

RUNNING COMMENTARY NO. 4

by

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58 PAGES

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"Recollection is a means not only of conserving but also of augmenting; something that is permeated by recollection has a double effect."

--From *The Seducer's Diary*
by Søren Kierkegaard

(RUNNING COMMENTARY NO. 4)

CAST OF PEOPLE AS THEY APPEAR

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. OPERATOR | 9. NANCY |
| 2. ALIX | 10. ASTRONAUT TOM |
| 3. OLD WOMAN | 11. AMANDA |
| 4. YOUNG MAN | 12. FRANK |
| 5. WOMAN | 13. GINO |
| 6. GIRLFRIEND | 14. MARY |
| 7. MAN | 15. VOICE |
| 8. IKE | |

SETTINGS

1. 911 emergency call of a future world
2. Old Woman Apartment
3. Space station on the moon
4. Ike's bar and grill
5. Garden of the old woman

** 911 CALL **

OPERATOR

911 emergency, is this an emergency?

ALIX

Oh god it's terrible, my son he's he's trapped in a car we're under attack so many people help us they're

OPERATOR

What's your name maam?

ALIX

ALIX! Uhhhhh, Alix Miranda.

OPERATOR

Okay Alix we're going to help you.

ALIX

Okay

OPERATOR

What is your son's name?

ALIX

Joey. Joey Miranda.

OPERATOR

Okay Alix, where are you?

ALIX

I'm on the commuter way under a pier

OPERATOR

Which pier?

ALIX

I don't know we had to surface suddenly...no no no oh god, jesus, it's... get away get away that's my son no stop stop pleeeeeeease

OPERATOR

Can you read the number on the pier Alix?

ALIX

IT'S IT'S SEVEN SIX

OPERATOR

Seven six

ALIX

The rest is fade... washed out I can't READ IT oh god where are we, hey! Where are we...[under the 96th street -----] okay ... it's the it's uh, under the 96th Street overpass?

OPERATOR

I'm tracing your call now maam. Please hold, do not hang up.

ALIX

LOOK! OVER THERE THERE'S MORE COMING OH GOD

OPERATOR

Alix, can you describe the attackers?

ALIX

WHAT! SNAKES the ah GIANT SNAKES ARE EVERYWHERE PEOPLE OH GOD

OPERATOR

One moment.

ALIX

THERE'S A DOZEN OR SO THEY'RE

OPERATOR

Are you still in the water?

ALIX

YES MY SON HE'S

OPERATOR

Alix you need to get out of the water immediately

ALIX

BUT JOEY, HE'S JUST A BABY MY JOEY

OPERATOR

Help is coming Alix, get out of the water now!

ALIX

I CAN SEE THE CAR, IT'S JUST BELOW THE SURFACE IT'S.

OPERATOR

GET OUT OF THE WATER ALIX!

** 911 OPERATOR **

OPERATOR

Sometimes there are random attacks from vicious brown wart covered sea snakes, their rattles are heard at great distances and intensity underwater, causing panic. And we come upon one of these snakes that has invaded a car and is injecting venom into each passenger, the car is on auto pilot and keeps going unaware of the malicious attack. A young boy, a pedestrian swimming above the cars, maybe three years old, is too curious and is caught in the snakes tail and is whipped into the car that has become a death chamber, the snake bites the boy on the neck and on the cheek, the boy is bleeding, suffering, the venom is coursing through his veins but he is not dead yet, the only thing that saves him is one of the passengers kicking the snake with a large underwater boot, the snake takes the boot and the passengers entire leg into his mouth and gags.

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT **

(Old Woman's apartment. YOUNG
MAN listens.)

OLD WOMAN

I don't know what's wrong with people. People have too much stuff on their shelves. Am I right or am I wrong?

...

I get up in the morning and I clean for two hours. I've done this my whole life. People don't clean nowadays, why? What's wrong with them? It just is what it is I guess. That's life. Am I right? Tell me if I'm right or if I'm wrong. I don't know.

** 911 OPERATOR CONT'D **

OPERATOR

The compartment of the car is now filled with water, the boy is asleep on a stranger's shoulder, the venom slowly eating away at his nervous system. Pedestrians watch the car floating just below the surface. Someone dials 911.

Water commuters are floating all around, tired, bleeding, hanging on to one last thread of life. The attack is one of many, the snakes are feasting everywhere. The numbers identifying the pier have faded and make it impossible to

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

confirm the location of the attack. The operator begins a trace, people who were floating now sink as they die. The three year old sleeps. There is a swarm of snakes devouring the commuters up and down the coast. The young boy sleeps for weeks. He recovers for the most part.

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT CONT'D **

OLD WOMAN

You know all this education is good, I'm not educated, I started high school but they needed me at home. So I never finished but I got streetwise, we all did, my father raised horses, we grew up with animals, if my brother were alive he'd be a hundred and one and if he'd had kids I'd have nieces older than me but he didn't, my niece is 70.

YOUNG MAN

Yeah.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS **

YOUNG MAN

When I'm walking down the street on my way to see an incredible piece of theater that I know is going to be incredible because people have told me so and I get to the corner of Lafayette and Canal and I think, my wife bought the tickets, or the ticket and so it is in her name and even though we're married we have different last names and I think when I get there they are going to say " you don't look like a woman, this ticket is in a woman's name" and I'll reply but I am her husband

-ah huh

and then someone will come up, another worker and say:

-I know the woman who bought this ticket. Who are you?

-I'm her husband

-Well do you have the credit card used to ...

-No.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

-Well this ticket is for her and it doesn't have your name on it and it doesn't even say for my husband on it.

Lot of people here tonight huh?

-Yeah.

-So...

-So we're sold out, you can go on the waiting list though, would you like to go on the waiting list.

-I know the playwright, she'll vouch for me, is she here?

-Who?

-The playwright.

-Huh that's funny.

-Why? I'm a playwright, so I guess I'll never do my shows here, then, so why would I want to do my shows here in this crappy space where nobody believes you, this ugly hole in the wall, in this shitty hole.

-Call the police.

-No wait, I'm sorry, I apologize.

-Too late.

I don't even believe that they called the police.

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT ANOTHER DAY **

(Apartment. YOUNG MAN and
OLD WOMAN speak.)

OLD WOMAN

It's there, always there in the same place. Why do you come up so late?

...

OLD WOMAN

What is that? You know I was never late, never ever. One time I was late. My boss, I worked down there on 9th street

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

and 3rd avenue, you know the building? Down there. One day my sister and I woke up and there was water running down the stairs, from a little drip, a little pin hole, how is that? You tell me, I don't know how you get so much water from a little drip, but Mr. Small, he's the plumber, oh he was a sweet man, he used to come whenever we called him, he was a good man, do you know Mr. Small, he had a plumbing shop right around the corner on 5th Avenue, you know the one? He said that it built up, I don't know how it built up from such a small little drip. What's the matter with people, if you have a leak you call the plumber why you gonna say nothing until there's a flood. I tell you my sister and I took care of this building, if it weren't for us, I don't know. Oh that landlady she didn't do nothing. She didn't even thank us for picking up the water. What kind of person? So we had to pick up all the water, all morning we spent picking up water, how does so much water come from such a little hole? I don't understand. Well my boss calls me up and says 'Where are ya's" I said "Oh, I'm picking up water.", "Picking up water" he says. "Yeah, there was a leak and a flood and no one is here so Mary and I are picking up water, all morning" I say. "Well you coming in?", "No," I says "We're still picking up water, tomorrow " I say "I'll be in tomorrow". I still don't understand how does so much water come from a pinhole.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS CONT'D **

YOUNG MAN

So now, I'm on West Broadway for one reason, the SoHo Grand, I love the SoHo Grand, I love to go in there and buy a ten dollar beer and sit in the soft chairs and talk to my friends while my eyes wander around the room soaking up the magnificent people sitting around me with wandering eyes. I don't want to know them, I just want to look at them and

then I'll know they are looking at me and we are all magnificent. We're all on team "cool." Or least that's how I feel in there until I look at myself in the mirror and I know I'm not on team cool but I was sitting with them. As I walk by there are magnificent people standing out front on their phones or waiting for a clean taxicab. One woman in particular is alone. She's on the phone talking sweetly to someone, her boyfriend or her dog maybe, maybe she had her dad hold the phone up to her dog's ear so she could whisper "I'm gonna give you a stuffed bull penis tonight when I get home sweet thing, my little rosey" Oh yeah and she's wearing white over black, A-line gauze over skin tight black, something soft, exposed legs, high boots, blonder than blonde hair, skin whiter than white, bone skinny.

** THE THEATER YOUNG MAN DESCRIBED **

(The theater.)

YOUNG MAN

Hi, here to pick up a ticket.

WOMAN

Name?

YOUNG MAN

Uh, Adelman. It might be under my wife's name? Courtney uh Wilson.

WOMAN

Here you go.

YOUNG MAN

Thanks. And I'll have a Yuengling as well.

WOMAN

Sure, that'll be six dollars.

They'll be opening the house in a few minutes so, there'll be an announcement. No beverages allowed in the theater.

YOUNG MAN

Okay. Thanks.

MAN

Are there any reviews for this show?

GIRLFRIEND

No, Kim said it's suppose to be good though, has Koreans in it and they do things.

MAN

Cool. Koreans are so hot.

GIRLFRIEND

Yeah, I know.

MAN

How long is it.

GIRLFRIEND

I don't know. An hour maybe? Look how many people are here, this is a lot of people.

MAN

Yeah. They only have one theater right?

GIRLFRIEND

Yeah.

MAN

Huh.

GIRLFRIEND

Oh wait, there's one downstairs too I think. I don't know.

WOMAN

The house is now open, please line up single file over here, your program is your ticket.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS AGAIN **

YOUNG MAN

She's not an old woman. She's an old lady. I don't even think of her as old. Her words come out of her like coffee. She doesn't stop talking even if you can't listen. And it's not that I don't want to listen I just have to get places. Get going, get some things done. I've got a lot of things to get done and there's no time to listen like that. We don't listen like that anymore.

She has the most amazing energy. The first thing I think of when I think of her is her apartment. How clean it is, how little she has in it. She's lived in that apartment for fifty years. The other day she pulled out a set of silver and asked me to put it on the curb. Silver plate silverware from the fifties, she said they never used it, maybe once, they used it once and then put it away. She only saves certain things and now she's getting rid of them. I like to listen to her. I try to remember every word she says, if I don't who will?

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT ANOTHER ANOTHER DAY **
(Apartment.)

OLD WOMAN

I was born in 1922
With one pair of socks and a shoe
No one knew my name
But they'd always say
Bless you

Now most friends are gone
Just my family
And they never come by
anymore and I'm Too old
to start again

CHORUS:
Hold on, hold on
Take me in your arms
We can walk a while
Let me make you smile
Hold on

I never found my man
Even though that was the plan
The time went by too fast
Couldn't find a thing that would last

CHORUS

Just say hello to me
Don't say goodbye
Let's keep our eyes open
That way we can never lie

CHORUS

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT, YOUNG MAN KNOCKS AND ENTERS **
(Apartment.)

OLD WOMAN

Why do you always take your shoes off? Huh?

YOUNG MAN

Shhhhhh.

OLD WOMAN

Put your shoes on. I cleaned this morning. I clean every morning.

YOUNG MAN

They're dirty.

OLD WOMAN

So? Put them on.

YOUNG MAN

Here's your bread.

OLD WOMAN

How much?

YOUNG MAN

Don't worry about it.

OLD WOMAN

How much?

YOUNG MAN

Three dollars.

That's too much.

OLD WOMAN

No no. You keep it. You did me the favor and you keep it. Give it to the boys.

YOUNG MAN

Alright. I'll put it in their piggy bank.

OLD WOMAN

Did you take the chairs?

YOUNG MAN

Yes. Thank you. They're great.

OLD WOMAN

I don't need them anymore. No one comes by.

YOUNG MAN

Well if you need them just let me know. I'll bring them up.

OLD WOMAN

You forgot the covers. Here, look at these. You know what those are for? Dust. To keep the dust off, yeah. I made those covers when we got the chairs.

YOUNG MAN

You made these?

OLD WOMAN

That's what I did. I could sew anything. You know me and my sister would go out dancing sometimes. Good clean fun.

YOUNG MAN

Mmm hmm.

OLD WOMAN

I would look at the latest fashion in the magazines and I would make the dresses. We looked good.

YOUNG MAN

I bet.

OLD WOMAN

Oh we did. And we would go into the city dancing. No one has good clean fun anymore. Why is that? Huh? What's the matter with young people?

No one's around anymore see? Gotta go to work, go to work on Sunday That's how it is I guess. Everyone's asleep, depressed or at work

How is a sixteen year old depressed? You can't explain that one to me, I don't understand it, we never had depression.

This girls got everything, fine clothes, an education, a loving mother and father and she's depressed? Oh, give me a break, doesn't make any sense this depression. We were always happy and we didn't have nothin'.

We used to go dancing. Just go into the city and dance late and come home and that was that. Good clean fun. No one has good clean fun anymore, they're all stressed out about what? I don't know.

** OLD WOMAN SINGS A SONG **
(Apartment.)

OLD WOMAN

She wears a red leather coat
She wears red tights
She wears dark sunglasses on a Saturday night
She wears dark red tights and a red leather coat
On Sunday morning when she's going for a root beer float

CHORUS

That's how it is
That's life you know
That's how it is
That's life you know
What you gonna do... uh oh!
You eat, you live, and that's how it is

My sister and I could dance
We had the good times
We had clean fun in our day but not anymore
My nieces and nephews go to school
They're getting education
Thank god for that, thank GOD for that
'Cause that's how it is

CHORUS

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS **

YOUNG MAN

A man from Italy called me the other day, during dinner time, I never answer the phone during dinner but he called three times in a row so this time I answered. I said 'Hello', he said his name, I couldn't understand his name, said he was from Italy, I said I come from Italy, he said

he knew that, said he's written a book that has been published, a true story, he said that he would like to send a couple copies to me and that I should read it and give it to other people to read because it is a true story and a very interesting story and that maybe others would be inspired by the story and use it maybe or something. The published book isn't doing well he said and he would like more people to read it and he will send me two copies and that I must read it and write back to him with my thoughts.

He asked if this was a good time to call, I said no, that earlier on Fridays is better.

** OLD WOMAN SPEAKS **

OLD WOMAN

I make an unforgettable onion pie. I was going to my chiropractor and I thought I should bring him something, so I brought him an onion pie and every time I went back there he'd ask me for the onion pie..."Where's my onion pie?" he'd ask.

People asked me how I made the dough, I'd say "don't ask me, ask the baker..." My mother would make the dough with the yeast and the flour and the water, not me I was too lazy. I'd get up at 7am and go to the bakery and ask for half pound and two pounds and they'd say "what are you opening up a bakery?" I tell ya, they had me going all the time in there. They'd say "Need anything else? Need anything else?" They'd always ask and I said say "Yeah, can ya bake it for me too?"

I'd bring that dough home and let it grow a little more, Mary would be cutting five pounds of onions. I tried cutting those but they made me cry so hard I couldn't see what I was doin'. Then the olives, you cut them to the bone, you know the pit, I'd cut the olives to the bone and pull the bone out and chop up the olives. And that's it. Everyone got onion pie every year. One year though we got done with all the packages of onion pie and Mary looked around and said, where's our slice?" Can you believe that? 7am and we forgot to make ourselves a slice, I said "ahhh, we'll make another tomorrow."

**YOUNG MAN CONTINUES SPEAKING **

YOUNG MAN

The Italian sent me a letter.

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself a little bit.

You already know that I am from Italy (I am 36) and that I wrote a book about situations of my life that I experienced... (the picture you see on the card is mine, I was inspired by Lance Armstrong's biography). Please

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

consider that I never wrote a book before, therefore I do not consider myself a professional writer, even if I been able to write "The Unexpected".

People who can really and professionally write books, stories etc. are not many, even if today, anybody could write books – just a consideration –.

I am sure your team of people is certainly more professional than me!

However, back in 2003 those moments were really terrible I can tell and writing was my only salvation.

I had stroke 4 years ago, while I was in France, visiting Lourdes...

You can already imagine faces' expressions when I tell people my story...Some of them, I was told, do not even want to go to Lourdes again!!

In a certain way it is rather unbelievable but the true thing is that if I was not there, in that particular moment, I would have never survived!

Why USA?

I traveled around the country from east to west in 1994, after I worked for SUMMER CAMP USA with kids. I spent six months traveling through many states, from New York to L.A. I traveled only by bus!

Nowadays, I think there is no better place around the world to launch my stories, to launch ideas, maybe fresh maybe not...who can tell? The true is that I never give up with the USA, perhaps I fall in love with the country!

After I wrote the book (you may still find little mistakes even if it was corrected by a cheap US writer), I found Xlibris – a P.O.D. company – that published my book.

Since 1995 I just sold a copy.

Unbelievable but to me it is a record anyway!

Xlibris keep asking me to buy, at a minimum price of 1.000\$, marketing packages to launch my book especially in internet.

I am living at least 6.000 miles away from Pennsylvania (where Xlibris is located) and I do not feel like paying money with the hopes that one day I will be able to sell between 1.000 or 2.000 copies..

What if, instead, I look for your collaboration...? What if some of you, reading my book, finds something particular or interesting to work on, to develop...?

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Remember, I just found you on a magazine "Vanity Fair", there was a little article regarding writers moving to Brooklyn...Let me try to collaborate...maybe it works...

When Father Peter, the pastor of HOLY CROSS CHURCH – 326 West 42nd Street N.Y. (my only contact in USA) finally returns from vacation, perhaps in two weeks time he will be able to finally send you at least 4 copies of my book.

Next time I will call you to see if you have read this letter, then I hope you can receive the books.

Thanks for listening to me.

Best Regards,

Luca Mazzon

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT, YOUNG MAN KNOCKS AND ENTERS **

(Apartment.)

YOUNG MAN

Need anything?

OLD WOMAN

My nieces and nephews call me up and ask "Do you need anything?" What do you think I say?

YOUNG MAN

No.

OLD WOMAN

I say "No, I don't need you." Why don't they just come over, say hello, have a cup of coffee, I have coffee, I always have a piece of cake around.

A SPACE STATION ON THE MOON. ASTRONAUT TOM SINGS A SONG

ASTRONAUT TOM

I'm just an astronaut living out my life on the moon
I don't know who she is but she is...
Where do I go from here?
We are flying out of sight
No end to tomorrow, no morning or night

We don't know who's alive or dead
No way to grow our food
Visions keep us alive but we don't know why
We don't know why

We don't know why (repeats 8 times)

I miss my cigarettes and whiskey
All those Friday nights in Tennessee
Saturday morning blues
Reminded me that I was a fool without any good shoes
Any good shoes

Do we try to run and hide
Do we leave this paradise behind
Do we hope that somewhere out there
We'll find a place to colonize

We don't know why (repeats 8 times)

I'm just an astronaut living out my life on the moon
I don't know who she is but she is...
sweet and soft like she always was

SPACE STATION ON THE MOON, CONTINUED

(Space station on the moon.
ASTRONAUT TOM eats dinner
with his wife AMANDA.)

TOM

I like that dress.

AMANDA

Thank you.

TOM

You haven't worn it in so long. You look really beautiful. You should wear it more often.

AMANDA

I will. Where did you learn to cook like this. You never used to cook like this.

TOM

Funny. I didn't ever cook, did I? I mean, out here, we just, I had to, Frank was making the worst ... he would cook the meat so long it would taste like ...

AMANDA

Oh, that's...

TOM

Yeah, so you know I took over the kitchen. Frank, he's on garden duty. Does a good job.

AMANDA

Really?

TOM

Oh yeah, he brought in some of the best heirloom tomatoes I've ever tasted he...

What's...I'm confused. I ... this conversation we're having, it feels displaced.

AMANDA

What is it?

TOM

Um. You're here and you've been here awhile? But it feels like you just got here...

AMANDA

Thank you.

TOM

No, it's just you, are uh

AMANDA

Tom? Tom? Tom?

TOM

Huh? Look at you... you are so god damn beautiful, I feel like I could do this every night

AMANDA

Heh.

TOM

Eat dinner and talk, tell jokes, remember the day...the outpost

AMANDA

Tom?

TOM

No. No. Nothing. I'm glad you uh, you like the food that's good

AMANDA

It's really good.

A SPACE STATION ON THE MOON CONTINUED

(TOM speaks with FRANK over an internal communications device.)

TOM

Frank. Just listen don't say a word. Okay?

FRANK

Alright.

TOM

Something's wrong. I just had dinner with Amanda.

FRANK

That's great.

TOM

No Frank. Like it was normal. Like, I sat across from my wife and had dinner, in my quarters, a steak

FRANK

Steak?

TOM

Yeah, steak but Amanda was there with me, like that would be a normal thing

FRANK

Hold a minute. Okay, go on.

TOM

I scanned the ship because something wasn't right, so I thought I should scan the ship and I've been wondering why things were right but not right you know?

FRANK

Uh huh.

TOM

And the scan showed thirteen life-forms.

FRANK

Okay. That's impossible but okay.

TOM

Frank, that's what I'm saying there's what, eleven of us on this mission, one dead that makes ten and then

FRANK

Hmmmm. You been sleeping?

TOM

Of course not. You?

FRANK

Nah.

TOM

Amanda did not come on this mission Frank. See? See? There it is, she isn't suppose to be here but there she was in my quarters eating steak, laughing at my jokes you know?

FRANK

This is not good. This is not good. Something's uh,
something's wrong.

TOM

Right.

FRANK

Okay now this is weird, check this out, there's no air in
the garden, there's no organic matter

Yet I see the plants, the strawberries

TOM

See? See?

FRANK

The scanner must be malfunctioning

TOM

No Frank, the scanner doesn't lie – it's god damn working,
it's in our...we're we're – jesus I just saw something..

FRANK

Huh?

TOM

Yeah like something huge and not human, some kind of
exoskeleton life form

FRANK

Ha! Alright alright knock it off

TOM

Listen to me Frank, when the time comes you have to, you
know, she's not Amanda but I can't do it, I know she's not
Amanda, she's whatever it is I just saw but..

FRANK

Come on down to the medical center, let's run a couple of
tests see what's what.

TOM

She's already in the medical center.

FRANK

I'm heading over there now.

TOM

No. I am not I am not, look at the bio signs it doesn't match up Frank.

FRANK

Alright I know what you're saying something's wrong but it doesn't feel wrong know what I mean?

TOM

Yes, I know, wait...look at the logs.

FRANK

We stopped keeping the logs Tom.

TOM

Why? Think about it, look at the last entry.

FRANK

Five years ago...has it been that long? Right after the accident, when we sent the moon out of orbit .. that's when ... that's when...

TOM

The atmosphere appeared and the garden grew

FRANK

And Amanda?

TOM

Get the crew together ... you're the only one who can, who can you know, just. Frank.

FRANK

Do this.

TOM

Yes.

****OLD WOMAN'S GARDEN****

OLD WOMAN

This is the garden. These are the roses. I walk into the yard and everything is there. The grass. The leaves, dead leaves. The rose bush with leaves, looking less like a bush

than a long skinny octopus. I know what I'm suppose to do, trim it back to a five leaf branch, no lower.

YOUNG MAN

Wow.

OLD WOMAN

So put your hand on it and squeeze.

YOUNG MAN

It hurts.

OLD WOMAN

Of course it hurts. Squeeze harder.

I like to listen to the old ladies speak Russian. That is a beautiful language. It is round and soft. Not hungry like you would expect. Did you do it?

YOUNG MAN

I'm bleeding. I've squeezed too hard.

OLD WOMAN

Yes. But now you must cut it.

YOUNG MAN

I like the light at this time of year, the angle is different and I wonder if that makes the air cooler. More enjoyable.

OLD WOMAN

An albino reindeer stood in my garden and said where there is sunshine there is hope and happiness but when the clouds come and they will, do not despair for in the darkness you will find light. And the reindeer walked into a shadow and disappeared.

YOUNG MAN

May I walk in the garden and pick a rose for you.

(aside) The old woman does not reply but that is exactly what she would like, it has been a long time since anyone has brought her a rose, they usually bring too much candy. She simply states:

OLD WOMAN

I am here, lost in a lot.

YOUNG MAN TRAVELS TO IKE'S BAR AND GRILL

(Ike's.)

IKE

Welcome to Ikes. I'm Ike. This is my place.

YOUNG MAN

I didn't recognize her voice from across the bar.

IKE

We have a bar in the center of the restaurant. It's not up against the wall or anything. So this fella sits down and he is facing people on the other side. Of the bar. Double service see? You always meet someone at Ikes.

YOUNG MAN

But I recognize her face. I knew her face. I told her I have two boys, I'm a mastah and I own a small business selling space. She walks away and goes back to her friend, a girls night out and I have a burger coming anyway. I don't know what's she's up to, I didn't ask her any questions, spent the whole time talking about myself. When I finish my black angus I'll ask her.

IKE

We only serve black angus burgers and we serve them rare.

YOUNG MAN

Hey...

NANCY

Do you know my name?

YOUNG MAN

Your name is Nancy right?

NANCY

Yeah. Yeah, you didn't say it so I wasn't sure...

YOUNG MAN

Nancy with a Q?

NANCY

Yep. Q.

YOUNG MAN

Do you think that chef over there is counting?

NANCY

I don't believe you're only one year younger than me. I always think of you as so little, a baby, just a little thing you know?

YOUNG MAN

Oh. Yeah. This is how encounters are enlightening, how things from a long time ago can show you life again. I've decided, leaving town is very important, necessary to

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

breaking our days, shattering them really is the only way we'll ever know or see anything. It's the only way to stay in the light, to forget without forgetting what we know

NANCY

He's not counting he's watching television.

YOUNG MAN

I'm not sure I understand.

IKE

Are you eating?

NANCY

I've eaten.

ASTRONAUT FRANK TESTIFIES

FRANK

The first attempt was an exodus to the moon. Eleven crew members successfully land on the moon in a desperate attempt of escape and to colonize the moon. There is something wrong with the earth, the climate, the people, the water, everything is wrong. So they land and everything seems normal, they go through their tests, test the

atmosphere, the dirt, the rocks, endless tests on radiation levels, they pick up a family portrait from the first lunar expedition. They take down the flag(s). They calculate what it will actually take to begin a rotation of the moon. Then communication is lost with earth for a period of time, they know this will happen and so they don't panic.

A slow delirium begins and the astronauts become confused. There is an accident with one of the astronauts who is positioning one of the explosive charges to initiate lunar rotation but the charge goes off prematurely and ends up protracting the moon's orbit, the moon is going to leave earth's orbit and spin out into the solar system. The computers are not powerful enough to calculate a destination or a path because there are too many variables, known and unknown.

Grass begins to grow, an unknown ice source begins to melt,

FRANK (CONT'D)

a lush garden emerges, pure happiness infects the lunar station and the astronauts are happy that the colony will begin. One of the astronauts is eating dinner with his wife when he realizes that his wife is not supposed to be there. He panics, meets with the others, they are as confused as he is because they all see her, they all speak with her but ...

He see's something strange... an exoskeleton life form sneaking around the ship. He scans for body signatures and finds there are thirteen people on board, but there should only be ten. He initiates an analysis of the air outside, there is none, but everything is so beautiful, he realizes that she is, his wife is going to have to be tested and possibly killed, he can't do it, he defers to the rest of the crew to...

IKE SPEAKS

IKE

The hunter keeps track of his ammunition. Carries beef sticks with, because his local beef sticks are better than the hunting ground beef sticks. The hunter protects the hunting ground, large green swatches of land rich with trees, rivers, animals of all kinds, small game, fluffy

bunnies, scruffy squirrels. So, the hunter flies on planes too, with nifty hard shell silver cases to carry the oversized caliber fire arms.

****OLD WOMAN'S GARDEN.****

(The garden. OLD WOMAN'S sister
MARY speaks to an albino reindeer
in the garden.)

MARY

I come out here when I'm lonely. Something about all those windows makes me feel less lonely. The windows on the building behind the garden up there. It's a big building. A lot of windows, some lit, some dark, some curtains pulled, some not, every once in awhile I might see a man in his kitchen without his shirt on.

(Deer exits. MARY'S husband
GINO stands in the back door.)

GINO

It's freezing out here Mary, what are you doing?

MARY

I'm letting all the heat out. I didn't realize you were home.

GINO

You're letting all the heat out.

MARY

The heat was let out a long time ago.

GINO

Come inside, the "Wheel" is on.

MARY

Old or new!

GINO

New I guess. We can have some tea.

MARY

You mean I can make you some tea.

GINO

Come on.

MARY

I've lived with you for forty years. I know what "have some tea" means. Means I make some tea and you drink it. That's how it is, isn't it.

GINO

I don't want to put you out. I don't want to ask you and make you feel like you have to make me tea.

MARY

But I always make the tea whether I want it or not because you suggested it. What's the difference?

GINO

You're half naked out here.

MARY

You wish.

(A strange noise.)

GINO

What's the noise?

MARY

When did you become such a 'fraidy cat?

GINO

There it is again over there. What the...

MARY

It's probably the reindeer.

GINO

Ahhhh.

It's the opossum. Now it's in our backyard. It's going yard to yard.

MARY

The neighbors have been talking about a raccoon from up the block.

GINO

How does it get through the fences?

MARY

Tipped her garbage over, opened the 'fridge and ate the leftovers. She said it happened 'round this time. Left the fresh vegetables though, imagine that. Only ate the leftovers. Such consideration for an animal.

GINO

Ah huh. What we have over there is an opossum.

(GINO goes inside.)

MARY

Ohp. There it goes. I think it's a raccoon and not an opossum at all. Has the bandit eyes, opossums don't have the bandit eyes. Opossums have that distinctive tail right?

(GINO returns with an old rusty rifle.)

Put that thing away.

GINO

I'm close enough, all I need is one shot.

MARY

You can't...there's about a hundred reasons why you shouldn't be shooting off a gun in the city with children sleeping all around us and I've never seen you shoot a gun and I don't believe you even know how to shoot it...

GINO

Shhhhh.

(IKE rises up from behind a bush.)

IKE

Well now...

MARY

Oh.

GINO

Who are you?

IKE

That little pea shooter you got there will never do...

GINO

Where'd you come from?

IKE

Name's Ike.

GINO

What are you doin' in my back, our backyard?

IKE

You'd likely injure it, if you hit it, but the injury wouldn't be fatal, it would just make it mad and bleeding until the rats found him and they'd eat him and then he'd finally pass on. Not a nice way to go. I recommend this, good for short range like you have here but has the destructive power of a quick and decisive blow.

(IKE holds out a large caliber
pistol.)

GINO

Wait wait, just wait a minute. Do you feel that? Behind... Mary, what's behind me?

MARY

Nothin' Gino.

GINO

I can feel it.

IKE

That's a good sense to have but it's nothing but a phantom.

GINO

I'm not talking to you. I don't even know you. You come into my yard holding a gun, guns. A hunter? You're in New York City, are you out of your mind?

IKE

I was about to ask you...

MARY

Boys...now hold on. First let's take care of this raccoon.

IKE

That's an opossum if I ever saw one.

MARY

Whatever it is one of you shoot it.

(Ready, aim..)

IKE

Have you thought about why you're going to shoot that possum? It's hungry right? Shoot him 'cuz he's hungry? It's trespassing, there's as good a reason as any I suppose. But I don't see any gardens around here, just concrete yards, bushes, decks, barbeques. Maybe that possums like a messenger, you might want to figure out what he's trying to tell you before you eliminate him.

(GINO's gun fails.)

IKE

Well I'll be damned.

GINO

Shit.

MARY

It's getting away.

IKE

You didn't tell me about your garden. You grow roses. You...

MARY

Mary.

IKE

That's right, Mary. That's a lovely name.

GINO

It's jammed.

MARY

It's too late Gene... possum's gone.

We used to, we haven't had

(IKE pulls out a rose from
his pocket.)

blooms in years, they bud and look ready to go and then
something always happens.

GINO

Last year winter came two months late, and left two months
early then came back again like it forgot something and
turned everything to ice, weather is everywhere, the plants
didn't know what planet they live on.

Another time the neighbor's barbeque, they left the
barbeque out, open, the bush over here caught first and
that's all it took, so dry that year, to catch the whole
garden. That was the burning roses year. Didn't matter how
much water we'd given the roses the yard was dry like a
bone.

MARY

Scorched before they could see the sun.

GINO

We have the rarest colors of roses out here, when they
bloom it is something to see. I think it is the fig tree
and the peach tree and the apple tree and the plum tree and
the crab apple tree and they all cross pollinate

MARY

and the flavors from the fruit

GINO

That poor peach tree, had a good year one year, most
amazing year

MARY

Peach jam, peach pie, peaches every day of the week...

GINO

Peaches in cream

MARY

On what's her name's sponge cake, oh that was something.

(IKE hands MARY the rose.)

IKE

Then this is for you. I found this years ago in the upper Adirondacks, in a place where roses don't grow, and now I know I've ended up in the right place.

MARY

Is this one of our roses?

IKE

I believe so.

GINO

Lemme see that. My god, the Adirondacks?

IKE

Was brought up there by someone or an animal maybe.

GINO

The possum.

IKE

Not likely. Something bigger.

GINO

Bigger? Like what?

IKE

Hard to say. Maybe.

MARY

Gino, maybe you could get us all a drink, some tea maybe. Do you drink tea Ike?

IKE

A cup of tea would be just what the doctor ordered.

MARY

(aside) What are you doing Gino?

GINO

Offering the man some tea, what's that all about?

MARY

Do you know how to make the tea? The man's a complete stranger, he's in our yard, uninvited, hunting?

GINO

Exactly, he has very large guns and we have know idea what's going to happen – wait a minute, you're so smart lovely Mary, if he's here to kill us, he's less likely to kill us if he drinks a cup of our tea, right?

MARY

If you could have a second chance?

GINO

Like if there's a bullet heading toward your heart or close to your heart and somehow it is stopped?

MARY

Exactly.

GINO

Hmm. I'd have to think about that.

It'd be painful but I would be alive at least for another moment, I mean there is never just one bullet, right?

MARY

How do you mean?

GINO

Certainty.

MARY

Oh.

GINO

I would be alive and that would be that. I don't think I'd change much. Maybe I wouldn't be late anymore.

MARY

Huh. So does that mean you're not doing everything you can with your first chance?

GINO

No. No. No. Does it?

MARY

Does it?

GINO

I never cared for these questions. I am doing, well, you?

MARY

I prefer not to have a second chance.

GINO

Love. Kindness. Beauty. Joy. Dismantle.

MARY

Get up there and call the police and make chamomile, all the other tea is caffeinated and will get you all hopped up, don't pour the boiling water over the tea bag, that'll scorch the leaves, let it ease off of the boil and then pour it in ...

GINO

Over the tea bag though, not to the side

MARY

Yes.

(Gino leaves.)

*

MARY

Oh god.

IKE

What is it about a person that makes love happen
The sound of their cough in the dark
The flesh of their lips – the light of their eyes
The press of their hand on our heart
Their heart, mostly their heart I suppose

And the titles of their books
The strength of their coffee

(From somewhere OLD WOMAN
pipes in.)

OLD WOMAN

WE FALL IN LOVE WITH AN IMAGINATION OF THE PERSON. THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALWAYS DISSAPPOINTED WHEN WE FINALLY MEET THEM EARLY IN THE MORNING BEFORE BREAKFAST. I DON'T HAVE LOVE. I DON'T NEED LOVE.

You kids go home and go to sleep. What are you making all that noise in the middle of the night for? Huh? Go home and eat some soup.

MARY

That's my sister.

She never goes out, really, much.

(Sometimes there's just nothing to say and Mary and Ike, well they don't have much to say. They just listen to the night. Eventually, Gino arrives with the tea kettle and cups, how long does it take water to boil?)

(A voice from somewhere in the darkness.)

VOICE

Yeah, I know. Well we'll try to figure it out.

She has three kids and Alexander has two. Yeah.

The kids make a difference I think. We should consider that.

Well, I don't know. We have the retirement fund. I want to do the right thing with that, I want you to be happy with that and I don't want you be unhappy with what we do with it and if we think about the kids first.

Uh huh.

Okay.

Sure. That's a good idea. We can give that to the kids. If that's what you want to do we can do that.

Yeah.

So it's decided then. I'll let you know in a couple months what's going to happen.

IKE

It's a lot quieter than I could have ever imagined.

MARY

Yeah.

IKE

Not this quiet up north I can tell you that. Every bit of silence is filled with something making noise. Some nights are deafening.

MARY

I suppose so. It can be like that here too, I guess.

IKE

Nah. You've got like what three crickets in this yard. Up there I can hear the night crawlers coming out.

The battles I have seen between god and beast. And yet, here I am, in your backyard waiting for your albino reindeer. What does it mean? What does this mean/

(IKE does something.)

I don't know. You don't know. But I did it. I do it. But it doesn't mean anything, unless.

Does that grill work?

(GINO returns with the tea.)

GINO

Yes.

IKE

Gino, wondered where you got up to.

GINO

Here we go.

Can I make this Irish for you Ike?

IKE

That's funny. But no thanks, not when I'm hunting sad to say.

GINO

Suit yourself.

IKE

We'll see.

Never had tea on a hunt before. Usually lukewarm coffee, water, you know. Sitting out there in a bush waiting. Watching the bugs, the spiders

MARY

The worms.

IKE

The odd snake. Wondering if I'm in a good spot or not. Watching the light. Watching all the things I'm not hunting.

Ahhhh. Mmmmm. Ahhhhh.

GINO

Like other hunters, trees?

IKE

Ducks, pheasant, deer. Bears. Trees? No. Sometimes I sit so long my legs fall asleep, my right leg usually. I don't know it's asleep until I stand up and when I do I'm disoriented. The light has changed enough that the hills, the trees, the weeds, everything looks completely different and I can't get my bearings. That's an exhilarating moment. The sun is going down and if you want to reach camp before dark you have one shot, one chance to get on in the right direction.

MARY

And if you choose wrong?

(noises.)

IKE

It gets messy.

(Cups down. Gun up. Aim, ready ...)

Real messy. That's why standing up is so exhilarating.

(Gun down.)

It happens to everyone once I suppose. Makes for a long dark night if the moon isn't out.

GINO

Why didn't you shoot?

IKE

Cat.

MARY

A cat? Oh dear god, that's from up the block.

GINO

You didn't shoot?

IKE

You can skin a cat a hundred different ways, I suppose. I don't like any of them.

MARY

Thank you for not shooting the cat.

IKE

I'm not out here for cats. I'm out here for your reindeer.

MARY

Why do you say it like that?

(Tea cups up.)

IKE

I have to say, this is the finest cup of chamomile I've ever had. Where do you get tea like that?

MARY

The Adirondacks.

GINO

We honeymooned up there. Found a little tea shop, has every kind of tea.

IKE

That's somethin'.

*

MARY

(aside)

Did you call the police.

GINO

No.

MARY

Why not?

GINO

Well, he seems harmless. I think if he was going to kill us he would have done that already.

MARY

Feral cats seem harmless but if you give them milk they never leave and before you know it you have a family of cats ready to move in and they take over your entire house until you have nothing left and your whole life is devoted to supporting cats and the cat's children and you have more cat food in your pantry than human food

GINO

Oh. Well, let's see.

IKE

That reindeer is a smart one. I think he led me here and slipped away.

MARY

Are you going to shoot her?

IKE

Her? You know her?

MARY

Yes. Please don't shoot her Ike.

IKE

Funny to hear you call me Ike. It's nice. How long has she been coming to you?

MARY

Ever since they changed the robes of the Beato Giacomo

OLD WOMAN

IT WAS A MIRACLE. NOT A SINGLE BONE WAS BROKEN WHEN THEY FINISHED. NOT ONE. HE NEEDED IT — HIS ROBE WAS SHREDDED AND DIRTY. HE DESERVED BETTER AND THEY GAVE HIM BETTER. THANK GOD FOR THAT.

MARY

We don't say much. Or least she doesn't. I speak usually, she listens. Nibbles on the rose buds or the grass. I feel better when I see her. I don't know why. I don't need to know why.

IKE

I just need to see her again. It's not about having heads mounted on the wall. Sometimes it is, for some, I have a few. With her though, it's about getting as close as possible without being seen. Without being noticed. Becoming so integrated in the environment in which they live that they are comforted by your presence the same way they are comforted by a tree. Do you see? And when you are gone, when you are no longer present that's when they notice you, for a moment.

(IKE leaves through the bushes.
MARY picks up something from
the ground.)

MARY

It's a letter to the Commonwealth of Being and Darkness.

Dear Commonwealth of Being and Darkness,
While suspended in mid air momentarily over the water while the moon quite full but not completely. You may tie your shoes with white laces, eyes wide open. Words may be heard but not understood as words but rather sounds that are known and unknown and these sounds are known to be words. Announcements/Pronouncements come through as excruciating high pitch.

While my coffee does taste like coffee, that hasn't changed, has it? Doesn't it? Isn't it? Do you believe we can fight for her and win? Do you believe there is honorable cause, do you believe a course to follow is one that cannot change because of worthiness, or honor?

MARY (CONT'D)

I the person, ask you the people, what say you on the issue of being, it has been so long since I've heard you speak and if you were to speak, would I recognize your voices?

Oh darkness, do you believe that evil comes from the darkness in outer space? That monsters are born there and will descend upon us when the stars set? My darkness is terrifying, my light is extinguished when I open the radio. Is it your pleasure to serve darkness in a cup? I lighten the darkness in a cup so that I may drink it.

I beg of you, please open the radio and let me hear your voices.

Sincerely,

Ike

GINO

Dear Ike,
Thank you for your thoughtful and interesting questions. We the people of the commonwealth of being and darkness will do our best to provide suitable answers. Do not open the radio. Instead bring your light to the garden where you will hunt the reindeer and deliver a rose. You will look to the sky, you will not see so many stars but perhaps the moon will be full.

Just to remind you, we the people are hungry. We the people are tired.

OLD WOMAN

ANYTIME YOU OPEN THE RADIO THIS COP KILLED SOMEONE OR THAT MAN GOT KILLED, YOU KNOW WHAT I SAY? WHY NOT GO KILL IN THAT WAR THEN? WHY DO THEY GOTTA KILL PEOPLE, INNOCENT PEOPLE OVER HERE?

AS THEY SAY YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL. I JUST THANK GOD FOR WHAT I HAVE AND THE WAY I AM.

YOU SIT DOWN AND SAY WHERE DID THE YEARS GO? I DON'T REMEMBER. AH WELL THAT'S LIFE.

IT'S NOT RIGHT WHAT YOU ARE DOING. READING OTHER PEOPLE'S MAIL. YOU'RE NOT RIGHT.

** THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUSHES **

(The other side of the bushes,
where manifestos are written.)

IKE

Is there a point in asking why?

Bar room brawls don't have to be bloody.
Coughing is healthy.
Don't let the tower fall.
We have a schedule to keep always.
The morning alarm demands respect,
more so than the sun rising. The sun rising seeks only to
be felt, absorbed, why else would it be there.
Footsteps are as unique as fingerprints. Some people don't
always notice when their shoes are too small. Pain is not
essential.
A name defines personality.
Curious pains result in unnecessary concerns.

I felt a lump in my scrotum. I felt a tenderness in my...
could it be the food, alcohol or deserts that bring such
curious pain? I am an untethered balloon, a bubble of
worlds attached to nothing.

To know where something is leading is to know that it need
not be written. Paradise is found before paradise is
located.

** THE OLD WOMAN'S GARDEN **

MARY

Dear We the People,
Thank you for attempting...for providing such answers to what
I am certain are difficult questions for you to entertain,
so much so, I am finding your answers difficult in a way
that they are not palatable, they are not even raw, in
fact, I consider your answers closer to the fecal matter I
have difficulty passing each day.

Therefore, I ask you this, why am I not of the people that
you are and why send me on a reindeer hunt?

Yours in fact,

Ike

GINO

Dear Ike-

Thank you for such an immediate and clear response to our response. You are not in isolation, you are not alone, you are only isolated from yourself. We the people encloses the world of people, it is only you who has removed yourself from//

MARY

//I'm confused. What are these letters?

GINO

I'm not sure.

MARY

They are clearly from Ike to the people and from the people to Ike.

GINO

But why would Ike have both?

MARY

Exactly.

GINO

Exactly.

MARY

I should return these to him.

GINO

He went into the bushes.

MARY

Yes. They are of no use to us? They are written for a different place.

GINO

Ike's place?

MARY

I believe

GINO

Canada? The Adirondacks?

MARY

Yes. A mountain. I am the little girl Gino. I am the little girl in the dream and I am going to climb the mountain and find Ike and deliver these letters to him. I will do it and together we will come down the mountain and we might land on the duck, on a duck and continue to fall down the mountain until we reach the ocean where a giant shark will certainly eat us and there we will wait, in the belly of the shark for a bee to sting the shark on the nose so he will sneeze and we will be catapulted from the belly of the shark onto shore. Saved. Safe.

GINO

Okay.

MARY

And you are—you will come down from the cliff and we will—you and I will hold hands walking until the sun rise—walking back home to this place, our backyard.

GINO

Okay.

MARY

Okay.

(MARY enters the bushes.)

GINO

Okay.

(GINO follows MARY into the bushes.)

YOUNG MAN SPEAKS

YOUNG MAN

I received a letter from the Old Woman — Lady.

Dear Young Man-

Are you down there? The building is so quiet, I don't hear people coming and going, I can't tell if you are in the building or not.

How long has it been since you've come up here. I called you for bread the other day and you didn't bring it. Can't rely on anybody these days, don't know who your friends are anyway.

I know people coming and going because I hear the water running. Who are they? Do you know them? We never had it like that, always knew who was in the building, now there's strangers every week it seems.

I'm an old lady, young man, I get scared when I don't know who the people are. If you aren't here you need to tell me.

Nobody has time anymore, time for anything. Why is that? You tell me? Why is that? Huh? Everyone rushing around. If my nieces are in the neighborhood, five blocks away, why are they gonna call me and not stop by, stop by I say, I have coffee, I have cake. I always have something, why do they ...what are you gonna do? That's life.

Terrible things on the news. Can't watch it.

Don't bring me anymore books. I have enough books.

Where are you?

Take care of your boys. Your boys are precious, so precious.

Sincerely,
The Old Woman Upstairs

*

OLD WOMAN

Twelve days to Christmas and I can't stop thinking about the albino reindeer and how she was a fawn and how she was sitting in the middle of my backyard as though that's where she was suppose to be. Was it the sweet grass that brought her? The roses? Did she drop from the sky or did she come from behind a leaf of the fig tree? Either way, I miss her.

OLD WOMAN sings a song.

We had a man
We had a man for everything
We had a man
We had a man for everything
 Knife man
 Egg man
 Bread man
 Milk man
And the ladies would come running
Down the street as fast as they can
To see D-O-M-I-N-I-C

(I see)

I see the banana man

We had good clean fun
No matter what the weather
We had good clean fun
Just being alive
Back then we had men
And we had good clean fun
Now nobody's gonna bring me
Either one!

We had a man

(We had a man)

We had a man for everything
Knife man
Butcher man
Bread man
Milk man

We had a man

Ahh

We had a man for everything
Ice man

Egg man
Butter man
Silk man

And the ladies would come running
Down the street as fast as they can
To see D-O-M-I-N-I-C

I see

D-O-M-I-N-I-C

I see

D-O-M-I-N-I-C

I see

I see the banana man

Ahhhhhhhhhh

** THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUSHES **
(Where manifestos are written.
MARY and IKE are already there.
GINO enters from the bushes.)

MARY

You followed me.

GINO

You went through the bushes.

MARY

Why would you follow me?

IKE

What?

Hardly. You followed me.

MARY

I have your letters. This isn't what I expected.

IKE

I am thinking structure and order are necessary to create efficiency.

Day to day efficiency. Divide a day into parts, each activity of the day fits with one of the parts.

Eating, writing, sex.

Walking the dog, cleaning the toilet.

GINO

This isn't the dream.

MARY

This isn't the dream. We should //

GINO

//Yeah. Leave them.

(MARY drops the letters.
MARY AND GINO return to
their garden.)

IKE

It's a rare moment to see an Albino reindeer. When you've seen one, you've seen more than most, more than many people will ever see.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS AGAIN **

YOUNG MAN

The Italian called. I didn't answer it. He went into my missed calls list.

** ASTRONAUT TOM TESTIFIES **

ASTRONAUT TOM

I heard a noise. It sounded like fire and I thought to myself I will get up and grab the fire extinguisher and shout to anyone sitting in the room with the fire "GET OUT OF HERE!", "HIT THE ALARM", and "GET OUT THE EMERGENCY EXIT" "EVERYONE GET OUT!" I'm shouting and I am struggling to pull the pin out of the extinguisher. When I finally get the pin out of the extinguisher and close the handle a puff of something bellows out of the nozzle and that's it, it's spent. The fire curls around our leather couch then I think, will the glass table melt?

I run to the emergency exit. Everyone is in the garden wide eyed. Some smoke cigarettes, I want to smoke a cigarette..

** OLD WOMAN SPEAKS AGAIN **

OLD WOMAN

There was a boat off the coast that carried a number of musicians from my home town in Italy. These singers had voices that were attached to god. A voice as sweet and pure as honey. My sisters and I woke up before sunrise to get to the pier to watch the boat come in. We watched it come up

over the horizon. We screamed. To think that they were on that boat. To think that they were sleeping or dinking coffee, or reading the newspaper as they floated into the harbor and that we could see them and were going to watch them come down the plank. We screamed again. We couldn't help ourselves. I tell you, we'd been waiting months for this moment, I had to pee, we all did, but we held it, we didn't want to miss a moment, we didn't want to miss seeing their faces as they saw us for the first time, as they saw

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Brooklyn for the first time. There weren't a lot of people there, not many people knew they were coming.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS AGAIN AGAIN **

YOUNG MAN

The Italian called again. He apologized for not sending the books. I said I was excited to read the book. He asked if I had received his letter. I said yes. He didn't say much then, just that he was glad that my address worked. He confirmed my e-mail address and I asked if he could send me an e-mail. I said I would like that. Again he said he wasn't crazy but that he must sound crazy to be always calling and so long for the books to come but that when the Pastor returned from vacation he was certain the books would arrive soon after.

** THE SPACE STATION ON THE MOON **

(Emergency. An alarm sounds.)

AMANDA

Tom.

ASTRONAUT TOM

You gotta get out of here. There's a fire in storage area.

AMANDA

When I die I want you to put the skeleton shirt over me. I want you to put that skeleton shirt that Frank always wears over me.

ASTRONAUT TOM

You're not gonna die. Now come on, get outside, to the garden. Frank?

FRANK

Yeah.

ASTRONAUT TOM

Get everyone outside before the fire spreads. GET EVERYONE OUT.

FRANK

Amanda...

ASTRONAUT TOM

She's already out there.

FRANK

Tom.

ASTRONAUT TOM

What are you waiting for.

FRANK

Tom. Amanda isn't...why did you send her out there?

(TOM and FRANK begin to wrestle.
The alarm stops. AMANDA enters
and wrestles with TOM and FRANK.
FRANK knocks out TOM. FRANK kills
AMANDA. TOM wakes up.)

ASTRONAUT TOM

What have you done?

FRANK

She, it, started the fire. I tried to tell...

ASTRONAUT TOM

Why?

FRANK

We don't know. We'll never know.

ASTRONAUT TOM

Is it done?

FRANK

Yes. I'm sorry Tom.

ASTRONAUT TOM
Can I ...

FRANK
No.

ASTRONAUT TOM
It's just...

FRANK
No.

ASTRONAUT TOM
Okay.

** YOUNG MAN SPEAKS AGAIN AGAIN CONTINUED **

YOUNG MAN
No books from the Italian yet but he did send me an e-mail:

Dear Sir,

please receive my e-mail address with this e-mail.

Let me organize (if anything does not go wrong again) a package to finally send you some copies of my book.

To be honest, reading my story might not be worthy from your side or useful but please give me a chance to try...

Now that we can e-mail each other, at least things should be easier to keep in touch. Where I live in Benevagienna, I do not have easy access to web lines.

Regards

Luca Mazzon

** IKE SINGS AN ODE TO HER RETURN HOME TO IKE'S **

(Ike's.)

IKE
She walks a million miles a year

** OLD WOMAN'S GARDEN **

(Young man stands in the back door.)

OLD WOMAN

I never come out here late at night.

YOUNG MAN

It's peaceful.

OLD WOMAN

I'm usually asleep by nine.

YOUNG MAN

I stay up late.

OLD WOMAN

I can't anymore, eleven twelve makes me so tired in the morning. Then...

YOUNG MAN

...the moon is out, huh.

OLD WOMAN

...if I do go to bed late something will get me up early. The garbage truck. The birds. Tell me, why is it the birds have to sit right outside my window and make all that noise first thing in the morning.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know.

OLD WOMAN

You don't know? You don't know much do you? That's your answer for everything.

YOUNG MAN

I know. I have to go.

OLD WOMAN

We just got down here. Have the coffee. It's hot. If it's too hot, put some water in it.

YOUNG MAN

I forgot...

OLD WOMAN

We just got down here.

(YOUNG MAN walks away.)

OLD WOMAN

My sister used to come down here all the time. She would have slept out here if Gino'd let her. I never understood why she'd come down here so late at night. Why do you think Gino didn't let her sleep down here?

YOUNG MAN

I don't know.

OLD WOMAN

Eh? Take a guess.

YOUNG MAN

It was cold?

OLD WOMAN

Because his mother would come out here. An that's it. She would come out here and talk to Mary and put things in her head about Gino. Can you believe it?

YOUNG MAN

No.

OLD WOMAN

Ah, that's life, what're ya gonna do, am I right or am I wrong?

YOUNG MAN

You're always right.

** IKE'S BAR AND GRILL **

YOUNG MAN

I fear late night good byes and long conversations under the moon. Not for what she will say but what she doesn't say and in that emptiness lies a question I don't ask because I also fear the answer to that question, that it will be tied intimately to me or worse that I will have

presumed that the answer has something to do with me but really it does not.

In those moments before our cheeks touch I know one day that I may trip or stumble and instead our lips will connect and the thing that was once flat and logical will become incomprehensively round and yet perfectly provocative and the future will change, our trajectories will have unforgivably touched and nothing will be certain.

IKE

You love her don't you?

YOUNG MAN

I love to yearn for her. I love to ache.

IKE

That's what I believe. Love, the nature of love isn't between two people together, love is what brings them together, it is everything before they are together.

YOUNG MAN

The ache.

IKE

Yep.

** OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT, LAST DAY **

My dad's crazy for horses
We had four horses and two stalls for rent
A carriage for three but we fit four with a racehorse named
Rosie

We'd hitch her to the carriage
Take us to the park
Me in the middle and my brother in the front
The cars would pull over and wait for us

CHORUS:

Tell me a story Pappy
Make us laugh and smile
We'll go to the talkies
Those were the times
Tell me a story Pappy

Make us laugh and smile
We'll go to the talkies on Saturday night

My dad would say one word
And we're off rumbling 'round the circle
'Til we hit 9th Avenue on a racehorse named Rosie

Summertime heat drives us all outside
Go up to the park so we can go to sleep
Nothing like that anymore everyone stays inside

CHORUS

OLD WOMAN

I received a letter from that Young Man:

Dear Lady,

I received your letter in gratitude, a wonderful gift from a lady. I am sitting here writing this letter to you and I already feel better. You haven't heard from me in a long time I think and I'm sorry about that, I hope you can forgive me. I've felt terrible these past weeks, must be

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

the clouds or possibly the moon. Studies show that the moon does affect our moods significantly, maybe we should all take the day off on the full moon, at least I should.

I exfoliated my face this morning and feel much better even though it is still cloudy out. I've been in a difficult place and unable to visit you although I think of you all the time. I admire you so much and want you to know that I will try harder to come by, to say 'hello', I long for your company.

I've done it again and forgot to let you know that I am out of town right now but will return soon, I promise.

I worry about you, I wonder if you are okay, if you have enough bread or eggs, I think I brought you eggs once, my memories are cloudy, did I bring you eggs? The eggs are very good where I am, fresh.

When I come back, I want to take you down to the garden and walk with you, I miss your stories, the way you recall your life, I really miss that. Will you walk with me?

I am with the Bulgarians. Did I tell you about the Bulgarians? A sweet artist type couple, they have a place for people like me in the mountains of Bulgaria, a residence for making things. I like it but it is so lonely and cold here. The people are nice enough, when they can be, it's a terrible job taking care of broken people all day I suppose. I dream about your onion pie even though I've never tasted it. That's funny isn't it? Maybe you can show me how to make an onion pie when I come back.

Please take care of yourself and I will be home soon.

Love,

Young Man

End play

NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Luca Mazzon is a real person and contacted me in the Fall of 2006. Everything he said to me is in this play as well as his letter and e-mail. I received the books he mentions in April 2007 and will probably write many plays based on them.

A huge thank you goes to Rebecca Hart who wrote all the music for the songs within this play, she was also amazingly helpful with editing the lyrics.

QUOTES THAT INSPIRED FROM KIRKEGAARD

"Behind the world in which we live, far in the background, lies another world, and the two have about the same relation to each other as do the stage proper and the stage one sometimes sees behind it in the theater"

"Many people who appear physically in the actual world are not at home in it but are at home in that other world."

ACTUALITY

"As soon as actuality had lost its significance as stimulation, he was disarmed, and the evil in him lay in this."

BEAUTY

"One sees from the diary that what he at times desired was something totally arbitrary, a greeting, for example, and would accept no more at any price, because that was the most beautiful thing about the other person.

