe to punish?

With love?

Say you had committed—  
say you WERE—  
some irredeemable infraction,  
you may not be so good  
at reading signals.

Thwack!

Feel it yet?

You may never be certain  
if that is the horizon of pleasure  
receding off there in the surf—

Thwack!

as you slog your way  
through a tide of pain—

Thwack!

holding on to what you can—

Thwack! Thwack!

Feel that?—

poking at the hard shells you find,  
hunting for a something soft.—

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

Do you feel anything yet?

Do you feel ME?

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

*(SHADOW gets up and exits.)*

HE

So you don't count on many repeat customers.  
They think you're playing a game.

But no.

You are not.

For you it is no game.

You are in search of a limit,  
an edge you may never find.

Enough is never enough.

So they—

they—  
 Most of them will never come back.  
 Precious few return for more.  
 It's a rare one who will.  
 Something rare and succulent  
 gone forever.  
 Fuck 'em!

HE and SHE

Jesus!

SHE

*(looking at her reflection)*  
 Jesus, it's a long way down.  
 A long, long, long way down.  
 Have you found that out yet?  
 I hope you do, Babe.  
 I damn well hope you do.  
 'Cause it's no party when it happens.  
 I can tell you that.  
 Far from it.  
 Far, far, far, far from it.  
 Most likely,  
 you're not even gonna know it when it's happening.  
 That slide.  
 That long long long descending.  
 'Cause those little voices?  
 All those little voices tryin' to tell you,  
 tryin' to warn you,  
 tryin' to let you know?  
 YOU don't let them.  
 YOU don't listen.  
 YOU keep tellin' them—  
 "Fuck off, Frank!  
 Just fuck off!"

HE

How do you know when you are lost?  
 When all throughout this barren terrain  
 nothing looks familiar,  
 nothing feels the same?  
 How can you tell  
 if you are an intrepid explorer  
 or just a lousy navigator?  
 And  
 when it's your own body

that constitutes this uncharted territory,  
 your own flesh,  
 your blood,  
 you do—  
 you do whatever it takes  
 to get some traction,  
 to find a trail or some tracks  
 to lead you somewhere resembling a home.  
 You make do with what you find.  
 With what finds you.  
 Thwack!

*(SHE enters.)*

HE and SHE

Men come. Men go.

*(SHADOW enters, playfully kisses the back of  
 her neck and her arms.)*

SHE

You become inured to the vagaries.  
 But some  
 with their continental charm—  
 Serge—  
 Oh Serge—  
 some take a part of you  
 when they leave.  
 And you settle.  
 You settle for the times  
 they do come around,  
 knowing they will soon be gone—  
 you don't know where—  
 as they leave you  
 to your parenting,  
 leave you to the world  
 you somehow now inhabit.  
 Still

*(SHADOW exits. SHE follows.)*

HE and SHE

You had a glimmer

HE

of someone with desire for you.

One of—  
 Another one of your mother's someones.  
 One of so many.  
 You wonder,  
 is anything better than nothing at all?  
 You didn't ask.  
 He came to you.  
 In the dark.  
 In the night.  
 You begin to calcify.  
 Emotion turns to shell.  
 Feelings become petroglyphs.  
 Nothing has happened.  
 Nothing has happened.  
 Nothing has happened if you do not feel it.  
 And yet...  
 And yet...  
 What incantation could you recite  
 that might have kept alive the spell  
 to make him want you more and more?  
 What recipe? What formulation?  
 What abracadabra  
 could conjure him again?  
     Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

HE and SHE

Your body no longer its own.

SHE

Something not of you  
 takes control.  
 That's how, Babe.  
 That's how it happens.  
 No need to slow it down ... down ... down.  
 Stasis happens  
 all on its own.  
 And everything you thought you had  
 stalls.  
 You no longer call the shots.

HE

*Maman!*

I mighta found some Pop-Tarts.  
 You want one?

SHE

No time.  
I have no time.  
Have to get ready.  
See my eyes?  
You think they're nice?

*(HE looks deeply into her eyes.)*

HE

Yeah. Yeah. Nice.  
Very nice.  
Love your lashes.

SHE

Too much?

HE

Hmmmm.  
Maybe just a little.

SHE

*Bâtard!*

HE

*(rolls his eyes)* For someone else, *Maman*.  
For someone else  
it is too much.  
But for you?  
No.  
Not for you.

SHE

*Bon.*

HE

Focus, Ma.  
Focus.  
You have time to eat before he gets here.

SHE

I'm going out.

HE

Out?  
You don't go out!

SHE

*Oui! Oui! Petite!*  
*Je m'en vais!*  
 I'm going out!

HE

No.  
 You can't go out.  
 We have an appointment.  
 We have a date.

SHE

You do.  
 I won't be here.

HE

But—  
*Cher,*  
*Maman,*  
 we agreed.

SHE

I told you I would consider it.  
 I considered it.  
 I've decided I can't—  
 I don't want to—  
 I'm not going to do it.  
 In fact,  
 I think it's sick-o.  
 It is not normal.

HE

Normal.

SHE

Yes! Yes! Normal!  
 Some people are!  
 Not everyone's like you, you know.

HE

How could I not know?

SHE

Or— Or—  
 Those creeps—  
 Those creeps you bring around.

Those men—  
 Those men in their diapers  
 with their pablum enemas  
 and the—  
 and the God knows what—  
 Oh Jesus!  
 Like the one who— who—  
 The one who had a THING—  
 The one who had a THING  
 for pimple puss  
 and warts  
 and hemorrhoids!  
 Is there nothing  
 a man will not fetishize?  
 That one still gives me the shivers!  
 Doctor Hemorrhoid.

HE

He was only asking.

SHE

HE WAS AN ASSHOLE!  
 Asking!  
 Sure!  
 That's how it starts!  
 Just—  
 just leave me out of your sick little scenario.

HE

We need the money, Ma.

SHE

Not that bad, we don't.  
 I'd rather sleep on the streets again.

HE

Let's not put that hypothesis to the test.

SHE

The answer is No.

*(SHE turns to the mirror, adds more mascara. HE leans into the mirror and adds mascara to his own eyes.)*

HE

So...  
 Okay.  
 As long as we're now in decision-making mode.  
 I've been meaning to let you know.  
 I've decided that...  
 I...  
 I...  
*Maman,*  
 I'm moving out.

*(SHE freezes, then slowly resumes making up.)*

HE

It's sudden—  
 a little sudden, I know.

SHE

When?

HE

Tonight. Right after—

SHE

Tonight???  
 Tonight!!!  
 Did you just say  
 you're moving out tonight?

HE

*Maman,* I met someone.

SHE

You have not met someone.

HE

Yes!  
 Yes I have!  
 I know.  
 It's a miracle.  
 God must have his eye out for me.

SHE

Who would meet you?

*(pause)*

HE

Thank you...  
 Thank you, Ma.  
 There's one person at least.

SHE

Someone into hemorrhoids?

HE

FUCK YOU, MA!  
 FUCK YOU! ...  
 Someone.

...

SHE

You see?  
 You see?  
 You see what they're like?  
 How they turn out?  
 You give them all the love in the world,  
 you feed them, take care of them,  
 put up with all their tantrums  
 year after year after year.  
 You learn to accept—  
 You adjust—  
 You adapt  
 to all their little  
 idiosyncrasies.  
 You forgive.  
 You make excuses.  
 You tell yourself  
 "Ohhhh. Ohhhh.  
 They don't really mean it.  
 They don't mean all those hateful things they say.  
 Or do.  
 They don't intend to hurt you.  
 They'll grow out of it.  
 Deep deep down,  
 some meager part of them  
 really does care about you.  
 They—  
 They—  
 They really do feel some kind of love for you.  
 'Cause when it comes down to it  
 we're a family.

Are we not?  
 A family.  
 BUT IT'S NOT TRUE!  
 IT IS NOT TRUE!  
 They're never going to take care of you.  
 'Cause it's all about them!  
 Do they notice you have needs?  
 Do - not - make - me - laugh.  
 They will never be your social security.  
 Your IRA.  
 Your golden parachute.  
 When they're ready  
 they will drop you out a window  
 so they can build  
 a little love nest of their own.  
 I WARNED YOU!  
 I WARNED YOU!  
 YOU WOULD NOT LISTEN!

*(HE takes the mascara from her.)*

HE

I met someone who cares about me.  
 He seems to care.

SHE

Seems to.

HE

Maybe that's enough...  
 Don't be that way.  
*Eh, Maman.*  
 Can you only share the crap with me?  
 Not something that makes me happy?

SHE

You expect me to share your happy gonads?

HE

Is that all it is?  
 Is that all you think I feel?

SHE

You tell me.

*(HE faces directly into the "camera".)*

HE

I'm very particular  
about who gets in my pants.  
If there's no cash involved,  
he better be LOADED.  
Loaded with animal magnetism.  
And when you find a guy who is  
-loaded-  
will you be ready to light the fuse  
on that big huge keg of dynamite down there  
just waiting to explode?  
You will  
with lip gloss.  
Nothing-  
nothing sets off fireworks in a man  
like a  
shimmering  
moist  
and luscious  
pair of  
labia-red lips.  
Light a fire  
that sends smoke signals  
straight from your lips  
to his pants.  
Let him know that  
tonight-  
tonight the natives are restless.  
And your mouth murmurs the promise  
that in the jungle of tonight  
there is a savage waiting-  
waiting inside you,  
ready to pounce,  
ready to smear lipstick  
all over that stick of dynamite.  
And nothing spells promise  
to a man  
like the sizzle of your lips.  
The sizzle that comes from  
lip  
gloss.  
R-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!

\* \* \*

SHE

And me? What about me?

HE

I'll do what I can.

SHE

That is not a lot to take to the bank.

Look—

Look—

What do you expect me to do?

If you gave me a little warning—

I— I—

What do you expect me to do now?

Tonight!!

Tonight!!

I—

I don't know what to say.

HE

Wow!

There really IS something new under the sun.

*(In silence they turn from each other, SHE begins putting on more mascara.)*

HE

Don't you think you've  
piled enough on already?

SHE

Have I?

HE

You'll find someone, Ma.  
You always do.  
Someone better at taking care—

SHE

I always find someone?  
You truly live in a state of delusion.  
When is the last time I FOUND someone?  
The last time you saw some new dog  
sniffing around these parts?

Take off the god damn blinders!

(beat)

SHE

There's no one left out there.  
Not for me.  
Not anymore.

HE

That's the spirit, Ma! ...  
Don't you see?  
That's what I thought, too.

SHE

No!  
You can't!  
You cannot leave here tonight.  
Just like that  
with no warning!  
*Impossible!*  
I have no money—  
Nowhere to go—  
No one to—  
no— no—  
I don't even know where to start.  
I don't even know what I need to KNOW!

HE

You can have the money from tonight.  
That's a start.

SHE

What money?

HE

From the date.  
The guy who's coming over.

SHE

Oh wonderful! Wonderful!  
Do I get to keep the tip jar too?

HE

(shrugs) It's a lot of money.  
 You can have it.  
 All of it.  
 And this guy?  
 He could turn into something regular.

SHE

Like all your other "regulars"?

HE

What does that mean?

SHE

You have no regulars!  
 You don't get people to want to come back.

HE

Well, I—

SHE

Get out of your shell  
 and face the facts!  
 You don't!  
 You don't have regulars!  
 And do you want to know why?

HE

I have a feeling I'm gonna find out.

SHE

They don't come back  
 because they can see right through you.  
 People who want to be dominated?—  
 I know these people—  
 They can tell a mile away  
 that you are putting on—  
 that you are trying to put on an act.  
 Your leathers and your whips and your sneers—  
 It's all one big phony mask.

HE

It's role-playing.  
 That's the game.

SHE

But there has to be  
at least a little something there.  
There isn't!  
Anyone can tell,  
you are the master of nobody.

*(beat)*

SHE

*(softly)* I'm sorry.  
But you aren't.

HE

And no one's slave either.  
*Cher Maman.*

*(beat)*

HE

If I were you  
I'd get ready  
for that guy tonight.  
You're gonna need the money.

SHE

*Bâtard! Bastard!*

*(Looking into her eyes, HE begins applying  
mascara to her lashes.)*

HE

I was thinking  
The money I've been saving—  
I have a little put away  
for the ocularist.  
For my custom, you know—

*(HE gestures toward his eyepatch.)*

SHE

The Oedipus Fund.

HE

Don't call it that!

Oedipus Fund!  
Oedipus Fund!

SHE

STOP IT!

HE

Look—  
If you can run around in circles  
flapping your arms and shrieking  
“I was in my mother’s cunt!  
I was in my mother’s cunt!”  
Then I should be able to—

SHE

I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD!  
Get over it already!

HE

Anyway.  
Your savings.  
Does he mean that much to you?

SHE

He doesn’t harbor  
a lifetime of resentment.  
Doesn’t keep reminding me  
of every little shortcoming.  
I guess that means something.

HE

Give him time.

SHE

Oh fuck it!

HE

I’m not saying him.  
Men are like that.  
It’s in their DNA.

SHE

You would know.

HE

SHE

Yes.  
Yes I would!

HE

I don't feel like I have to pretend with him.  
And he works in video.

SHE

Porno?

HE

Not only.  
And he DOES have big feet.

SHE

Dime a dozen.

HE

Voice of experience.

SHE

Wish I still had some of those dimes.

HE

We'll get you some.  
Hungry?  
We have time.

SHE

Time.  
Time.  
Not enough time.  
They one thing  
they don't make any more of.

HE

Wrong!  
That's the only thing  
they DO make more of.  
Ma,  
you have all the time  
you're ever gonna need.  
You know what your problem is?

SHE

Why do I think I'm going to find out?

HE

You always forget about the things you got,  
all the things you already got.

SHE

You'll find out.  
You lose so much.  
And some of it you never got to—  
you never even had.

HE

That's just what I'm afraid of.  
But let's don't think about all of that now.  
You ready for a little grub?

SHE

Escargot?

HE

Let's see what we can find.

*(SHE exits, lights fade to black.)*

\* \* \*

*(Lights up. HE faces "the camera".)*

HE

Wrap your hungry lips around  
this tender morsel of flesh.  
Let your tongue explore  
the rich, moist flavor of the juicy meat.  
Press firmly into the utter succulence.  
Feel the juice explode.  
A torrent of musky sauce  
coats your throat,  
fills your mouth  
with the surprising,  
devastating taste of life itself.  
Savor those thick heavy gobs,  
oozing over your quivering lips.  
Revel in the power of the fleshy goo  
as it slowly works its way

down over your chin,  
 an ecstasy of potent flavors  
 intoxicating rush of earthy aromas,  
 culminating in a sensual climax  
 fit for a queen.

Mmmmm—mm!

Don't call them snails.

They're escargot.

Turn any drab, everyday meal  
 into a potent, royal feast!

A feast  
 of escargot!

\* \* \*

*(Lights fade. HE exits. Lights up SHE and SHADOW enter, hugging, kissing, laughing. SHADOW tosses aside his leather jacket. They lie down together. HE enters, stands in a different "room".)*

HE and SHE

A door closes, the world divides.

HE

They close the door,  
 you're on your own,  
 alone to imagine what must go on  
 behind all the giggles, all the moans,  
 all that beefy masculine laughter  
 mixing with grunts,  
 blending with growls.  
 In your own world outside the door  
 you wonder  
 have they grown coats of fur?  
 swaths and patches of hair  
 you never get to see?  
 Could they now be wolfman and she-wolf  
 aching to let out a howl  
 but constrained in their abandon?  
 The cascading sounds—  
 so animalogical to little ears—  
 regularly punctuated with guarded  
 shhhhhhh,  
 constant modulation  
 of their little fling with joy,

reminding them—  
the world beyond their door.  
Grim reminder,  
how fleeting the nowness  
they inhabit.  
They cling to these moments  
these stolen moments  
they do not wish to share,  
not with that other world  
outside their door,  
not with my world,  
population: one.  
I stand there alone  
and I listen.  
I reach for his jacket  
carelessly tossed.  
I hold the leather to my nose.  
Rub the weathered skin  
upon the softness of my own,  
a confusion of grease and smoke,  
oil and sweat,  
precum, aftershave.  
The bold scent  
scrapes and scratches,  
clawing its way  
up into my tender nostrils,  
molecules of him  
blend inside me.  
Sounds of their pleasuring recede  
as I slip into this jacket  
this second skin  
so casually shed  
on his way to their world apart.  
My own world—  
population: one—  
acquires sounds of its own,  
my own grunts and growls.  
What kind of beast would I make?  
What kind of hair  
will one day cover this naked body?  
What inheritance  
does this heavy outer skin of his confer?  
Has the Wolfman gene been passed as yet?  
Who—  
in years to come—  
who will look into my eyes

searching for a world  
 of private pleasure?  
 Who will I choose  
 when we get to close our private door?  
 When do I get to explore that world—  
 population: two?  
 Who will settle for me?  
 The questions.  
 The questions.  
 But for now  
 only grunts and growls  
 escape from my mouth  
 as I wrap my arms  
 around this emblem of him,  
 caressing myself.  
 I think  
 I still feel  
 a trace of his heat.

*(Lights fade. SHADOW exits. SHE takes a seat at her vanity table. HE joins her carrying a Pop-Tart.)*

HE

Hi Ma.  
 Gotta match?  
 There's a line that doesn't get much action lately.

SHE

What for?

HE

We're having a little party  
 before our guest arrives.

SHE

No we aren't.  
 And I already told you—

HE

Oh but we are.  
 Yes.  
 We're having a little party.

I'm not dressed.  
I have nothing to wear.

HE

It's come as you are.

SHE

Then it's not a party.

HE

Oh yes.  
We're celebrating.

SHE

What?  
What are we celebrating?

HE

It's a birthday.

SHE

Whose?  
Whose birthday?

HE

Well it's not yours.

SHE

Whose then?

HE

Come on, guess. ...  
Ta da!

SHE

It's not Christmas.  
Your birthday is on Christmas.

HE

That's what I always thought.

SHE

Well, it is.

HE

That's what you always told me.

*(HE drills a birthday candle into a Pop-Tart.)*

SHE

Stop all this foolishness.

HE

Did you ever get your chart done, Ma?  
They say you can learn a lot about yourself  
through astrology.  
I find that's true.

SHE

A long time ago.

HE

You need to know where and when  
you were born.  
Exactly where.  
Exactly when.  
For best results.  
Most accurate.

SHE

It was Christmas Day, Nineteen—

HE

I'm not a Capricorn, Ma.  
Am I?

SHE

I remember it was on—

HE

Turns out, I'm a Scorpio.

*(HE lights the candle.)*

SHE

I should know when you were born,  
shouldn't I?

HE

I was at the hospital.

SHE

I was too.

HE

I went there, Ma.  
To the records office.  
I saw the records.  
They gave me my own copy to keep.  
Want to see it?

SHE

They must have made a mistake.  
Mixed you up with someone else.

HE

I don't think so, Ma.  
They had your name too.  
No listing for him, though.  
Just an immaculate white expanse  
of virgin territory.  
No testament to any male role  
in my creation.  
Weird, Ma,  
you know?  
But the date box  
that was filled in.

SHE

I don't know why you're going into all of this.

HE

Let's sing Happy Birthday.  
C'mon.  
You've gotta know the words.  
Happy birthday to—

SHE

I will not!  
STOP ALL THIS FOOLISHNESS!

HE

I just want to know why.

SHE

THIS INSTANT!

HE

Why would someone lie about—

SHE

Don't want to hear this!

HE

lie about someone's birthday?

SHE

Not listening!

HE

It wasn't to get me into school a year early.  
 The dates don't add up.  
 Did it make you feel like  
 the Virgin Mary?  
 Now that would be funny.  
 Wouldn't it, Ma?

SHE

You watch your mouth, Mister!

HE

All those years,  
 you can't imagine how unfair  
 I thought it was  
 that other kids got to get  
 Christmas presents  
 AND birthday presents.  
 But you convince yourself  
 that if it makes you special  
 there's gotta be a price to pay.  
 But you're not special  
 And still you pay the price.

SHE

You have no idea how hard it was.

HE

Oh but I do.  
 I have a very good idea.  
 You made sure of that, Ma.  
 You made sure I knew  
 how much of a burden it was to—  
 what shall we call it?—

to "raise"?—  
 I know,  
 to "care for"— that's good!—  
 what a burden it was  
 to care for a child.

SHE

This is the gratitude you get.  
 You scrimp and you scrape to get by.  
 You do everything you know how  
 to provide,  
 to put food on the table every day.  
 Day after day after day.

HE

Cue violins.

SHE

And all you get for your trouble—  
 all you end up with  
 is a load of resentment,  
 resentment and blame  
 that you didn't buy enough presents.  
 Resentment, blame and spite,  
 followed by abandonment.  
 I hope you never have to be a parent.  
 A single parent.

HE

Don't you want to be  
 a doting grandmama some day?

SHE

Not to the spawn of you!

HE

Don't worry.  
 There's no grandkids  
 in your future.  
 No more presents  
 you'll have to buy.

SHE

Hateful!

HE

You couldn't—  
 you couldn't let me have  
 even one day a year  
 that was just about me.  
 That's it isn't it?  
 It wasn't the presents.  
 It was the attention.  
 Wasn't it, Ma?

SHE

Ungrateful.  
 No matter how much you give,  
 it's never enough.  
 They always want more, more, more.

HE

Happy birthday ...  
 to ...  
 me.

*(HE blows out the candle.)*

\* \* \*

HE

Kohl.  
 It's amazing the power contained  
 in such a humble blend  
 of powder and oil.  
 A potion to unlock some of  
 the mysteries of life.  
 Mysteries, at least,  
 as they exist in Grade 9.  
 It's not like I was wearing  
 an all-out complement  
 of eye shadow, eye liner,  
 rouge and mascara  
 or anything.  
 It was just a tiny black line,  
 a bit of kohl  
 defining the perimeters of the eye socket.  
 A tentative effort  
 to declare a hint  
 of personal style.  
 Practically under the radar.

Discreet.  
But in Grade 9,  
discretion *n'existe pas*.  
There's no such a thing.  
Nothing, but nothing,  
escapes the notice  
of prying,  
inquisitive,  
all-absorbing eyes.  
Fellow students despised my kohl—  
which I was okay with—  
my home room teacher  
viewed it as a threat.  
Which is how I landed  
in front of the principal  
facing yet another set  
of disapproving eyes.  
Old Man—  
Doctor Manning,  
if you please,  
was a wrinkled and withered  
spectre of a man,  
better know as Pussyfoot  
by the student body  
for his habit  
of skulking around the school  
trying to catch you  
up to no good.  
Sitting at his desk,  
Pussyfoot set aside  
some carefully arranged papers,  
told me to come around  
to his side  
of the heavy polished oak desk,  
and had me bend over  
so he could get a closer look  
at the offending cosmetology.  
"Boys should not wear makeup"  
he said,  
his dulcet tone betraying a sadness  
blended with authority  
suggesting in a weary way  
that he was trying to prevent  
another future,  
an entire incipient life,  
from being thrown away

before it barely got underway.  
"I cannot stop you doing  
whatever it is you want to do  
when you are at home,"  
he told me,  
"but if you want to stay in school  
you'll have to take it off."  
He said this so matter-of-factly.  
"Boys don't need makeup."  
And as he stared into my face  
and I stared back at his,  
holding my gaze,  
unflinching  
I thought I saw  
a hint of a plea.  
"This," I thought to myself.  
"This, is what a man's eyes look like."  
"Okay," I said.  
"Okay."  
He opened the bottom drawer of his desk  
and took out a jar of cold cream,  
and handed them to me  
along with some tissues.  
"There's a mirror  
on the inside of the closet door,"  
he said.  
I opened the door,  
opened the jar,  
and the heavy oily perfume of goop  
smacked me in the face.  
I began obliterating  
my stab at personal style,  
first turning the thin black line  
into a smear,  
one big raccoon eye,  
which I gradually wiped  
all away.

*(SHADOW enters, stands behind him, and  
choreographs his actions with what is spoken.)*

HE (cont'd)

As I finished,  
Pussyfoot appeared behind me  
in the mirror.  
"Much better," he said.

"Much better,"  
as he leaned in closer,  
looking over my shoulder  
our faces reflecting back at us,  
framed together in the silver glass,  
his body touching mine.  
"Much more masculine,"  
he whispered.  
I felt him lean into me  
as he reached around  
and ran his finger over the  
soft blond hairs sprouting on my upper lip,  
hairs that were almost now a mustache.  
And as he said,  
"You'll have to start shaving soon,"  
I thought to myself  
"This is what a man's body feels like."  
"Won't you?"  
"I guess so."  
"You're well on your way  
to becoming an adult,"  
he told me.  
His body pressing harder into me,  
our eyes locked in the mirror.  
"You look much better like this.  
You don't need such childish behavior any more."  
His body beginning to rub against me  
pressing,  
releasing,  
pressing once again.  
His finger still playing  
with the hairs on my lip.  
"Almost an adult."  
"This," I thought to myself.  
"This is what a man's desire looks like."  
It looked like excitement  
blended with fear.  
"Such a handsome young man."  
He moved harder against me,  
angled us into the closet,  
closed the door behind us.  
Gingerly he turned me around  
his parts now rubbing against mine in the dark.  
Slowly my body began to move in response.  
I could feel him shaking,  
heard his heavy breathing

smelled the bitter stain of tobacco on his breath.  
 His hands now fumbled with my zipper.  
 As he pulled me out  
 my soft flesh became hard  
 even as I tried to keep it soft.  
 I felt his hand,  
 now tender and greasy,  
 slathered in the oily cream  
 working on me in the dark.  
 "This," I thought.  
 "This is what it's like  
 on the other side of the door.  
 This is what it's like.  
 This.  
 And this.  
 And...  
 thi-i-i-i-s-s-s."

*(SHADOW exits. HE takes a seat at his vanity  
 table.)*

SHE

MEN ARE FUCKERS!  
 MEN! BOYS! WHATEVER!  
 THEY'RE ALL JUST FUCKERS!  
 THEY CARE ABOUT ONLY ONE THING—  
 NO— NO—  
 THEY CARE ABOUT THREE THINGS:  
 THEIR COCK AND THEIR BALLS!  
 NOTHING ELSE!  
 NO ONE ELSE!  
 ESPECIALLY NO ONE ELSE!  
 YOU THINK THEY CARE A SPIT ABOUT YOU?  
 YOU THINK THEY APPRECIATE  
 SOMEONE WHO THREW AWAY THEIR WHOLE LIFE,  
 THEIR WHOLE GODDAMN LIFE  
 TO TAKE CARE OF A BRAT?  
 TO TAKE CARE OF THEM AS A BRAT?  
 HELL NO!  
 WHAT KIND OF FUCKING FAIRYTALE WORLD  
 DO YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE?  
 HOW FAR WOULD YOU HAVE TO  
 TWIST AND DISTEND  
 THE TRUE NATURE OF EXISTENCE?  
 WHAT WOULD IT TAKE  
 TO END UP WITH ONE SHOT OF APPRECIATION

THE SIZE OF A GOOBER OF SPIT  
 FROM AN UNGRATEFUL BRAT.  
 A PUNK YOU SPEND PRACTICALLY YOUR WHOLE LIFE  
 PROTECTING AND WORRIED ABOUT,  
 OBSESSING OVER,  
 NURSING—  
 NURSING HIM!!—  
 LIKE SOME MOTHER HEN OF A BIRD  
 WITH NO BETTER PURPOSE TO YOUR LIFE  
 THAN DROPPING WORMS  
 INTO THEIR ENDLESSLY GAPING MAW!  
 FEED ME! FEED ME! FEED ME!  
 CAW! CAW! CAW! CAW! CAW!  
 YOU TRY!  
 YOU TRY SHAPING THE LITTLE FUCKER'S LIFE.  
 YOU TRY FROM THE TIME HE'S A SQUIRT  
 IN SOME UNKNOWN ASSHOLE'S CUM  
 UNTIL HE TURNS INTO HIS OWN PARTICULAR KIND  
 OF AN UNGRATEFUL LITTLE FUCK!  
 TRYING TO TEACH HIM WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT LIFE  
 ALL THAT YOU'VE LEARNED  
 AND DECENT MANNERS  
 AND CARING ABOUT THE FEELINGS OF OTHER PEOPLE  
 AND HOW TO GET ALONG IN THE WORLD  
 AND HOW TO TRY TO BE A SUCCESS INSTEAD OF A FUCK-UP!  
 A MISERABLE EXCUSE FOR A—  
 BUT IT'S HOPELESS! HOPELESS!  
 IT'S HOPE-LE-E-E-E-S-S-S-S!  
 WHAT YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DONE—  
 WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED IS  
 THAT INSTEAD OF ALWAYS CODDLING HIM  
 INSTEAD OF TRYING TO BE THE PERFECT PARENT  
 LIKE OUT OF SOME BOOK BY DOCTOR SPOCK.  
 WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE  
 IS LET HIM KNOW  
 THAT YOU ARE FOR REAL.  
 LET HIM FEEL EXACTLY HOW REAL  
 YOU CAN BE.

*(SHE grabs him, puts him over her knee,  
 yanks down his pants, and spansks him. Hard.)*

THIS IS FOR STEALING MY MONEY.  
 THIS IS FOR STEALING MY LIFE.  
 THIS IS FOR ALL THE MESSSES YOU MADE  
 IN MY MAKEUP CASE.

AND WHY THE SMELL OF COLD CREAM ALL THE DAMN TIME?  
 AND THIS IS FOR STAYING OUT ALL NIGHT.  
 AND THIS IS FOR STAYING IN WHEN YOU NEEDN'T HAVE,  
 CHASING AWAY WHAT FEW FRIENDS I EVER HAD,  
 SNEAKING AROUND OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR  
 MAKING SURE NONE OF THEM—  
 NOT ONE OF THEM—  
 FELT AT HOME ENOUGH  
 TO WANT TO STICK AROUND.  
 AND THIS, YOU PRICK!  
 YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS FOR.  
 DON'T YOU?  
 DON'T YOU?  
 THIS!  
 AND THIS!  
 AND THIS!

HE

Easy, Ma.  
 Easy.

*(SHE jumps up, dumping him, throwing her arms  
 up in the air, like a thief caught in the act.)*

SHE

You know damn well what this one's for!

That is what you ought to have done.  
 Maybe then you'd have let him know  
 there are feelings in this world.  
 There are people in this world  
 who really do have some feelings.

...

HE

Arise, Grade 9!  
 Arise all you somnambulators!  
 Arise you saps, you zombies.  
 Arise. Allow the slumbering scales  
 to fall from your eyes!  
 For I walk now among you.  
 With you, not of you.  
 If you but knew—

SHE

AND FURTHERMORE!  
 MEN HAVE NO *SAVOIR FAIRE*—  
 EXCEPT FOR THE FRENCH!  
 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO *JOIE DE VIVRE*?  
 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LIVING A LIFE FULL OF JOY?  
 AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO EVER THINKS ABOUT  
 THE PLEASURES OF THE QUOTIDIAN?  
 EXCEPT FOR THE FRENCH—  
 THEY KNOW HOW TO TREAT A WOMAN—  
 THEY KNOW PLEASURE IN ALL THE SENSES—  
 NOT JUST THE GONADS—  
 EXCEPT FOR THE FRENCH,  
 MEN ALL STINK!

*(SHE turns and leaves.)*

HE

Oh, Grade 9.  
 If you but knew  
 what I now know.  
 If you could but see  
 through my eyes  
 and know the world  
 not as stultifying crypt,  
 but throbbing,  
 undulating webs of compulsion,  
 networks of urges and drives,  
 cravings and longings,  
 passions and hungers,  
 subcutaneous jungles  
 of lust and of sex.  
 Raw, raw, raw, raw sex.  
 This the universe that now is mine,  
 where rigid flesh summons forth  
 seeds of creation.  
 A universe in constant motion.  
 I, the proton,  
 alluring, enticing, captivating,  
 locked at last in a dance with you,  
 you electron spinning dizzy in my orbit  
 animating space between us,  
 charging the void,  
 turning the air to fields of vibration,  
 pulsing electric and true.  
 Every orbit an oscillation

between the hold of attraction  
 or an impulse to fling away into the forever.  
 Stay, electron, stay.  
 Your humble—  
 Your mighty proton would have you stay.  
 Together we will keep the world alive.

...

I love Grade 9.  
 I love my school.  
 I love this world!  
 Oh somnambulators.  
 Would you could know the world I know.  
 The throbbing, pulsing, vibrant secrets  
 shimmering right before your eyes.  
 Everywhere you look,  
 carnal eruptions  
 triggered to explode.  
 If you could feel the power within you,  
 that which I have felt,  
 Grade 9,  
 and will again  
 and again and again and again.  
 The scrim of the world torn asunder  
 once you have been touched by another,  
 held in the palm of another,  
 slithery, frictionless,  
 gooey and slick.  
 Softness of youth now cured,  
 now become hard.  
 Innocence,  
 a childish thing to set aside,  
 Grade 9.  
 Well, perhaps, not quite so innocent.  
 But intuitions, suspicions, impulses,  
 fevered adolescent fantasies,  
 forever now confirmed.  
 You have had your confirmation.  
 You take your place,  
 you feel a part.  
 Now you belong—  
 somehow belong—  
 miraculous transformation—  
 you are a part of a teeming world  
 of generation/regeneration.  
 Rivers of desire.  
 Oceans of experience.

Watersheds of furtive pleasure,  
 Grade 9.  
 You have felt a something running deep,  
 tributaries running deep.  
 Oh somnambulators,  
 if only I could tell you,  
 if only I could show you how.  
 But this we all discover on our own.  
 With someone else,  
 yet all alone.

HE and SHE

There are moments—

*(SHE watches as HE picks up a phone. He's clearly talking to the one who has him entranced. SHE watches him. HE is not aware of her. HE appears animated, engaged.)*

SHE

There are moments  
 you can look at someone  
 and he feels so unfamiliar,  
 as if you do not know him,  
 never knew him,  
 that for all these years  
 it has been some mask  
 you've been watching.  
 But now,  
 suddenly,  
 something unfathomable  
 presents itself,  
 some quality you never even remotely dreamed  
 was part of his make-up,  
 has softly insinuated itself,  
 has reconfigured  
 the submerged fascia of emotion,  
 has tilted his head a degree,  
 widened his eyes,  
 and on this lips  
 painted an almost-smile.  
 A smile?

*(HE fondles himself as he speaks on the phone.)*

HE

I'm looking at a cock.  
 I'm looking at a cock  
 and it has your name written all over it.  
 Peter.

SHE

And yet,  
 and yet it seems so natural,  
 seems to belong,  
 as though it had been there all along.  
 You could be looking at a stranger.  
 You could.

HE

... It went okay.  
 Of course she wasn't happy about it.  
 But she never is.  
 She'll survive.  
 ... I told her she can have  
 the money I was saving for  
 the ocularist.  
 ... It'll just have to wait a bit,  
 that's all.  
 ... No. Not wimping out.  
 ... It's my eye!

SHE

Is it a part of him  
 he reveals to society  
 to the world beyond us,  
 but always turns off in the vicinity of you?  
 Or are they facets of him always there  
 that you chose not to see?  
 Is it a hunger that has burned  
 deep, deep, deep inside of him,  
 waiting all along  
 for one to arrive  
 who will feed him?

HE

So.  
 What are you wearing?  
 ... You don't want to know.  
 No. I'll put them on later.  
 ... Of course, not.

Who wears leather all the time?  
 ... Well, not my identity, exactly.  
 It's more for role play.  
 Something for the customers.  
 Not who I really really really am.  
 You're going to see parts of me  
 I don't show everyone else.  
 The things I'm going to do for you.  
 I'm going to curl your toes  
 and blow your little mind.  
 ... Not "little" mind.  
 For such a hot, hot, steamy hot man,  
 you're awful touchy.  
 ... SORRY!

SHE

Maybe a harbinger that appears  
 as you are about to lose him,  
 a farewell reveal  
 so you get to see  
 how he will move out in the world,  
 how he will look without you.  
 How the world will view him in flight,  
 when he gets to fly all alone.

HE

... I'm sorry that I'm sorry.  
 You don't want me to say I'm sorry?  
 I mean.  
 ... Masculine?  
 Of course I am.  
 Dominant?  
 Yes definitely dominant.  
 But that's not the whole picture.  
 You know that by now.  
 Didn't last night show you  
 how complex,  
 how versatile I can be?  
 That's not—  
 ... What are you getting at?

SHE

Could it be the absence of you  
 making space in him  
 for some happiness he could not feel  
 until now?

Or  
 is it an entire world you see  
 that has a life beyond you,  
 a solemn reminder  
 that if you are no longer there,  
 that WHEN you are no longer there,  
 the world simply continues on,  
 on and on and on and on,  
 will not even notice  
 most of the time  
 that you were once a part  
 of all that is?  
 All that has been?

HE

... Sure.  
 If that's what you want.  
 I can be that for you.  
 It's just that when I'm with you  
 I feel like I can—  
 I want to open up to you  
 in ways I don't with—  
 Well, that seems pretty shallow to me.  
 This is not about role play for me.  
 This is REAL.  
 It's real!  
 You get that, don't you?

SHE

Will there remain not even a void,  
 no indelible tattoo of regret,  
 no flesh feeling hunger  
 for the absence of your touch?  
 Will no furrows remain,  
 no impression left in the shadows  
 where once you moved,  
 where once you trod upon the land?  
 Is this the promise you now read  
 upon his face?

HE

... Is that all?  
 Is that all you really want—  
 ... I mean.  
 If it's so important to you,  
 I can do that.

I can be that for you.  
 I can be whatever you want.  
 ... I didn't mean shallow.  
 I—  
 Fuck!  
 Yes I DID!  
 I DID mean shallow.  
 If that's the only kind of person  
 you can relate to,  
 if you're looking for only one type—  
 one stereotype—  
 then...  
 This didn't come up just now.  
 Did it?  
 ... I've gotta go.  
 To be continued.

SHE

You're supposed to hope  
 they have a better life than you.  
 But what if your life  
 never got underway?  
 What do you hope it's better than?  
 He thinks GOD is keeping an eye out for him.  
 Well, I hope that eye  
 is more pretty than the world  
 he's watching over.  
 'Cause if we're it...  
 If we're the best that God can do...

\* \* \*

HE

Are you changed yet?  
 He'll be here soon.

SHE

I told you.  
 I'm not doing it.

HE

What?

SHE

I... am... not... do... ing.... it.

HE  
Yes... you... are.

SHE  
It's sick  
and it's degrading  
and it's twisted.

HE  
And your point is?  
Look—  
It pays the rent.  
How did you happen to suddenly stumble upon  
this particular nugget of morality?

SHE  
I was at a birthday party.

HE  
Ah.

SHE  
Ah.

HE  
And one of your lies,  
one of your dark little secrets  
has been dragged into the light of day  
so it could shrivel up and die,  
and Mama isn't pleased.  
Mama isn't happy.  
Get over it, Ma.  
We have a job to do.

SHE  
Your work.  
Your job.  
You can leave me out of it.  
Dark secrets!

HE  
But Ma.  
It's the family business.  
It's just theatre.  
Just something we do.

SHE

Nothing means anything to you,  
does it?  
It's all an act.

HE

In this business, yeah.  
Dates mean something.  
And hours.  
And minutes.  
We have an appointment.

SHE

Count me out. (*exiting*)  
And now that you've suddenly discovered  
something you do care about,  
that does mean something,  
I think I have something for you  
I think I have your birthday present.

HE

As usual,  
you overcompensate.  
And overreact.  
While you're in there, Ma  
hurry up and get changed.  
Our generous gentleman caller  
will be here any minute.

SHE

(*off*) You mean your kinky voyeur  
with a mother fetish.

HE

We're all voyeurs, Ma.

SHE

(*off*) I'm not that weird.  
I never wanted to do this  
and I shouldn't have let you talk me into it  
even considering it.  
I'm not doing it.

HE

But, Ma.  
You look so pretty.  
And think about our reputation.  
How bad it could be for business.  
There!  
There's something I care about.

*(Nothing happens.)*

HE

Ma?

*(SHE enters, a mess. Her makeup has been smeared with cold cream. She holds a bag out to him.)*

HE

Ahhh! Look at you!

SHE

Go on.  
It's for you.  
For your birthday.

*(HE doesn't take it. SHE pulls a leather jacket out of the bag.)*

SHE

Remember?

HE

... Serge?

SHE

Everybody's favorite!  
Everybody's favorite French chef.  
Go ahead.  
Put it on.  
I think it might fit you now.

HE

Why...?

SHE

*(insistent)* Put it on!

*(HE does, slowly.)*

SHE

So masculine.  
I mean—  
once you get past the mascara and eyeliner.

HE

Where did you get this?

SHE

He left in such a hurry.  
Remember?

HE

We weren't doing anything.  
That's what's so pathetic.

SHE

What is pathetic is what you were doing  
and who you were doing it with.

HE

What you saw—  
and—  
thanks to you—  
I was in no condition to explain—

SHE

Thanks to me?  
Thanks to me?  
Don't you try to justify—

HE

There is nothing to justify!

SHE

Nothing that CAN be justified  
you mean.

HE

Don't tell me what I mean!

SHE

Stop lying and I won't have to—

HE

I am not lying.

SHE

Just drop it.  
 You're leaving.  
 Go ahead leave.  
*(holding out the jacket)* And take him with you.  
 Again.

HE

*(as he swats away the jacket)* Oh no you don't!  
 You don't get to drop one of your  
 toxic bombs of recrimination  
 and then tell me "Never mind!"  
 Not this time, you don't.  
 You need to hear this  
 you nasty, bitter, spiteful woman

SHE

Go ahead, then!  
 You want to spew more of your lies?  
 Go ahead!  
 Spew!

HE

He was showing me.  
 That's all that happened.

SHE

Showing you his penis!  
 That's all that HAPPENED?  
 You are such a liar!  
 And even if it WAS true!

HE

It was!

SHE

Liar!  
 You are such a liar!  
 And don't try to tell me  
 you had no one else to ask.  
 What about Pussyfoot?

HE

Pussyfoot?

SHE

I saw him drive you home.  
Many times.  
Many, many times.  
I know you!

HE

He was helping me with math.

SHE

He was helping you with biology!  
I'm not as clueless as you think I am.  
I never interfered, did I?  
I never interfered with whatever it is  
you wanted to do outside of the home.  
But how could you, with Serge?  
In my home!  
In my own home!  
With my own—  
He was practically my fiance.

HE

It's true! I swear it's true!  
I wanted to know  
Why I was different—  
I asked him—

SHE

Oh I'm sure you asked for it!  
That much I am sure of!

HE

Not like that!

SHE

He was practically your father!  
Practically my husband!

HE

Yeah, well.  
I never had a real father.  
Not with YOU for a mother!

*(SHE grabs his riding crop, flailing.)*

SHE

You hateful!  
Hateful!  
Hateful!  
Hateful!

HE

Go on!  
Take the other one out now!

*(SHE drops the crop.)*

HE

Who would you gonna blame it on this time?

SHE

I gave him thirty seconds to get out  
and told him if I ever saw his face again  
I'd call immigration.

HE

You didn't have to do that.

SHE

I wish I could have done the same to you.  
Narcissist!  
My big mistake—  
I can tell now—  
was asking them— begging them—  
to let me have you  
so I could raise you.

HE

Ma—

SHE

You didn't know that, did you?  
That they didn't want me to raise you?  
My parents, the hospital, everyone.  
They took you away from me  
and gave you to my aunt.  
But she found out.  
Oh she found out soon enough  
what you're like.

So self-centered,  
 such a miserable soul.  
 So they finally gave in  
 and let me have you back.  
 A little present for me  
 they delivered into my arms  
 on Christmas day.  
 Lucky, lucky, me.  
 Well I want no more of it.  
 No more of the accusations  
 No more running in circles around  
 every man I bring home yelling  
 "A father! A father! A father!"  
 Kiss that one goodbye.  
 And that and that and that one.

HE

That only happened once.

SHE

Twice!  
 Three times!  
 No more gimmee gimmee gimmee  
 No more Pop-tarts!  
 And no more degradation!  
 I'm glad you're leaving.  
 Glad, you hear?

*(SHE wipes some cold cream off her face and  
 smears it all over his. The doorbell buzzes.)*

HE

I don't know any more if I am.

SHE

You are.  
 It's time.

HE

It you thought this little stunt  
 was going to preclude—

*(Doorbell buzzes again.)*

HE

Ma,

I think you just doubled our rate.

SHE

That's good.

I guess I'm gonna need the money.

*(Blackout.)*

\* \* \*

*(Lights up. HE is kneeling beside SHADOW and leaning on him, one arm around SHADOW's legs.)*

HE

Nothing says "I love you"  
like a blowjob.  
Nothing else can show  
how very much you care.  
Or say it so succinctly.  
Nothing's more effective  
at letting him feel  
that he's the top banana  
than sucking him off.  
Let him know you are  
one hungry carnivore  
and he's got just what you want.  
On your knees  
you move beyond the profane,  
you enter the realm of the sacred.  
Let him feel you.  
Let him feel your feast of adoration  
as you take  
as you eat  
of his flesh,  
of his body.  
Let him know  
that he is lord,  
he is master.  
Let him know  
he's the one you idolize.  
And he'll never forget  
that you are the one.  
You are the one who knows  
exactly what it takes,  
to blow his cares away.  
You don't do this for just any guy.

No.  
You do this for him.  
Only for him.  
Promise him anything.  
Just give him head.  
Blowjobs.  
It isn't sex.  
It's worship.  
Let - us - pray.  
This has been a public service announcement.

\* \* \*

SHE

Who does he think he's kidding?  
Doesn't he know?  
BJs are kid stuff.  
If you want a man,  
if you want a real man,  
you can bet he'll be looking for  
a piece of ass.  
Let's face facts,  
you don't put out a trail of birdseed  
when you want to catch a lion.  
You put out—  
Babe, you have to put out some meat.  
And when it comes to men,  
meat is spelled b-o-o-t-y.  
That's right,  
men are out for a booty call.  
Oh sure,  
what guy doesn't like a little head.  
But when it comes down to biology—  
and it always comes down to biology—  
a real man's gotta fuck.  
Someone or something.  
They don't seem to care all that much  
about the details.  
As long as it involves a pelvic thrust.  
They just want to put it somewhere  
warm and wet and tight.  
And I don't care how much technique  
you manage to accumulate,  
your mouth is never gonna be as tight  
as a piece of fresh booty.  
Unexplored virgin territory.

Something you can only offer once.  
And then maybe pretend  
and lie about it a few more times.  
"Oh I never done THAT before."  
It's boys, boys who go wild for BJs.  
But men,  
men are all about fucking.  
And that's one of those things  
your mother can never really teach you.  
One of those things in this world  
you're gonna have to  
find out on your own.

\* \* \*

*(Lights up. SHE is kneeling behind a dog bowl on the floor. HE is standing over her. He dangles a worm just out of reach, she tries to reach it, he eventually lets her have it. She eats it. He picks up an escargot and extracts one from its shell, dangles it out of reach, then feeds it to her. He drops more worms into her bowl, she looks up at him reluctantly, he thwacks his riding crop. She looks out in the house at the "generous gentleman", and down at the bowl.*

*SHADOW enters, gets HER to stand. They begin necking. HE joins them, tentatively. Lights fade to black.)*

END OF PLAY