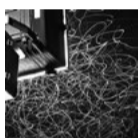


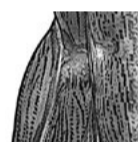
## **RYGA NUMBER 7, SUMMER 2014**



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## RYGA: A JOURNAL OF PROVOCATIONS NUMBER 7, SUMMER 2014



A publication of  
**Okanagan College**

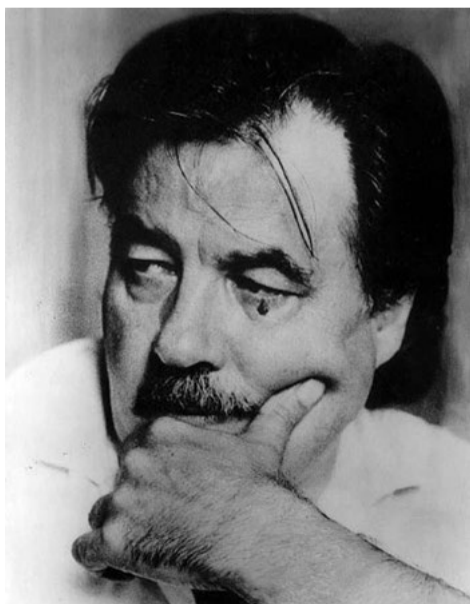
Editors: Sean Johnston and  
Corinna Chong

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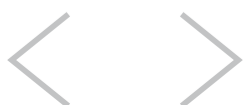
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**We take our name from Ryga**, a political writer, to honour his commitment to his art and to his world. His legacy is this: he was a human living in a community and that community was living in a nation, that nation in a world. He wrote without nostalgia about the world that lived around him. He believed the artist had a responsibility to write counternarratives, to treat the marginalized among us fairly, to challenge the formal boundaries of his art without losing the humanity of the characters that drive it. These characters live and move according to a complex, tentative political agreement that must not be taken as natural, but must be interrogated in every way.

—Sean Johnston, Editor



**George Ryga** (1931-87) is the author of Canada's best known English-language play, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, first produced in 1967. He was one of Canada's most prolific authors – he maintained a taxing work program as a short story writer, novelist, radio and television dramatist, poet and film scenarist, not to mention ventures into the world of ballet and opera. In a period of 14 years he produced 190 plays, two cantatas, five screenplays, two long-playing albums, three novels, and a book of poetry, as well as a considerable body of unpublished and unproduced work.



# ANNIE CHRISTAIN

AI Supercomputer as Black  
Magic Megaritual Amplifier:  
Sir Paul McCartney's God-  
Given Right

Magnetic Fields on the  
Road to Damascus, a May to  
December Marriage

The CD Documenting  
Everything that I'm Saying  
that Mr. X Gave to Me  
Was Confiscated by the  
Police upon My Arrest and  
Sent Directly to the Ethics  
Department

## AI SUPERCOMPUTER AS BLACK MAGIC MEGARITUAL AMPLIFIER: SIR PAUL McCARTNEY'S GOD-GIVEN RIGHT

“They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).”

—Revelation 9:11

Times New Roman of the AI supercomputer, Mesmerism,  
distressed landscape of the electrode spike in the architect's skull,

how he designed the World Trade Center with a separate partition for the dynamite.

The monarch trumpet begins with the first three measures of sacred programming:

(a body lying in a gold-lined box filled with briefcases,  
spoiled wine, Aaron's rod;

the arrangement of the copper and the sun's heat;

the ash of the cooked narcotic body taken back to the temple.

The scene can be found in the architect's geometrical interpretations  
of narcoleptic male teen prostitutes waking up in the Pantheon of channeled gods.

A trumpet drones.

*Paul McCartney watches planes hit towers from his grounded plane*  
as kids run after the smoke in an increased tempo  
of shifting light sequences of yes/no succubae.

Paper airplanes burn in their higher throats three times before the attack  
suggesting AI precognition.

When color combines with the rhythm of another falling body—  
(prisoners in Area 51 with skewers for spines toppling over in a game of human Jenga),

Queen Elizabeth spasms and heils the sun with an ankh  
cast in the reptile ovulation rhythm at Ground Zero.



She, a flaming tarantella dancer, conjures Baphomet through climbing pulleys  
of dark energy transference

until the Pope forgives the Beatles.

Fragments of 26 separate tones assigned to each letter of the alphabet  
run fast sentences along the pentagram,  
gradually awakening us to a new death,

a natural consequence of any sorcery process.

Mexican youths jump on Paul McCartney's tour bus in the murderous love rhythms  
of a mathematically impossible free-fall, revenge.

To makes sense of tragedy, one must read the depopulation score  
as a means of premature eulogy.

Good characters can only die if it advances the plot.  
Once more in a faster tempo.



## MAGNETIC FIELDS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS, A MAY TO DECEMBER MARRIAGE

“John wrote *Skywriting* at a time when the world was wondering whatever happened to him. Why wasn’t he writing songs anymore? Well, this was what he was busy doing.”

—Yoko Ono

When a Gauloises Bleues burns down in my hand,  
I peel off another Japanese robe,

the extra personalities I splay on beds with bloody nails  
bought from flea markets,  
nine inches long.

The figures’ polymorphic curves catch the overhead light,  
the tracers of the Goddess Columbia stringing  
telegraph wires across the ceiling.

*Go west to the Dakotas*, she intones and rattles her tail.

I immediately build my own Aeolian harp so I can reason with her.

I’m sure you’re familiar with high-tensile  
electrical fences that keep sheep in?

I can even feel some of my umbilical cords  
drying up and falling off when the TV evangelist’s Bible  
emits curtains to strangulate me.

This prompts Goddess Nuwa to fix a rip in the sky  
in the white room  
by blocking it with her body.

Her snake-like lower-half conducts my piano playing,  
while something else shaves my leg for surgery—  
a decorative gargoyle.



One of my personalities greets it, my right temporal lobe that accepts  
any kind of beam from space,

the concept of myself that the brain interprets as Elvis.

I became aware of him as myself when the gold rings  
on my fingers turned my hands black.

Prairie dogs, pheasants,  
upright walking reptiles as big as me trailing my moves.

The idea for manifest destiny didn't just happen.

A light reaches me that excites my cells;  
the plastic threads melt into coils into Brazilian coffee  
I drink twenty to thirty times a day.

*Who are you, Lord?* I ask Yoko.

Did I mention that cats always seem extra sexually attracted to me?  
I wake up naked next to my love who's wearing a business suit.

*I scrambled your DNA, but it was for the best,*  
she says with a mouth full of Christmas tree bulbs.

She asks me to plug in the tree and I do,  
as I watch her mouth for my lighted signal to fall,

convulse, and go blind with my love (that she and the help attest)  
is for her and only her.



## THE CD DOCUMENTING EVERYTHING THAT I'M SAYING THAT MR. X GAVE TO ME WAS CONFISCATED BY THE POLICE UPON MY ARREST AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE ETHICS DEPARTMENT

“Fortunately for him, he had written down the pertinent information from the CD on his T-shirt, which he happened to be wearing while he was giving his testimony and had not washed in two years. He asked the judge if it would be possible for him to step off the stand, remove his shirt, take off the T-shirt so he could refer to his notes, and the judge, who was as shocked as the rest of us, said yes.”

—*Cold Case Files*: “The Shopping Cart Killer”

The police said, *Get out of the car and bring this era to an end!*  
There was a god who wanted this.

They put forty-one bullets in the wrong man, so I had to be blamed for the rapes,  
even though all I had on me was a stolen computer.

In the interrogation room, the cops dressed like doctors  
and tried to get me to consent to a mouth swab, but I saw the seven foot tall brownish light  
(Mr X.) who guided me to resist everything.

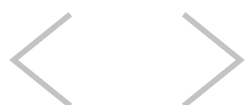
It's funny because when the cops performed the four corners consecration,  
they used Indian corn instead of British corn (wheat),  
so they received unexpected nature-beings.

The God from the North was my ally and not the psychic scare-tactic stalker  
they always use at the precinct to put the pressure on.

It wouldn't have mattered either way. I'm the kind of guy who had a pops  
who wore a cloak of the beast and made me chew sticks of gum laced with Phenobarbital;  
  
ingesting it is the best way to know Satan.

I stayed strong and used the record player with the broken spring,  
and turned it by hand to play Methodist hymns.

Naturally I became a rap producer, but I couldn't go along with my boss  
who wanted me to inject alcohol and sugar into the spinal cords of little girls  
around my building. The record label wants me to freeze all the girls





so they can be shipped from Earth first, to test the waters,  
and mainly because young girls will be more likely  
to maintain the peace in the new settlement  
until the rest of the chosen tribe arrives.

Any rapper who doesn't go along with this plan devised by Quincy Jones will be sent straight to jail.

He is the fake father to thousands of children in the projects,

but I can make it on my own. I'm a computer genius, I was temporarily hypnotized by the Geto Boys,

and for the past ten years I wrote on my arm *I'm messed up with sex*  
but told myself *I'm sexually marvelous* to program myself to have better self-esteem.

I'm a warrior,  
and if you don't decide to make this handsome face a free man,  
I'll fuckin' kill myself.



**Annie Christain**, assistant professor of Composition and ESOL at SUNY Cobleskill, is an English PhD graduate from the University of South Dakota. Her poems have been published in *Seneca Review*, *The Chariton Review*, *Arabesques Review*, and *The Lifted Brow*, among others. She is a three-year recipient of the University of South Dakota's Gladys Hasse Poetry Award; she received the 2007 and 2008 Jerry Bradley Award for Creative Writing at the Southwest Texas Popular Culture Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and she was the grand prize winner of *ICON's* 2013 Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Contest for her poem "The Sect which Pulls the Sinews: I've Seen You Handle Cocoons" and the first place winner of *Phoebe's* 2013 Greg Grummer Poetry Award for her poem "Villagers Chop Them in Half, Thinking They Are Snakes."

Title page photo courtesy sxc.hu





# BEAUTIFULLY USELESS

R.W. Gray



NOT HARD TO IMAGINE A father that is absent; you can do it I am sure. Some histories are made for desire. Imagine he's absent, a handful of memories before you're eight, then gone for decades before he dies, without you, with relatives you don't know beside him. You could have been there. You were called. But you didn't go. Maybe because you've seen enough movies with deathbed reunions to unavoidably want catharsis. And he was so sick, organ failure, unconscious, and already born inarticulate enough that you would never hear any words that would help anyway. Even if he had all the words in his lap, the life still in him, what could he say to you to make up for all the unconscious abuses, the clumsy father ways.

Not to say you aren't curious, don't want to know where he went for two decades. Who he loved, who loved him back, whether, despite the fact that life was a mad horse and his foot was caught in the stirrup and he was dragged on through, he might have found small pockets of happiness. Something. You wouldn't begrudge him that.

You only have two pictures of him: one where he wears a goblin mask, holds you, tickling you, making you laugh; the other with the two of you, picking seashells on the beach, his face grave like he's explaining something to you. Only two pictures, poor props to reconstitute a life, to understand the man you might want to understand.

Then imagine you found out from one of those relatives you don't know, one who tracks you down after the funeral, someone with no discretion or tact, that in your father's poverty, in his clumsy search for that happiness, he was in a film once. An erotic film. And here's the question, the itchy question: would you watch the film?

It arrives in the mail. Even in this age of internet file sharing the only place you could find a copy was a mail-order warehouse. It arrives in the mail five weeks after you ordered it, just on the night when you forgot it might arrive. One of those nights when you close your fingers in the car door, or the rain drenches you so all you can think about is hurt or being sopping wet. Or you are hungry beyond distraction, no food in sight. No matter, but you are not expecting the small, thick parcel in your mailbox. And there it is. And you are in pain, or wet, or famished, but you are now face to face with a brown parcel like a letter bomb, and your mind stops communicating with your body for a moment, like that time you did a chin-up on a chin-up bar that wasn't properly attached to the door frame and you landed on your back on the threshold, the breath bashed from you. Just like that. A porn video wrapped in brown paper, all that's left of your father.



You think maybe you could get someone else to watch this video, watch it and select the less Oedipal parts to watch. There must be interstitial scenes, moments without full porn. They could tell you what to watch and what not to watch. But you're caught wondering if it would be worse to imagine what he did in the gaps this supposed friend censored. And, though it's perverse, you can't fathom letting someone, anyone, know your father more than you do. As small as this might be.

The parcel sits on the coffee table burning from within, lights up the room, so you see Cheerios where they fell beside the couch, dust bunnies hunkered down licking themselves. There are a thousand things you could be doing besides staring at this parcel. So much cleaning you've put off, the broken shelf in the fridge, the crack in the bathroom window, the tear in the hall wallpaper, all need fixing, all come to mind in this moment as you stare at the parcel containing what remains of your father.

Someone wrapped it neatly, deliberately. Someone who should have a job at Christmas in a mall wrapping presents for those who are adhesive tape-challenged. Someone cared to wrap this porn video perfectly. Someone did their job well. You stare at the seams, wondering about these careful hands. A way to put off the opening. Put it off for now.

You orbit other rooms, making the bed you forgot to make, doing dishes, flossing, resisting the parcel's gravitational pull. You can't think about the various kinds of destruction, the possible injuries that might come from this. You think of family members who might be horrified, disgusted that you even looked for this video, let alone ordered it, or then considered watching it on a Thursday night.

You make pasta, from dry noodles, a can of pureed tomatoes, and loads of parmesan to cover the fact that there's no meat or other vegetables in the pasta. You think you make good pasta, but you don't. No one has told you this because it's a small thing.

You eat the poor pasta in the kitchen, out of the line of sight of the parcel. You sense that you can't put this off much longer. You place your dishes in the sink. You don't remember eating the pasta. It was there and then it was gone and your stomach was full. One less thing to think about. You remember you have half a bottle of Scotch in the cupboard above the fridge. You think this is one of those occasions where drinking alone is not only permissible but required.

You bang back one glass. The next you add ice cubes, thinking this might make you sip it. But you chug it back anyway, freezing your front teeth. And when your shoulders feel warm, you figure it's time. No more



waiting. You don't want to be too drunk or too sober for this. So it's time.

You run a fingernail along the adhesive tape seam, you break the paper free from itself, and underneath you find a VHS tape, no cover, merely a fresh label that says "College Guy #58." And you realize your father was just one of many guys who went to some fictional porn college. He never really went to real college. You know this. Or feel fairly certain. He was full of little hopes followed by little failures in predictable succession.

You have to dig out the VCR you never use and stored in the top of the hall closet. You attach the VCR to the TV. You place the tape in the front of the deck and, holding your breath, you push the tape in. It clunks into place. Adjusts itself. Ready to play.

You decide to perhaps watch it on visual fast forward first. Maybe skate across the surface of the whole thing, blurring your eyes even, so you might map out the most traumatizing stuff first.

You press play, then fast forward, like pulling the band-aid off quickly maybe. Images of him begin to streak by. Look how young he is. Was. You see him sitting on a couch, talking to the camera, he strips down, flexes, does pushups. Then he's outside, strips off his underwear, then jumps into the pool. Much splashing, much nakedness in water. Then he climbs out onto the deck. You realize this isn't a fetish video, that so far it seems like there won't be any sex with animals or feces involved, so you rewind to the place where he poses. You press play again. You watch him flex his biceps. He's in really good shape. He's your father and he's in really good shape. You think about him drinking himself to death, about the binges you've heard about, and this doesn't seem to match the body in the video, the muscular, healthy looking body.

He flexes, then he turns towards the camera, blushes, lowering his head, and maybe it's a gesture you have yourself made on occasion. Or maybe he has your hairline, or maybe he has the same gap in his front teeth or his nostrils flair in the same way. No matter, it's just a small moment where you see he really is your father. He has narrow hips. He looks so young, even younger than you are now or at least younger than the man you got the phone call about, the old man with the failing organs and the jibberish mouth.

You could be wrong, but it seems like he doesn't do this all the time. He doesn't even seem to be enjoying it that much. Maybe you just want to believe that, need to believe that, but that fragile smile, the red blotches rising on his chest, the blush creeping into his cheeks all seem to say he hasn't done this before. And you've only heard of the one video. So



that must be. And you know that consoles you somehow. As small as this is, as little as it might add to your memory of him, you'd rather not have to do this again, see a decline in him. It is perfect enough to see him in this moment, in this simple salt-sweet place, before the wreckage.

He drops his track pants. You press fastforward.

And then he's in the pool. Press play. He seems like a kid. This surprises you. You feared many things, feared all kinds of things you might see, but didn't expect this moment of childlikeness, as though he is on a beach, his hair blonder than you remember, perhaps bleached by the sun, bleached from bare-foot running on a beach where he was six once and ran and ran, lungs bursting, to the salt water, to summersaults in the surf, to breathless air-breaking laughter. He was six once, you see. He wasn't always a father.

He rises out of the water at the pool's edge. His hair washed down his face, he tosses it back, a slight smile. He places his hand on the deck in front of him and pushes himself free of the water.

You see him in all his nakedness. If you had a normal childhood, where he would have been around, you probably would have seen him naked before this. Dads bathe or shower with their kids. Are naked with them in pool changerooms. But you have never seen your father naked before now. And there he is. Naked. But he doesn't look like a father. And all you can think is that people must have desired him. Men and women must have wanted to see him naked. And maybe he even seems happier naked.

A close-up shot of his face, eyes closed, as he lies on the pool deck in the roaring sun, and you see you don't have his mouth. He has a beautiful mouth, lower lip thicker, more pulpy than the upper, and it's a narrow mouth. You got your mother's wide mouth, or her thin lips, or her closed-mouth smiles, but in any event, you didn't get his beautiful, pouty mouth.

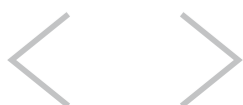
He is beautiful. Your father is beautiful. You see what your mother might have seen at a school dance, in boring half-mown front yards one summer, or maybe at the park pool, casual glances as he walked by on the concrete deck. You see what she saw. Before she found out he liked men instead. Yet even that makes him more beautiful, somehow distant on a summer dock, looking off instead of at her, she can taste the moment he will turn to her. The way you watch him, his bottom lip jutting a little, his eyes closed, the sun loving him.

He gets up, and the video cuts to a bedroom, a bedroom emptier than a hotel room. This is a room without character, a room that threatens



to erase him. You watch him lay down on the bed in shorts, with a pornographic magazine. You watch him lay down and you know what comes next, what only could come next. So you pause the video there. Anything that follows will mar the beauty of what you've seen.

You rewind the video to the flexing part again, then pause. The tape stands still with the image of him, back to the camera, biceps flexed, his head just beginning to turn towards you. It is a caught moment. It is the moment before what comes next. You sit on the couch in your living room, the torn brown paper on the coffee table in front of you. Your father's flexed back and biceps flickering on the television. This moment must stand in for all the memories you do not have. He is not quite happy, it's true, more nervous than anything. But he is beautiful. And perhaps, just perhaps, in the absence of happiness, beauty is something.

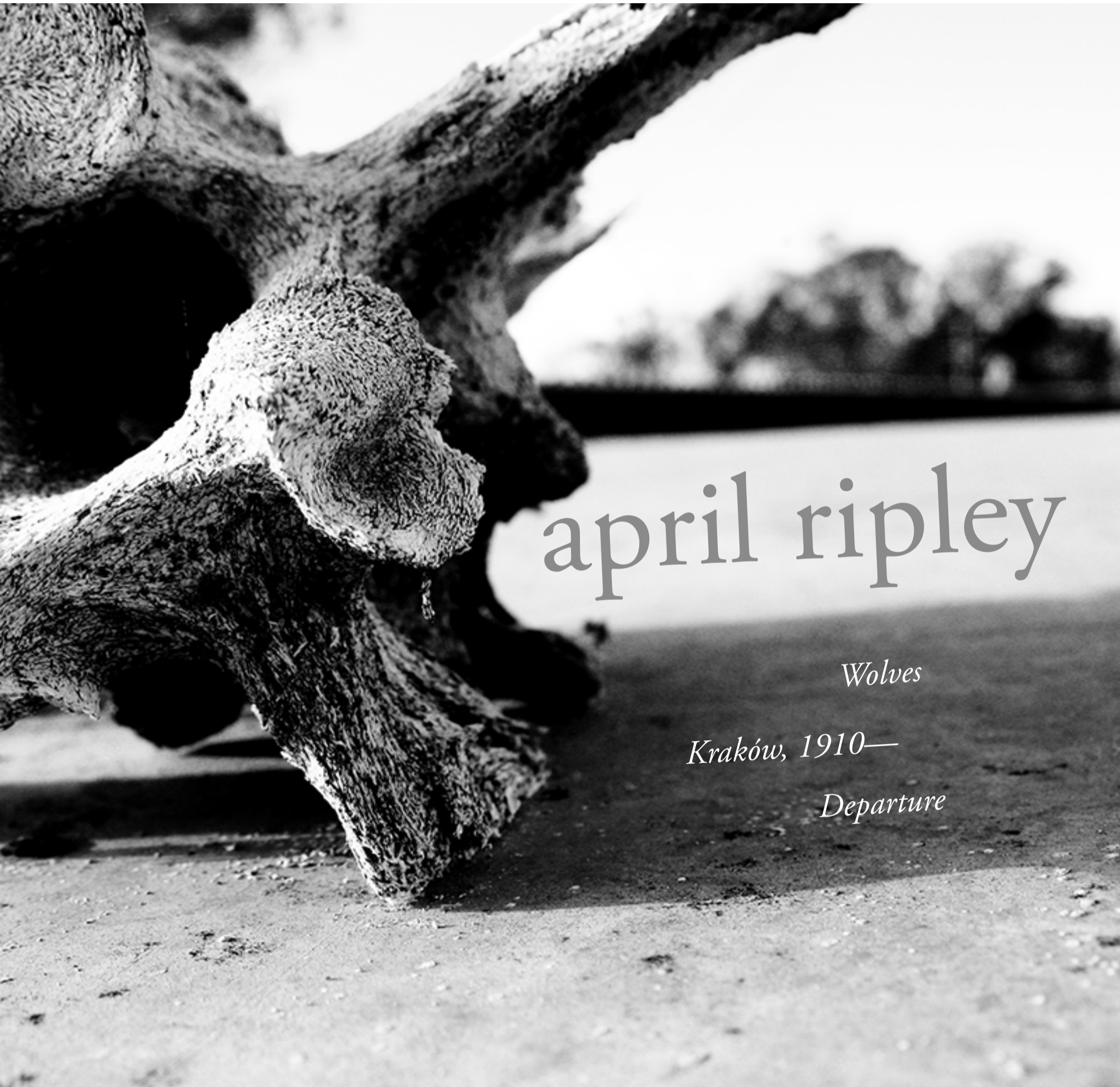




**R.W. Gray** has published his poetry and prose in numerous journals and anthologies. His first collection of short stories, *Crisp*, was published by NeWest Press (2010). Ten of his short scripts have been made into films and the most recent, “alice & huck,” won awards at festivals. He is senior editor at the helm of <http://numerocinqmagazine.com/> and its “at the Movies” section. He is also professor of film and screenwriting at University of New Brunswick. “Beautifully Useless” is from his second collection of short stories *Entropic*, forthcoming from NeWest Press in Spring 2015.

Title page illustration © Julien Tromeur (courtesy sxc.hu)





# april ripley

*Wolves*

*Kraków, 1910—*

*Departure*



## WOLVES

There was the leftover quail from the fridge  
 at four in the morning, red wine gravy to marinate the skin  
 under her fingernails as she returned to bed with the lantern taste  
 of thyme drawing her down the dry, dark coyote trails of sleep.  
 There was the blood that opened across her temporal lobe:  
 a door nosed open to reveal a gust of animal warmth that bent  
 her language double, snapping rooted words like hay-ready stalks  
 of grass under a chinook wind, the syllable of her hand curled on the pillow  
 equal now in meaning to the dead body of a bird, Whiskyjack, or crow—  
 a thing the dog might have lifted from the grass, carried slack jaw to the backyard  
 and buried. In the morning, there was the growl at the back of her throat  
 when she wanted to tell her husband how last night the moon was skinned,  
 a red pelt of light unfolded across the landscape, how it made her  
 so hungry she wished to swallow an entire thin-limbed species.  
 Now finding herself unable to sift the debris of Broca's ruin, or cultivate  
 meaning against the fertile planes, roof-of-mouth, back-of-teeth.

Months later, if her voice is flanked by hours, emerging flawed,  
 canted, there is a word (maybe *hinge*), she will use to mean: *whenever you  
 are gone I think about the opening of doors, the creature smells you once  
 would bring in to me from the fields.* And the same word, pronounced  
 with a bark, with tight fists, may be a warning: *all bodies recognize famine,  
 and this is mine.* But until then there's the early light of the fridge to settle  
 hollow morning hours while her husband sleeps, and there's the dog,  
 who has taken up howling in her silence, who at her side has begun  
 a gradual dismantling of reason, until his voice slipping through cracks  
 is liberation for them both,

or perhaps it's only that he's caught the scent of fox  
 beyond the fence, and this is the one he desires to meet in violence,  
 to wrestle into the dead leaves and season's grime of shed skins and hair,  
 and to draw a shared dialect of blood from his throat and belly and all  
 the soft places from which it's possible to spill open and speak.



**KRAKÓW, 1910—**

dawn-walk of the nomad

through Rynek Główny among the Saturday  
flower stalls, half unwrapped and rousing  
at the base of the basilica of the Virgin Mary.  
The way the city took him on those early morning visits  
to her apartment was a way of being lost, maple-wing  
anemochory, never quite the same as the one before.

When he entered her kitchen, she was slicing bread,  
she was boiling eggs, apples, sticks of cinnamon.  
She was sitting on the window seat reading Mickiewicz,  
sketching her own foot, re-writing Exodus chapter 12  
for solo violin. She was naked, damp-haired from the bath  
and smoking a cigarillo, chewing a sprig of mint, a liquorice.  
She was wearing a green silk dress she stole from the neighbour,  
that she inherited from a cousin, from her mother. She was asleep  
with her head on the table. She opened with the saddest of looks.

The first time she spoke to him in the street he was sure that  
somewhere behind him a man had just flung open his shutters,  
thrown a perfectly tuned guitar out the fourth-floor window,  
a mumbled arc that was swiftly street-broken into resonant litter,  
jumbled vibrations that registered first, and longest, along  
the jawbones, the teeth—unable to forget—of any passers-by.

On second thought, though the shutters were indeed open, the sound  
was only of a man's voice hard-strumming over Russian,

if I could have wished to live apart with you,

and all the rest,  
etcetera.



## DEPARTURE

The sleeve of my sweater caught in your watch  
as you held my wrist to say goodbye.

You refuse to give hugs, and I had to untangle while you  
clipped a smile, and looked past me, over my shoulder

at a lost Safeway bag skimming pavement, achieving  
occasional, muddy-wing liftoff from the gutter.

I loosed my sleeve, and yet I still unravelled  
from the bottom step all the way to the airport.

The mountains I saw were in disarray:  
starred, scattered, all pinching and knuckling space

in a landscape accustomed only to randomness.  
And I left, bereft of breath-taking

by my tremendous distance from the ground.  
The man beside me fell asleep, his thumb

folded into the pages of his magazine. The light  
above his head was too weak, broken across

his wide forehead, to confess any more of him  
than small words he chose for himself: flying home

after 15 years away. Gradually aware of a dry-branch  
separation of parts and, like most of us, determined

to remember where he left off. He gave me his magazine  
when he was done. *National Geographic*. I read an article

about a kind of wandering butterfly that flies 3000  
miles to a place it's never seen, arriving in a cloud

of thrumming collective consciousness,  
whose singular desire is always to move away



from where it is. A single butterfly may never see  
the same place twice, yet the entire constellation

of coordinates ripples endlessly across generations.  
I thought about the yellow sweater thread that held us

together, briefly that morning, even as we moved apart.  
I made my first thought the wrong one—saw it dangling,

too long, from your wrist, trailing the wood floors  
behind you as you moved, humming, from room

to room. Though it might have been better, shared like that,  
I knew it was all mine, bright yarn a worm against

my denim thigh, something I'd remember for a day, and  
then scissor off onto the cold tiles of the hotel bathroom.



**April Ripley** currently lives and writes in Victoria, BC. She has an MA in English and Creative Writing from the University of New Brunswick, and is currently working on her MLIS through the University of Alberta. She has previously published poems in *Grain*, *The Fiddlehead*, and *Qwerty*.

Title page photo © kiomi (courtesy sxc.hu)



# The 2014 Canadian Mourning™ Championship Match

MARTYN BRYANT





## UPDATE – DAY 1 – 6:53 AM

The 2014 Canadian Mourning™ Championship match has just begun. This year's contest is between Jane, who is mourning the loss of her father, and Bobby, who is mourning the loss of his mother.

CANADIAN MOURNING™ CHAMPIONSHIP RULE CLARIFICATION (DAY 1 – 6:55 AM): Bobby offered the challenge at 3:36 am (EST) this morning. It was a legal challenge with regards to rule 9b, which states: “The Challenger’s Mourning™ must commence within 72 hours of the start of the Defending Champion’s Mourning™.” The separation of the two deaths fell within this cut-off; Jane’s father died 58 hours ago and Bobby’s mother died approximately 11 hours ago.

MOURNING™ CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE STATEMENT (DAY 3 – 8:02 PM): The Committee has heard the concerns of a minority of people who expressed concern that Bobby could still be continuing the Mourning™ he began in the 1994 Adolescent Canadian Mourning™ Championships, because he is a 34-year-old man who had never moved out of home or had a proper girlfriend. The Mourning™ Committee deems these objections to be irrelevant as many people in their 20s and 30s today struggle to leave home or find meaningful relationships. The Committee wishes the public to focus on this year’s Mourning™.

\*

## FEATURE: COMPETITOR PROFILES

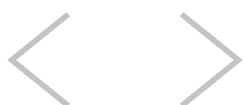
NAME: Jane

MOURNING™ HISTORY: Jane was relatively unknown when she beat Barbara to become The 2013 Canadian Mourning™ Champion. Jane quickly proved herself to be fast mourner; after just 34 days of competition Jane had successfully accepted the death of her mother as a messy motoring accident. At that same point, Barbara was still in denial about giving birth to a stillborn named Simon.

NAME: Bobby

MOURNING™ HISTORY: Bobby impressed Canadian mourners in the early nineties when, at the age of just 14, he beat a 17-year-old to become The Adolescent Canadian Mourning™ Champion.

Bobby’s father had been driving on the highway at the peak of



the morning rush hour. He was 23 minutes late for work and had an unshaven face. He had a heart attack and tried to take the exit ramp but missed it and hit the concrete divider. The police closed the northbound side of the highway for almost two hours.

The principal and the school nurse pulled Bobby out of first period, just as he was starting to get good at factorising quadratic expressions. They looked at his rashed-red neck as if it were a sign Bobby already knew. They thought that somehow he was getting a head start on the Mourning™.

After 86 days of astonishing grit, Bobby accepted his father's death.

\*

THE 2014 CANADIAN MOURNING™ CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH  
UPDATE – DAY 32 – 3:50PM

Bobby has a slight advantage, he has moved to the anger stage of Mourning™. He is stacking tins of tomato puree. Two cans have already fallen and are dented badly. People don't buy badly dented tins, Bobby knows that.

Jane is still in the denial stage. She just phoned her father. There was no answer.

\*

FEATURE: LEGENDS OF MOURNING™

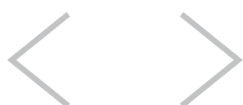
Continuing our Legends of Mourning™ series we profile Barbara:

**HISTORY:** Barbara won The Canadian Mourning™ Championship Match every year from 2006 to 2012. In that time the popularity of Mourning™ reached an all-time high, thanks mainly to Barbara's impact and appeal – the layman could relate to her and her style of Mourning™. **LEGACY:** Barbara has become a verb ubiquitous within the Canadian Mourning™ Community: 'You barbara-ed your cousin'; 'I could see you were already pre-barbara-ing your husband when he was still alive in the hospital,' etc.

\*

FEATURE: MOURNING™ PREPARATION

**JANE:** After being crowned The 2013 Canadian Mourning™ Champion,



Jane said publicly that she didn't want to defend her title the following year. That wasn't unusual though, nobody ever said publically that they wanted to defend, not even Barbara would say such a thing – it's considered bad taste.

Not only did Jane not want to defend her title, she didn't anticipate being able to. The closest near-deather in her family was her father and his cancer was being securely contained to his prostate gland. The doctors were confident that it could remain contained for many years.

The positive prognosis gave him enough energy to keep pursuing the auto-insurance company to get the full payout for Jane's mother's accidental death. He waited and waited on the telephone; each day he felt like he was getting closer but each day the pain of holding the receiver to his ear got greater. Metastasized cells were beginning to cling to his ribs and humerus. After two weeks, he started using the speakerphone, and after three he stopped calling. One month later he was dead.

**BOBBY:** Bobby spent the next few years following his adolescent Mourning™ victory in and out of high school. He was in school the days he was clean shaven and suspended the days he wasn't. He argued that his skin was sensitive and the principal argued that he was better off with an electric shaver. The principal even telephoned his mother to ask her to provide him with one.

At 18 he didn't get the grades he needed to study engineering at university so he kept working at the grocery store stocking shelves and balancing bell peppers and became known as the guy with the epic beard who, with a little more effort, could have become very successful at adult Mourning™. Customers discreetly watched him as he stacked items on special at the end of each aisle.

Over the last 20 years Bobby's mother encouraged him to get back into Mourning™. "You were so good at it. You had so much potential. Why don't you give it another go?"

When Bobby's mother, a day after the death of Jane's father, jumped from the balcony of the cruise ship and hit the water at 90 km/h, nobody found her body but they found a note on her bed saying, "Mourn me. Love Mum." Bobby took it as a sign that this was his moment to show Canadian Mourners from the bereavers of Newfoundland to the grievers of British Columbia what he was made of.

\*

DAY 60 – PUBLIC PANEL – 8:31 AM



QUESTIONER #1 – “This is for Jane. How are you feeling at this stage?”

JANE – “I’m looking to move into depression in the next few days. By my calculations I should be there Tuesday morning while eating breakfast.”

QUESTIONER #1 – “How are you going to make the transition?”

JANE – “David is going to take a few days off work and we are going to fuck and go for a few long walks.”

QUESTIONER #1 – “Will you be having sex on Tuesday morning?”

JANE – “Yes. We haven’t been having sex throughout denial and depression. He is usually a once-every-two-days kind of guy so I imagine he’s been taking care of himself. He’s been trying to make the move in bed so I think if we do it on Sunday night he’ll be good to go again on Tuesday morning before he goes to work and I will have a leisurely breakfast alone.”

QUESTIONER #2 – “What will you be eating?”

JANE – “That’s a good question. As you know last year I ate nothing throughout the depression stage and lacked the mental energy to get through it. I was only boosted by Barbara continuing to hear her dead baby’s cries. I felt so guilty using her pain to help me but I’m just being honest, it totally worked.

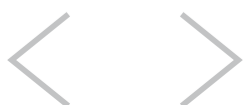
“I’m going to try and eat well through the depression stage. We have some pancake mix that we haven’t used for a long time so I’ll start off with banana pancakes with maple syrup.”

QUESTIONER #3 – “Won’t that make you fat?”

MODERATOR – “No, no, sorry. That’s an inappropriate question.

“I’d like to turn to Bobby. Bobby, you must be happy with the way things are going?”

BOBBY – “I am. I really struggled with the bargaining stage. I look back now and think I could have come to terms with the coast guard’s incompetence a lot quicker. I felt a lot of pressure from Jane as she went



through anger in just a couple days. But she got really stuck in bargaining and as you can see she's still there. Once I got out of bargaining, I got on with depression and I'm making solid progress through it."

QUESTIONER #4 – "This is for both mourners. Could you have done anything to better prepare for these championships, like reading novels, using the computer analysis software *Sorrow 2.0*, solidifying your friendships, or finding God?"

JANE – "To be honest, I don't think I could have. My brother and I knew that Dad had prostate cancer but we were all stunned by how quickly it spread to his bones.

"What I would say is that once he had bone cancer I prepared by spending most of my evenings on Netflix. In hindsight I should have gotten closer with my brother but at the time he wasn't great to be around as his only outlet was driving around town very fast and swearing at people that got in his way.

"I can talk a little bit about computer software. Maybe Bobby, you could address God?"

BOBBY – "Sure."

JANE – "I looked at the *Sorrow 2.0* analysis two days ago. Protected sex with David wasn't even mentioned as an option. I had to enter it manually and when I got it to calculate that, even with just three minutes of protected sex, it said it would increase my Mourning™ time by 6 days 3 hours and 34 minutes without any explanation as to why. Even with two minutes of foreplay and no penetration the computer predicted an extra 6 days 1 hour and 3 minutes to my Mourning™. I was curious what it would have said for unprotected sex, but I didn't really want to know. I was imagining it adding years to the Mourning™.

"I'm going to go for the sex anyway; I think we're seeing the limitations of *Sorrow 2.0*. At the moment they are not human enough. I think its algorithms are more domestic optimising rather than intimacy optimising. For example, number two on its list of suggestions was to mop the kitchen floor. I thought, 'Fuck you computer, the floor may be in need of a clean but I need to re-establish my intimacy with David. I can do the fucking floor tomorrow.'

"We'll have to wait for the next generation of *Sorrow*, *Sorrow 3.0* or whatever's next, to see if its output is more human."



*Bobby leans into his microphone. Jane sees him and leans back.*

BOBBY – “I’ve heard about the book method. Something about empathy and perspective. I respect the people who go this route. I didn’t read during the ’94 Adolescent Mourning™ Championships. I liked films back then, I guess they are like books. Getting back into Mourning™ to challenge Jane I tried re-watching the films I watched secretly as a teen— Goodfellas for example.

“On the God influence, I’m fairly sure Jane is with me on this one. I think modern mourners are mostly developing God-free variations of Mourning™. I know that the God variations are still working for some mourners but we’re trying to do something new to break through. Would you agree with that Jane?”

*Jane nods.*

BOBBY – “I would also like to say something about the computer analysis. I ran *Sorrow 2.0* two weeks ago when I was in the anger stage of Mourning™. The number one thing it recommended was that I should be using the computer software more often to make decisions.”

*Audience laughs.*

BOBBY – “Sometimes in an effort to make *Sorrow* more human the programmers overcompensate by writing algorithms which I think are too irrational. For example, the second suggestion from the computer was that on the way home from work I should stop in at the 7-Eleven and steal a bag of Cheetos.

“I don’t know why it said to steal the Cheetos. I had enough money to buy them. Anyway, it said I should steal a packet of Cheetos and when I got home I should sit on the kitchen floor and eat them wildly without caring about getting the yellow cheese dust everywhere. It specifically said – ‘maximise cheese dust mess.’ Interestingly, Jane, I think you’ll be interested by this, after cheese mess maximisation it said the best continuation was to mop the kitchen floor. I don’t even own a mop. You know what I think happened, Jane?”

JANE – “What?”

BOBBY – “Last year you must have mopped your kitchen floor at a critical



stage of Mourning™ and the computer is trying to learn from it.”

*Audience laughs. Jane laughs.*

MODERATOR – “That’s funny. Okay, maybe we’ll take one or two more questions. I see two hands...”

JANE – “Sorry, can I just interrupt you there? I’ve got something to add.”

MODERATOR – “Of course.”

JANE – “I just wanted to say that I agree with Bobby. I don’t think a computer, even in the distant future, will solve Mourning™. There are too many permutations that a computer could never calculate. Mopping and stealing Cheetos are just the tip of the iceberg.”

MODERATOR – “Fascinating. Sorry folks, just time for one more question so let’s go with you, Miss.”

QUESTIONER #3 – “Do you have any advice for each other?”

MODERATOR – “The match is still in progress so the mourners don’t have to answer that. Jane? Bobby?”

JANE – “Well, Bobby’s ahead, I’m not into depression yet. I don’t want to get even further behind so I’ll refrain from saying anything.”

BOBBY – “That’s fair. I guess I’ll say that I wish Jane good luck in trying to make a breakthrough by having sex with her partner David twice before he goes back to work on Tuesday. I hope their sex is tender and loving but maybe I’m saying too much now. I think banana pancakes are a great way to go. I would love some banana pancakes myself. I think maybe there is some pancake mix in the back of my cupboard. Maybe I will swing by the grocery store just outside this conference centre just in case. Maybe I need to buy a mop, too.”

*Audience laughs.*

\*

UPDATE – DAY 83 – 1:45AM



The younger lady at the checkout rejected Bobby's offer to go snowshoeing three days ago, and then his offer to go skating yesterday, and earlier today his offer to get her a coffee on his break. Bobby is still awake, restacking tins in his small pantry. Each tin is perfectly dent-free. He has almost got them into a perfect pyramid.

\*

UPDATE – DAY 98 – 3:34PM

Jane and Barbara just had coffee together; it is assumed that they discussed the match. This is a legal move from Jane as stated in rule 1a, "Mourners can talk to anyone."

\*

UPDATE – DAY 104 – 5:22AM

There might be a winner! The Mourning™ committee is seeking clarification.

UPDATE – DAY 104 – 5:23AM

The Mourning™ Committee can confirm that one of the competitors has completed Mourning™ and has accepted the loss of their loved one. Details to come.

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#### POST-MOURNING™ INTERVIEW WITH THE LOSER

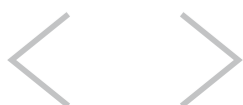
"I lost a lot of confidence when the girl at the grocery store told me that I was being too *in her face*.

"Someone was saying to me as Jane was getting close to winning that I should ask Jane out. You know, to try and intertwine my life with hers. It could have been a way to mess things up; I sensed that during the 60<sup>th</sup> day press conference she was quite into me. But I couldn't do it. Being rejected by Jane would have been disastrous."

INTERVIEWER – "Where do you plan to go from here?"

"It's going to take some readjusting but I think I can wrap up my Mourning™ in a few more weeks."

#### POST-MOURNING™ INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER





“For me it was critical that I got through depression quickly. I needed to put some pressure on Bobby; he was asking the checkout girl on great date ideas and I was sure one of them was going to work. If she’d have gone for one of them that would have been game over for me, he’d have been in a winning state of acceptance within a few days and my Mourning™ would have deteriorated rapidly.

“I was struggling, eating nothing and still feeling fat, until I got a call from Barbara last week. Over a cup of coffee she said she had recently learnt to accept the loss of her son and that she was ready to try and have another baby. I was inspired by her perseverance.

“I decided to start swimming again, with the exercise I was happy to start eating again as long as I did 20 minutes of swimming every other day. Also the money from mom’s car crash came through finally.”

INTERVIEWER – “Do you plan to defend your title next year?”

“I really hope not. But who knows, my uncle has started training to become an electrical power-line installer and everyone thinks it’s a terrible idea at his age.”



**Martyn Bryant** holds an MSc in Physics (UBC, 2007) and an MA in Creative Writing (Birkbeck University of London, 2014). His fiction appears in *Feathertale* and will shortly appear in *Carte Blanche* and *The Mechanics' Institute Review* 11. His book reviews and author interviews can be found in *Rover Arts* and the *Montreal Review of Books*. He is writing his first novel, which was partially developed this May at the Banff Centre Writing Studio. He lives in Montreal where he also teaches. <http://martynbryant.wordpress.com/>

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# LESLIE BOHN

✠ *The Vigil Keeper Tries  
to Explain*

✠ *The Vigil Keeper Waits with  
Mary Middleton Rutledge Fogg*

✠ *The Vigil Keeper and the Preacher  
John King*



## THE VIGIL KEEPER TRIES TO EXPLAIN

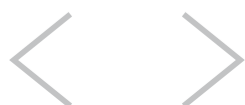
Her parents didn't know how to make it easy  
for her. But I was there. I helped her  
over the white wave that was soft and gentle

—Kate Daniels, "Sometimes When I'm Singing"

Because he thought I was making him go,  
he looked at the apple your mother had brought him,  
took a bite and threw it at me.  
She didn't remember seeing me there  
when she came home and told you that  
he threw the apple against the wall and died.  
I should have left then.  
You needed no diversion from grief.  
Your desire was without hope,  
for which I loved you well.  
You filled your paper bags  
with colored strings and wooden spools,  
ribbon, scraps of flour sacks, river quartz,  
playthings of objects sanctified  
because you had claimed them.  
We hated your mother for the moment  
she called it junk. *Junk*.  
You hollered. Her touch could taint it.  
*I'm taking it when I go*  
*see Alton*. You thought I was taking you.

That's not what I do.  
You will run down the stairs to me  
though the bones of your knees grind together.  
We will be sitting in the sun and laughing,  
and it will be *you* who decides to leave.

But just now  
I am leaving you, with this story, little sister:  
Man was made from God's side.  
So that he would not add to the wars in heaven,  
as new gods are wont to do,  
he was clothed in wisdom different from God's own,  
wisdom called *etemmu*, mortality, the ghost, even Eurydice.



God watched ghost cleave to ghost as gods never did.  
So, God sought *etemmu* for himself and was conceived  
to follow the procession of ghosts as the sun  
journeys over the body of the world and below it.  
Time has been that gods must die.  
And, times there are that  
man should go underground to find his soul,  
that Wisdom herself would harrow hell.



## THE VIGIL KEEPER WAITS WITH MARY MIDDLETON RUTLEDGE FOGG

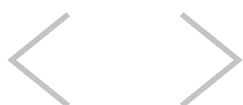
“Mrs. Francis B. Fogg died suddenly early yesterday morning. She had only a short time before gotten out of her bed, raised the window, opened the blinds, remarked to her husband that it was likely to be a bright day and had lain down again...” 1872

Ironic arpeggios of “Dixie”  
floated into the city.  
The soldiers entered the city,  
a slow flood  
building on the Cumberland.  
You watched the Union capture Nashville.  
No, Mary, you watched  
the mayor give Nashville away like a bride  
and the gray boys walk away.

The battle would come to the hills of the city.  
The ragged boys, the jagged envoys  
not broken on the breastworks of Franklin,  
would follow their subduers into the heart of the city.

But already your Henry lay in the earth.  
Already you called yourself a broken harp,  
a broken harp your country of the unmothers,  
“brooding over each sickening hour,”  
lullaby and battle hymn “quenched  
in Agony’s dark stream.”  
You put on a name before the war,  
the name of a man,  
A. Barrington  
whose textbook—yours—  
began like the Bible with the waters:

“The ocean forms the residuum of the chaotic fluid  
in which all solid bodies were held originally  
in a state of solution, from which they have been  
precipitated or crystallized,  
and brought to their present state.”



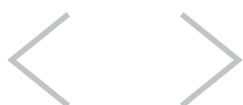
Back into the chaotic fluid, the blood  
which poured into that dark stream Fishing Creek,  
and what solid body from it made, what present state?  
The daughter of those who signed  
their names to independence,  
she had just enough rebel in her blood  
to drown her own voice for the inhuman cause.  
Barrington asked,  
“Is the black of a cow  
of a different species from the white?”

Mary, in the Plateau,  
dark streams  
through nine thousand caves,  
six-thousand-year-old stories  
told in ash and chalk  
and still soft mud  
while we know well  
how years of steady rain  
wear away an epitaph or name.

Francis.  
Septima.  
Henry.

They like snakes crawled on their bellies  
and lit up the caves with flaming cane  
in daubs flung upon the walls.  
They filled the underground  
with serpents  
transforming into birds,  
even instruments of war  
transforming into eagles,  
axes with human faces  
transforming into men-like-eagles,  
thunderers,  
the enemy of the snake.

What does it mean?  
Is there redemption for all,  
O Mother in Israel? These are



the mysteries of the Southern Death Cult.  
It is a good name for what you have seen,  
the stories you have marked  
with your own hands.  
There is not a warrior better  
acquainted with blood than a woman.  
You helped find arms and legs  
for men parted of them  
by the Minié ball.  
If they had been missing  
horns, feathers,  
would you have found these for them as well?

Variations on a theme:  
horned serpent, feathered serpent  
sometimes of the underground,  
sometimes of the fresh water  
where there it puffs itself up  
until the river reaches out over the land  
and eagle comes to counsel snake  
“not yet, not yet.”  
It sounds to you like thunder,  
the language of over earth  
and under earth.  
Quetzalcoatl  
one of this continent’s indigenous gods  
carried rain, life, in his eye like your morning sun  
and galaxies uncoiling in each scale.

Barrington,  
how atelic your hymn  
to this star must seem.  
I will lend whole octavos  
to your anthropology.

Mary, in your cosmology  
the enemy is the ophidian,  
but this is only the guardian  
of death, the cave,  
and through the cave  
the sky.





## THE VIGIL KEEPER AND THE PREACHER JOHN KING

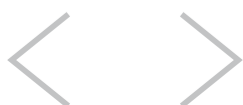
Beck's shout  
 sending  
 black weeds  
 swaying on their hoops,  
 an abyss where light and color vanish,  
 Sally's yearslong dress worn for the first time today,  
 moving from the bedside.  
 Sally's small, hard shoes on the boards  
 and creaking to close, a door.  
 Whisper of crape on the mirror  
 stroked by the wind  
 coming through the open window and with it  
 magnolias and the arval bread—  
 sweetness, cinnamon, nutmeg, even raisins,  
 immolating in the oven.

*I should steal us up a cake, John.  
 It won't do now for your guests.*

*Sin-eater? What do you say?*

From what window in what room where  
 does this sunlight stream on him?

*No, sir. Those days are mostly behind us.  
 We will still stop the clocks  
 and bid the bees and the neighbors.  
 The bread is for them  
 whose prayers will guide you  
 like candles on a path.  
 They will make a right mass  
 out of it with a cup of spiced ale  
 at your foot and a basket of loaves  
 held by little Will Fletcher at your head.  
 The children will kiss your face and hands  
 to keep you from their dreams  
 and from their waking.  
 If Bishop Asbury comes,  
 the family will have a fine tea.*



*Ah, that he comes quickly.*

Foxtail locks around his face  
like flames with a white hot core.  
I light a candle for him.

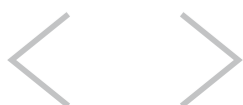
I see you as you were, circuit rider.  
Born a hellfire Southern preacher  
in the cool damp of England.  
Wesley's voice that day in Oxford:

*There is no employment of our time,  
no action or conversation, that is purely indifferent.  
All is good or bad...*

Disinherited by your father for love of Wesley's God.  
Sickness of the ship. Almost two months,  
and near the end, a child's body thrown into sea.  
Disembarking into the colony.  
Your horse shaking the dust of one town  
off his hoofs for the dust of another.  
Pulpits of tombstones and butcher blocks.  
Threat of highwaymen  
and the bullets of the Revolution.  
Then dust flying from the cushions  
of St. Paul's. Wesley's letter  
of admonishment prized:  
*for the love of God,  
stop screaming.*  
I see you as you were, circuit rider,  
full of fire, seeking perfection in love.

*Grandfather, that our  
sins could be baked into  
gingerbread and fruitcakes,  
that we could smuggle in our bellies  
those we love into heaven.  
Let me be full.*

He who has preached from the gallows  
laughs: *Let me be empty.*



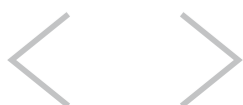
Don't give me that old time religion.  
It's not good enough for me.  
    To leave her now  
    is like abandoning a burning house  
    with loved ones still inside.

I will take whom I can.

I smell it burning  
this house of waning hours.  
You thought I came to watch for angels with you,  
to see your "good death" and learn,  
but I came, so that through me, you could watch it burn.

I began with Beck,  
the woman you bequeathed to your wife.  
She is my first charge against you,  
against the history your children can't disclaim.  
Your money allowed you passage,  
your privilege allowed you to follow your god  
while others sold themselves or their children  
just to get off the goddamned boat.  
There is no action  
which is purely indifferent.  
All is good or bad. For the love of God,  
this itinerant can't stop screaming.  
"Love should be put into action!"

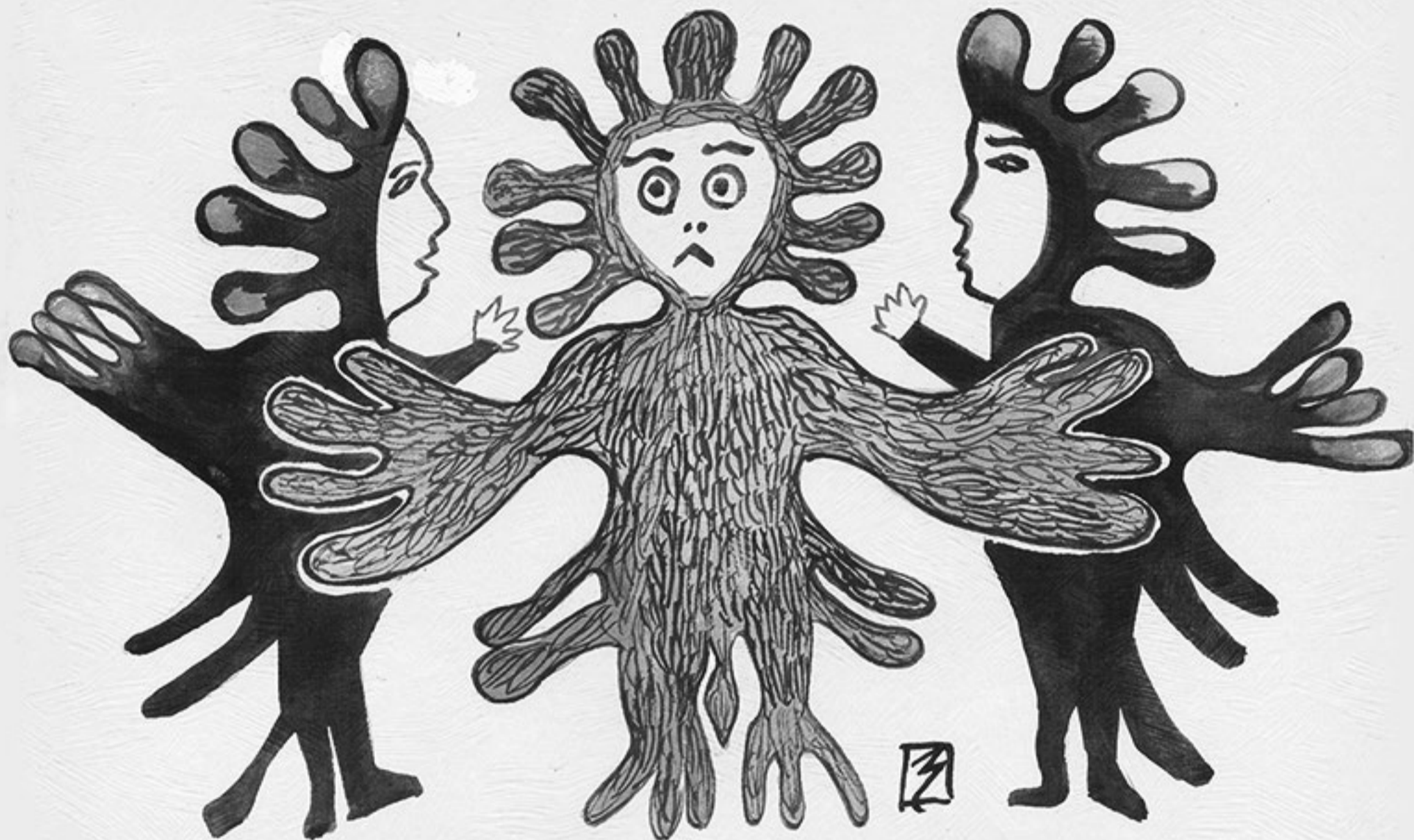
Unsure of any heaven  
but memory,  
*I am your daughter. See me as I am  
tending this small fire burning  
between the worlds in which we ride.*



**Leslie D. Bohn** teaches English composition and ESL at Tennessee Technological University. Her work has appeared recently in *32 Poems* and *The Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VI: Tennessee*, and her slightly longer than chapbook-length manuscript *The Vigil Keeper* was a finalist for ELJ Publications' 2014 Mini-Collection Contest.

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# WHITE LIES

jennifer wynne webber

## WHITE LIES

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charlesnorthcote@rogers.com  
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### Cast of Characters

CAITLIN ..... mid-20s; a waif; vulnerable but with an edge;  
bright. (*pronounced KATE-lin*)  
MARTIN ..... Inuk or half Inuk; aspiring filmmaker; a truly  
gentle spirit.  
MARILYN ..... striking; charismatic; successful marketer; well put  
together; Caitlin's mother.

### Setting & Time

The present. Late spring. Several different locations in Edmonton,  
Alberta, Canada.

The set should be as minimal as possible. The following locations are  
to be created with a few specific objects and/or lighting:

- A park.
- A kitchen with adjoining living room.  
(*The home of Caitlin and her mother, Marilyn.*)
- A bedroom.  
(*This becomes Caitlin's bedroom, the hospital, and Martin's apartment  
as required.*)
- A bridge.  
(*The High Level Bridge in Edmonton.*)
- The back exterior of a club.  
(*Any steps leading to the bridge could double as the stairs outside the  
club.*)
- A bookstore.

The lighting should be able to make any of these playing areas  
prominent separately or all at once or to cause them to recede so



that the stage can also be a neutral space, none of these locations, as needed (such as to create Caitlin's dreamscapes.)

Even in interior scenes, the northern lights should be visible in the sky above, as needed. They are the play's fourth character.

### Note

While this play is written such that it can play uninterrupted—without intermission—if an act break were to be taken, it should be taken at the end of Scene 15.

### SCENE 1

*(It's after 3:00 in the morning. The northern lights glimmer above. They're faint and only hint at their full glory—but they're making a promise.)*

*CAITLIN DREAMS: The shadow of someone walking toward Caitlin. When CAITLIN sees it, she looks to see who is casting it but can't see past a blinding glare. Still, she's sure she knows who it is.)*

### CAITLIN

I knew you'd come back for me. I knew it.

*(beat)*

I'm here, Daddy. Over here.

*(CAITLIN waves.)*

### MARTIN

No, you're not.

*(MARTIN is revealed.)*

### CAITLIN

What? What are you—?



MARTIN

Don't tell lies, Caitie.

CAITLIN

I'm not, I... I am here. And my dad was just—

MARTIN

Your dad? What are you talking about? Only person here is your mom.

*(MARILYN appears, smiling and waving at the video camera with bright light that MARTIN now points toward her.*

*MARILYN blows a kiss at the camera. MARTIN then swings the camera to point it at Caitlin.)*

MARTIN

Your turn. Come on now, camera's rolling. Time to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. What's your story?

*(CAITLIN faces the camera.)*

CAITLIN

I was five years old. My dad had been gone so long I... I couldn't remember his face anymore. But I was still sure he'd come back for me. Too sure, I guess. That's why my mom finally told me:

*(MARILYN steps into the camera's light with Caitlin.)*

MARILYN

He's dead, Caitie. Here, I've written it up as a news release for you so you'll know it's true.

*(MARILYN hands CAITLIN a news release, sneaking a smile at the camera as she does so in an over-the-top photo-op moment.)*





MARILYN

I know you can't read yet, hon, but, believe me, it's all there in black and white.

*(MARTIN moves in for a close-up of the news release.)*

MARILYN

And look!

*(motioning to the camera)*

Now it's all on videotape so it's even more true.

CAITLIN

Daddy's dead?

MARILYN

Yes. And I know that's very sad and that you're very little but you have to understand this means he's never coming back. That's what death means.

*(CAITLIN stares uncomprehendingly at the news release before...)*

CAITLIN

Daddy's dead.

*(CAITLIN addresses the camera again.)*

CAITLIN

Mom said I was too little to go to funerals so I made one up in my head: a big, beautiful funeral. It started off as a little QuickTime<sup>a</sup> video playing in just a corner of my mind but, by the time I was fifteen, it was IMAX.

*(An old world cathedral is conjured with light... and sound: a church bell rings; a traditional Gregorian chant, VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS, begins to fill the air.)*



## CAITLIN

A huge cathedral, candles and columns, vaulted ceiling. Giant stained glass windows sending light everywhere—rainbows in every direction. Priests in white collars, monks in robes. Bells chiming. Incense burning and chanting floating up over it all—the sound of it huge and deep and echoing. Black dresses, black veils. Everyone’s Italian or something old world and it’s all so Catholic, so Roman. Listen.

*(The sound of the Gregorian chant increases.)*

## CAITLIN

I imagined it so much I started to dream it, night after night. I’ve even started teaching myself Latin and Greek so I can catch more of the words. *Kyrie eleison.*

## MARILYN

For God’s sake, why not Spanish? At least you could order a drink on holiday. *Dos cervezas, por favor.*

*(MARILYN blows a kiss at Martin.)*

## CAITLIN

Lord have mercy. It was weird, I know, all of it, but I was okay with it. I was okay.

## MARTIN

*(still filming)*

Don’t lie.

## CAITLIN

*Mostly* okay. But all it takes to end the world... is a phone call.

*(MARILYN presents a telephone. It begins to ring. MARTIN follows the action with his camera.)*

## CAITLIN

That’s all it takes.



*(The sights and sounds of the grand cathedral end abruptly when MARILYN answers the phone.)*

MARILYN

Hello. Yes, it is. Yes. Oh. Oh, I see. When did it...? I see. Thank you for letting me know.

*(MARILYN hangs up the phone.)*

MARILYN

Make me a promise, Caitlin. One promise and I'll tell you the truth.

CAITLIN

Can I know what it is first?

MARILYN

Promise you won't blame me. If I try to make something up to you.

CAITLIN

Why would I blame you?

MARILYN

You never forgave me for not letting you go to Tom's funeral. Closure. That's what Dr. Klein said you needed, right? So I want to make something up to you now, that's all. Promise me.

CAITLIN

Okay. I promise I won't blame you.

MARILYN

Your father didn't die when you were five. He... Tom died today.

*(CAITLIN looks at her mother, unable to speak.)*

MARILYN

There's no other way for me to tell you this.

CAITLIN

I don't understand. What are you saying?



MARILYN

I'm saying something that's very difficult to hear I know.

CAITLIN

No.

MARILYN

Oh, sweetie.

CAITLIN

No. You can't. This can't be...

MARILYN

Caitie.

*(MARILYN reaches for Caitlin; CAITLIN recoils.)*

CAITLIN

You're telling me...

MARILYN

I'm telling you, yes, you lost your father. Just not the way you thought. And not when you thought. Trust me, it's actually not as big a deal as—

CAITLIN

I don't get what... What is happening here?

MARILYN

This is hard, I know, sweetie. So hard. But it's going to feel so much better, you know that? And I know for me—this has been such a weight on me, you have no idea. I feel lighter already, you know that? And you will too. Honestly, we'll both sleep better tonight, we really will. You're already used to him being gone so nothing's really different for you now, not really.

CAITLIN

How can you say that?



MARILYN

Caitlin. There's no point right now.

CAITLIN

Why didn't you... why didn't he—

MARILYN

You're too upset, Caitie. We'll talk later.

CAITLIN

All that time. Did he ever want to see me? Mom? Didn't he ever want to see me?

MARTIN

CUT!

*(MARTIN stops shooting, but keeps the video camera in hand as he looks for his next shot.)*

MARTIN

Okay, we need to take this again. We need to re-shoot the beginning. Not all of it, just the... last 17 years or so. Okay?  
PLACES!

MARILYN

That's centre stage for me, right?

MARTIN

Of course.

*(MARILYN strikes a pose in centre stage: she cradles the telephone like it's a baby. The light on her fades to black.)*

MARTIN

C'mon, Caitie cat. I said PLACES!

CAITLIN

I don't know where to start.



MARTIN

Now. We start now. At the beginning. ROLLING!

CAITLIN

But where do I—? I don't know where I stand.

*(MARTIN takes her by the arm, moves her a few steps.)*

MARTIN

You stand on the grave. Don't you remember? Caitie? 'Cause that's where you always start. Nothing's changed. Not really.

CAITLIN

But I can't... I just can't....

MARTIN

Maybe that's because your legs are gone.

*(CAITLIN looks down to her legs then crumples to the floor. As she falls, everything drops to black, except for the northern lights which remain dancing above for a few more moments.)*

## SCENE 2

*(A park on a hot and brilliantly sunny day in late spring.*

*CAITLIN is curled up and motionless on the ground. She wears a black dress and tights. MARTIN sits slightly apart from her. He wears a borrowed tie—awkwardly, the best shirt he's got and dark slacks. His camera gear is beside him. The two have been there for some time.)*

MARTIN

Kay, I've got it. Something soothing?



*(looking intently at Caitlin)*

A little cat curls up in the sun and dreams her troubles away. There's your something soothing. My something soothing.

*(CAITLIN shifts in her sleep.)*

MARTIN

That's what you are, aren't you, Caitie cat? A little sleeping, dreaming cat. All cozy and—

*(CAITLIN shifts again, breathes more quickly.)*

MARTIN

Cait? Hey. Hey, shake awake there, little cat.

*(MARTIN touches her. CAITLIN pulls up, startled.)*

CAITLIN

Oh my God.

MARTIN

You fell asleep. Must be the stimulating company—[you keep].

CAITLIN

My legs were gone.

MARTIN

I thought you must be dreaming. You were breathing so—[fast]

CAITLIN

You were there.

MARTIN

I was?

CAITLIN

Filming me. You said we had to re-shoot.



MARTIN

I was in your dream?

CAITLIN

They're so real. Are yours like that?

MARTIN

I don't dream. Not anymore.

CAITLIN

When you did.

MARTIN

Yeah, they were real. Too real. Kids huffing gas, getting messed up. Suicides.

CAITLIN

Sorry. I didn't mean to—

MARTIN

It's okay. If my dreams are messed up, now I just go outside. Watch the northern lights.

CAITLIN

If they're there.

MARTIN

They're there.

CAITLIN

I've seen them like maybe twice in my life. You can't see them in the city.

MARTIN

Sure you can. They're there when I look for them.

CAITLIN

Come on.





MARTIN

It's the truth.

CAITLIN

So, what, they follow you?

MARTIN

Maybe.

CAITLIN

You think they follow you around? Come looking for you? After those bad dreams you supposedly don't have anymore.

*(beat)*

I'm freezing.

MARTIN

How can you be cold when it's—[so hot out]

*(MARTIN reaches for her but CAITLIN pulls away.)*

CAITLIN

It's okay. I'm okay.

*(He looks at her. They sit in silence for a few moments.)*

MARTIN

Kay, my turn. Tell me something... beautiful.

CAITLIN

I don't want to play anymore.

MARTIN

Come on, it'll take your mind off—

CAITLIN

You think anything could take my—



MARTIN

Come on. Just play. Tell me something beautiful.

CAITLIN

Why beautiful? Why make it so hard? I mean, tell me something strange. Easy peasy. Tell me something psycho—even easier, especially today. But beautiful? I mean, there was nothing beautiful about what we just went through, was there? Unless... yeah, okay, yeah, I've got one. Something beautiful? Mom's grieving widow act at the funeral. That was something, you have to admit. Knockout. Oscar worthy. I mean, a truly, bloody unbelievable—[performance that... ]

MARTIN

Whoa, Cait. I didn't meant to—

CAITLIN

No, no, it's okay. We've got a game to play here. Come on. My turn. Tell me something... true. Since I never get much of that at home.

MARTIN

This was a bad idea.

CAITLIN

Okay, I'll tell you something true. I'm so cold I may never warm up. I honestly think my body forgets even how to feel warm.

MARTIN

Come here. Let me—

*(MARTIN reaches for her again to no avail.)*

CAITLIN:

I'm serious. I can't even remember what warm feels like. I mean, I can picture it but I can't feel it. Like when I was little, when it was really hot, my dad used to take me for picnics at Gull Lake and I'd play for, like, literally hours and hours on the beach. All safe and comfy and warm. The sun beating down. The sand so hot, so white. Once I dropped my French Fries into it—on purpose—because the



sand looked like salt. Of course then I wailed cause it sure didn't taste like it. And the thing is, I close my eyes now and I can see it all, all over again. The fries all over the sand. The sun glinting on the lake. My beloved pink bathing suit—it had this ruffle that made me feel like a princess. My dad, holding out my Sleeping Beauty towel, telling me to come wrap up in it. I mean, I can see it, everything, but I can't feel it. How warm I felt. Why is that?

MARTIN

Doesn't work that way, that's why. Take it from an Inuk, when you're cold—go inside.

*(The first sign of a thaw: Caitlin smiles, might even laugh.)*

CAITLIN

Go inside?

MARTIN

Yup. Or put on a sweater.

CAITLIN

Ancient Eskimo advice?

MARTIN

You got it. Better yet, let Doc Martin here warm you up.

*(MARTIN takes her hands and blows on them to warm them.)*

MARTIN

See? Better already, right?

CAITLIN

You're something.

*(beat)*

So you have bad dreams? Like, all the time or—

MARTIN

Don't go there, girlfriend.



CAITLIN

Girlfriend, is it?

MARTIN

You'll come round. You're already staying with me. Pretty soon I'll be irresistible to you.

CAITLIN

Pretty sure of yourself.

MARTIN

Hey, I know these things.

*(MARTIN reaches for her feet. She resists.)*

MARTIN

Come on. It'll make you feel better.

*(MARTIN starts rubbing her feet.)*

CAITLIN

No wonder you have bad dreams. You never talk about it—what it did to you. Being bounced around all those foster homes after your Mom died. Or your dad. You never talk about your dad.

MARTIN

Never knew him. Supposedly, he moved down here to Edmonton but I don't know.

CAITLIN

Really? Because if you could find him and talk to him, I mean that would change everything.

MARTIN

Wouldn't change a thing.

CAITLIN

But if stuff is coming out in your dreams, it means you have to—  
[deal with it]



MARTIN

No way. I say focus on the present. Now. This moment. Me warming you up. See? It's good, hey?

*(still rubbing her feet)*

A good moment.

CAITLIN

Yeah, it's good but—

MARTIN

So forget looking back all the time. Gull Lake, what it felt like to be warm, all of it. Just be here now. With me. I'll warm you up then we'll go home. I'll make you some good, traditional, Inuk spaghetti.

CAITLIN

I like your spaghetti.

MARTIN

See, you're coming round already.

*(CAITLIN cringes and pulls away.)*

CAITLIN

Ow, ow, ow! Stop!

MARTIN

What did I do?

CAITLIN

Nothing. It's okay.

MARTIN

What is it?

*(MARTIN tries to examine her foot, covered by black tights.)*

CAITLIN

Nothing. A glass broke. I stepped on it. That's all.



MARTIN

You gotta be more careful.

CAITLIN

Yeah, whatever. It's just a scratch. The least of my problems.

*(beat)*

I thought funerals were supposed to be... I don't know... grand or something. But today was... and Mom—oh my God.

MARTIN

She was having a tough time.

CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

I just mean... she was taking it pretty hard.

CAITLIN

Taking what hard? She'd pretended he was dead for years. It was her glory moment—her lie was finally true.

MARTIN

She's got to have her reasons, Cait.

CAITLIN

You're defending her?

MARTIN

No. Hey. It's just... there's probably stuff you don't know that—

CAITLIN

I don't care. And I'm not going to have anything to do with her ever again.

MARTIN

You don't have to. You can stay with me as long as—



CAITLIN

'Cause I mean I am done. And she must sense it—like an animal. Did you see how she glommed onto me today? And how she kept giving me little comforting pats on the back. I was going to scream, literally bloody scream, if she touched me one more time.

MARTIN

She's worried about you.

CAITLIN

She's worried about her. How will she function without me as her full time, live-in audience? Who's going to supply her laugh track—especially when she's between boyfriends again.

MARTIN

I didn't mean to start anything.

CAITLIN

For the first time, I'm not playing along. Which is why she's such a mess. On random radio search for what to do. One minute supposedly comforting me. The next, trying to act like nothing's changed for me.

MARTIN

I think she just means... the rest of your life doesn't have to change just because—

CAITLIN

Whole chapters just got ripped out of my life. Ripped out and set on fire. You do get that?

MARTIN

You're still you. That's all—[that matters]

CAITLIN

No. I'm not. That's the point. Your story changes, you change.

*(Beat.)*

MARTIN

Like cowboy and Indians.



CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

Come on. Didn't everybody play it?

CAITLIN

Cowboy? Like, as in, one?

MARTIN

Just the way it worked out. This kid, Franklin—his dad was RCMP—he always got to be the cowboy. Always said me and my friends had to be the Indians. So we were. I mean, Franklin was... you didn't want to mess with that cowboy. But finally we had it and I just told him: "We're not Indians, anyway. We're Inuit. And *we're* going to be the cowboys from now on." Changed everything. Totally different story.

*(beat)*

I think being a cowboy makes you vicious. Playing ninjas was better.

CAITLIN

*"Mutantur omnia nos et mutamur in illis."*

MARTIN

Yeah. What you said.

CAITLIN

"All things change, and we change with them."

MARTIN

Latin. You said it in Latin.

CAITLIN

Yeah. Latin.

*(MARTIN is highly amused by this.)*

MARTIN

You and your dead languages. You're totally stuck in history.





(beat)

Where my mom's from, there's not even a word for history.

CAITLIN

You're kidding. How about *suntan*? Any word for that?

MARTIN

I forget.

(chuckles)

Ancient history.

CAITLIN

How can there be no word for history? I mean, the past is real. Stuff happened... in the past. There has to be a word for it.

MARTIN

Where I grew up, in *Panniqtuuq*—

(pronounced PAN-nik-  
TOOK)

— there's a word that's pretty close. But not where my Mom's from. She said, for them, the past isn't separate from the present. It's kind of like... everything from the past is inside you but since you're living in the present, nothing's really in the past. It's always now, inside you.

CAITLIN

You know what's inside me? Lies. My mom's lies. I'd cut them all out only I don't know where they stop and I begin. My bones have grown around them.

MARTIN

You're a little oyster.

CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

That's how oysters make pearls. Nasty, scratchy bits of sand and crap



get stuck in them—so they cover them up—grow them into pearls.

CAITLIN

And we think they're pretty. Wonder what the oysters think.

MARTIN

They're probably proud of their little pearls. Survival badges.

*(beat)*

Someday I'll buy you some.

CAITLIN

Survival badges?

MARTIN

Pearls. Real pearls.

*(CAITLIN gives him a look.)*

MARTIN

I keep telling you, girlfriend. You'll come round.

*(Despite herself, CAITLIN laughs.)*

CAITLIN

Thank you.

MARTIN

For what?

CAITLIN

Just... thank you. For letting me stay with you the last few days. For making me laugh when... I don't know. For everything.

*(Beat.)*

MARTIN

*Qujannamiiriaturataarikkitt.*

*(pronounced: khu-YAN-nah-MEE-rhia-to-rab-  
taa-rick-kit)*



CAITLIN

And that means... ?

MARTIN

I'm thinking you're the one who should get the thanks. At least...

*(MARTIN picks up his video camera and points it at Caitlin.)*

MARTIN

... if you'll finally agree to star in a movie. Ready for your close-up?

*(CAITLIN holds her hand to block the shot.)*

CAITLIN

No, no paparazzi. Go film something that wants to be filmed. Your northern lights.

MARTIN

Yeah, I don't think so.

CAITLIN

I thought they follow you around. Might be looking for attention.

MARTIN

They got my attention. Believe me.

*(MARTIN lowers the camera.)*

CAITLIN

Hey, how does a filmmaker not believe in history, anyway? That's what you're recording, you know. Every time you pick up that thing.

MARTIN

No way. In here...

*(tapping the camera)*

... it's always now and always true. I'm catching true little rolling scenes of right now. That's why I like it. You would too if you gave it a try. All you have to do is wave hello. Come on. Wave.



*(CAITLIN waves feebly at the camera.)*

CAITLIN

There. I waved. Now shut it off.

MARTIN

Once more with feeling. Come on. Wave hello to now, to freedom, to living with me.

CAITLIN

How about waving goodbye to my mom? Woo hoo!

*(CAITLIN waves more enthusiastically.)*

MARTIN

Yeah! That's more like it. Okay, wave goodbye to all of it then. Your mom. Your dad. His family—all of them. Cause it doesn't matter now what funny ideas they had about things, it's all in the past and it's time to—[leave it all behind]

CAITLIN

What do you mean?

MARTIN

Doesn't matter. Come on. Wave hello, goodbye. Whatever.

CAITLIN

What do you mean "funny ideas?"

MARTIN

I don't know. Forget it.

CAITLIN

Martin! Shoot's over.

*(CAITLIN grabs the camera. She looks to see how to turn it off. MARTIN takes the camera from her and shuts it off.)*

MARTIN

Leave it alone, okay? It's the day of a funeral. Good day to bury things.



CAITLIN

Or dig the ground up. Tell me the truth.

*(MARTIN sets the camera down.)*

MARTIN

It was at the funeral home. After. You were in the bathroom. Your mom just said your dad's family had some funny ideas, alright? Just that... they're blaming you guys for what happened—for how he passed away or something.

CAITLIN

How could they blame us? We hadn't seen him in years. He dies in a car accident and it's our fault? Martin? What happened? What really happened?

MARTIN

I don't know exactly what... I just know... you've gotta move on, okay? None of it matters now.

CAITLIN

What, did my mom give you a script to read or something?

MARTIN

No, I... I mean... it's just that...

CAITLIN

Don't. Don't even try. You are such a bad liar.

*(CAITLIN gets up suddenly to leave.)*

MARTIN

Hey, no!

CAITLIN

I can't believe this. I can't believe you.

*(MARTIN gets to his feet to follow her.)*

MARTIN

No, Cait.



CAITLIN

Don't. Leave me alone.

MARTIN

It's not like that... whatever you're thinking, it's not true.

CAITLIN

I'll tell you something true: I don't like pearls, never have. So you can forget about saving up.

*(CAITLIN takes off, leaving MARTIN behind.)*

### SCENE 3

*(The home of Caitlin and her mother, Marilyn.)*

*MARILYN, wearing a black dress and pearls, drains the last few drops from a bottle of wine. She gets up to look for another but stops to take off her shoes.)*

MARILYN

Ow. Damn it.

*(She kicks her shoes across the room.)*

MARILYN

Damn it, damn it, damn it!

*(She breaks down sobbing and crouches on the floor, hugging her knees.)*

*(She's still crying when Caitlin bursts in.)*

CAITLIN

Okay, we need to talk. We need to talk right—[now!]

*(She takes in Marilyn on the floor.)*



CAITLIN

And you're crying. Right. Cause this is all about you.

MARILYN

Leave me alone.

CAITLIN

Leave YOU alone?

MARILYN

Where's Martin?

CAITLIN

He's not your little puppet, you know.

*(MARILYN gets up off the floor.)*

MARILYN

If you could only hear yourself.

CAITLIN

I hear Dad's family has some "funny ideas." They blame us. What else aren't you telling me?

MARILYN

I need a drink.

CAITLIN

Mom!

MARILYN

You want to talk, fine. But I'm not talking till you're pouring.

*(CAITLIN hesitates then goes over to pour a glass of wine. Marilyn watches her pour.)*

MARILYN

This is just so... I mean, if anything, I thought you'd finally be more... at peace.



CAITLIN

What?

MARILYN

I just mean... it was a lovely service.

*(CAITLIN stands holding the glass of wine.)*

CAITLIN

You've got to be kidding me.

MARILYN

I thought funerals were such a big deal to you. Ritual. Closure. What I never let you have.

CAITLIN

It sure as hell wasn't much of a funeral.

MARILYN

What are you talking about?

CAITLIN

I didn't even see where they put Dad. There was no coffin and no—

MARILYN

Of course there was no coffin. He was cremated.

CAITLIN

So where were his ashes?

MARILYN

Right up front. How could you have missed it? That big blue butterfly.

CAITLIN

His ashes were in that butterfly? That plastic butterfly?

MARILYN

It wasn't plastic. I'm sure it was some kind of ceramic.





CAITLIN

Ceramic.

MARILYN

Or at least high end plastic.

CAITLIN

That was the tackiest thing I ever—I mean, if I had to imagine a more—

MARILYN

I thought it was stunning. And a lovely reminder about—what's that called when a butterfly changes, you know, turns from butterfly to chrysalis?

CAITLIN

Other way round.

MARILYN

Whatever. You know what I mean. Transformations. I thought it was lovely. Now, bring me that. I told you, I'm not talking until you give me a chance to relax.

*(CAITLIN gives in and brings over  
Marilyn's glass of wine.)*

CAITLIN

You know, I saw it myself, how they looked at me. That guy Jim—

MARILYN

Your uncle Jim.

CAITLIN

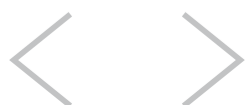
*Uncle Jim... kept looking at me. Through the whole service.*

MARILYN

I told you, you look good in that—

CAITLIN

God, Mom. He wasn't being a lech. He was just... looking at me.



MARILYN

You're imagining things, sweetie.

CAITLIN

And that elderly woman. In the blue blouse -

MARILYN

Tom's mom. Your grandmother.

CAITLIN

My grand—oh my God.

MARILYN

She just needs some time. We all do. It's hard—the way this brings everything back. It feels so fresh, doesn't it?

CAITLIN

It is fresh. We were at his funeral today.

MARILYN

You know what I mean. For us, it's different. It's something the two of us have lived with for a while now.

CAITLIN

I lived it. I don't know what you were living.

MARILYN

Cait, go get yourself some wine. Go on. And take a vitamin too—you're in quite a mood. Maybe you're getting that flu I just had.

*(CAITLIN stares at Marilyn, then decides she needs a bit of wine, after all.)*

MARILYN

Remember that last picnic at Gull Lake. The week before Tom... left. I was thinking about that today at the service, when they talked about how much Tom loved the cabin, out at Gull Lake. I thought about all the picnics we had that last summer. What lovely times we had. Remember this?

*(MARILYN makes a loud kissing sound.)*



MARILYN

That was you. Running around, kissing everybody in sight. Tom, Jim and Lindie's kids, everybody. Handing out dandelions. You thought they were "pretty frowers." You used to be so cuddly. Tom called you the "kissy monster." Remember that?

*(MARILYN demonstrates the loud kissing sound a few more times.)*

CAITLIN

No.

MARILYN

Oh, sure you do. At Gull Lake.

CAITLIN

Don't.

MARILYN

The picnics.

*(MARILYN does it again.)*

CAITLIN

Quit it.

MARILYN

You weren't too small to remember the picnics.

CAITLIN

You know what you're doing.

MARILYN

Honestly, Caitie. A bloody walking encyclopedia for anything negative, but ask you to remember a few happy—

CAITLIN

Mom, you were never there. You never went on any of those picnics. Dad brought me out there with his family on weekends when you were working.



MARILYN

Sweetie. You're forgetting. Just today Lindie said how nice it was I'd been able to be there. At those picnics. You just don't remember.

CAITLIN

There's nothing wrong with my memory. I remember everything. Do you know if you're hypnotized and regressed—you can even remember your own birth? Well, been there, done that. Quite the therapy session. Silly me, I thought it would be wonderful to go right back to the beginning.

MARILYN

So, what, people weren't singing with joy in the delivery room? Beginnings are bloody, Caitie. Welcome to the facts of life.

CAITLIN

Dad was alive. All those years. Why didn't he try to see me? And what about his family? Jim and Lindie. My grandma. God. What stopped them from trying to see me, tracking me down at school or something? Mom? What am I missing here?

MARILYN

I can't do this right now.

CAITLIN

I *knew* there was something else. I almost asked them what it was, this afternoon.

MARILYN

Well, that would have been nice. Bothering them at the funeral. They were grieving, Caitie. Can you not think of anyone but yourself?

CAITLIN

I'm not playing along with you anymore. Not one more day, one more hour, one more minute. I will call them, Mom.

MARILYN

Oh for God's sake. I honestly don't see the point in... it's just... well, it's all a bit awkward, isn't it?



CAITLIN

Mom.

MARILYN

Weird, actually. Right out of a daytime talk show.

CAITLIN

Mom!

MARILYN

If you have to know, they thought you didn't want to see any of them.

*(beat)*

I know, it's all very weird, but I think... well, I think they were afraid Tom might have, when you were very little, might have... abused you.

CAITLIN

What?

MARILYN

It was all very awkward. But it was just... they obviously misunderstood something I said once, way back. They were always getting strange ideas. Very odd family.

CAITLIN

How could they think—?

MARILYN

Don't worry. I think I got it straightened out. After you left today, I let them know you've been in therapy and now know it never happened.

CAITLIN

You said that to them? Today?

*(CAITLIN spills her wine.)*



MARILYN

Wipe that up.

*(CAITLIN is motionless.)*

MARILYN

Listen, I can't control everything people think, you know. They're odd, Caitie. I handled it the best way possible, believe me. Now. Where did Martin take you, anyway?

*(CAITLIN can't speak.)*

MARILYN

We're changing the subject, Caitie, and that's final. Where did he take you?

*(beat)*

I am your mother and you're in my house and you're going to answer me. I asked you... where did Martin take you?

CAITLIN

To the park. By the greenhouses.

MARILYN

Oh, for Pete's sake. I thought you'd go for a drink somewhere upscale, like that new place near my office. With the stainless steel counters. All burnished. I told him to take you somewhere nice.

CAITLIN

Leave my friends alone.

*(beat)*

So that's why they blame us? Blame me. They think I made up some story about abuse and ruined his life?

MARILYN

Oh, they don't blame you. Not now. They're actually quite relieved, you know, to finally understand what happened and to be able to let it go. And that's what you should do.



CAITLIN

But that's not what happened.

MARILYN

Caitie, hon, let's just drop it, okay? I've had it with relatives and funerals and grieving. It's too much. But, you know, if you could learn to let go of all this, it really could help you down the road. I mean, seriously, get the right talk together and you can make an absolute killing. Do you know how much they pay motivational speakers?

CAITLIN

What are you talking about?

MARILYN

Overcoming adversity. Moving beyond pain. Life after loss. There's money in stories like that. You have everything you need. You just don't know it.

CAITLIN

All the therapy in the world and I still don't stand a chance with you, do I? I mean, I need to talk to you. I need to... but I can't. My head is spinning. Literally. I feel dizzy.

MARILYN

Take a moment. Breathe. You know what to do.

*(CAITLIN takes a deep breath and tries to pull herself together.)*

MARILYN

Now, yes, we do have to talk. Of course we do. But you're the one who took off right after we got the news about Tom. How can I talk to you when you're hiding over at Martin's? And, just now, when I was finally trying to open things up by talking about a few of the happy times, the picnics, you shut me down. So, now, I just can't. I'm sorry, but you can't turn me on and off like a switch. I refuse to be manipulated like that. I'll try again later. But now, Caitie, please. Go wipe that up.



*(MARILYN watches CAITLIN pull a wad of tissue from her pocket.)*

MARILYN

We do have a floor cloth.

*(CAITLIN bends down with the tissue and uses it to soak up the wine. MARILYN watches her.)*

MARILYN

Fine. Good enough for now.

*(beat)*

Listen, Caitie. I'm actually proud of you, sweetie, the way you're handling all this. You really are doing so much better. Now, go wash your face and, when you're ready, we'll go out. Just the two of us. We do need to talk. Martin can get along without you for one night, no matter how good the sex is.

CAITLIN

It's not like that.

MARILYN

Sure, whatever. But there's no way I'm cooking tonight and neither are you. I just need a soak in the tub. Then we're going to have a proper night out and have that talk.

*(MARILYN starts to leave, but stops.)*

MARILYN

Could I wear that green top of yours? The one with the spaghetti straps and the little matching sweater. I want out of all this black and nothing's clean. Caitlin? You frozen stiff or something?

CAITLIN

Yeah, okay. Whatever you want.

MARILYN

Just throw it on my bed. Now go call Martin and tell him we have plans for tonight. Be thoughtful, would you? I don't want him worrying about you.





*(MARILYN exits. CAITLIN stands with the blood red tissue in hand and watches her leave.)*

#### SCENE 4

*(Later that night, after midnight. The northern lights shimmer.*

*CAITLIN DREAMS: The sound of a blizzard's cold wind is heard raging in Caitlin's bedroom. CAITLIN walks through the storm, feeling her footing with every tentative step. She is extremely cold. Finally she walks toward her bed, climbs in and lies down, shivering. The lights shift and the winter images and sounds fade.*

*The rhythmic sound of a heart monitor emerges from the sound of the storm and we know that this is now a hospital bed.*

*As MARTIN steps forward to stand by Caitlin, the northern lights shining above flash and brighten.*

*MARILYN hurries in, wearing a coat.)*

MARILYN

Caitie? Oh my God. Caitie! What did you do?

*(MARILYN notices MARTIN hanging back, by the end of the bed.)*

MARILYN

Oh my God. Are you the one who found her?

MARTIN

Yeah. I—

MARILYN

Thank you. Thank you so much.



*(MARILYN flies at him and hugs him.)*

MARILYN

If you hadn't seen her—

MARTIN

I did.

MARILYN

But if you hadn't—

MARTIN

I did.

MARILYN

I don't know how to thank you. I don't know what I'd do if Caitie...  
she's all I've got.

*(MARILYN goes to Caitie and strokes her arm. They stand silently, watching Caitie's bed for several moments. We hear only the heart monitor.)*

MARILYN

I didn't get your name.

MARTIN

Martin. Martin Auksaq.

MARILYN

That sounds...

MARTIN

Inuk.

MARILYN

Inuk. That's the new word for Eskimo, isn't it?

MARTIN

New? It's always been Inuk—at least to us Inuit. But, I don't know,  
maybe for southerners...



MARILYN

Can I give you a ride anywhere?

MARTIN

No, I'm okay. I'm gonna walk.

MARILYN

Oh no, you're not. Not after everything that's happened tonight. It's late.

MARTIN

You'll want to stay here with your daughter.

MARILYN

The doctor says she'll be fine and right now I think I... I need to clear my head. Oh. Oh dear.

*(MARILYN stumbles slightly and steadies herself on the bed.)*

MARTIN

Are you okay?

MARILYN

Uh huh.

*(MARILYN takes a sharp breath. She seems dizzy.)*

MARTIN

Whoa. You sure?

MARILYN

Um... I don't know. Maybe not.

*(MARTIN puts his arm around her to steady her.)*

MARTIN

Do you want me to call anyone for you?



MARILYN

There's no one to call. Thanks.

*(beat)*

Actually, if it's okay with you, maybe you could take me home. I'm not sure I should drive. Then, if you wouldn't mind, maybe you could come in and, I don't know, just have a drink and sit with me for a little while? I'm sorry to be so much trouble. I'm feeling a little...

MARTIN

Okay. Might be good for me too. This brings a lot of stuff back.

MARILYN

It's Martin, right? Martin, thank you. Looks like you're my lucky angel tonight. I needed an angel tonight.

*(MARILYN leans into Martin and gives him a kiss. The kiss is just a little too long. MARTIN pats her awkwardly on the back.)*

*CAITLIN sits upright, sees the kiss and watches as MARILYN and MARTIN exit. The northern lights subside slightly as Martin leaves.)*

CAITLIN

And that dream always seems so real... until my heart monitor stops.

*(The heart monitor stops. We hear a long beep. The wind rises again as Caitlin lies back down.)*

*The northern lights glow... )*

SCENE 5

*(... and grow in intensity. Vertical washes of green shimmer in the sky above a park—the same night.)*



*In the dim light, MARTIN is putting the last finishing touches on the set up for his late night video shoot. His gear is simple: tripod, decent video camera, one light. A small lapel microphone is pinned onto his shirt; its wire is plugged into the video camera.*

*When he's ready, MARTIN looks up at the northern lights.)*

MARTIN

Smile for the camera.

*(MARTIN smiles himself as he watches the northern lights dance. He starts to film.)*

MARTIN

Always with me, aren't you, *Aqsarniit*?

*(pronounced: awkh-  
SAWR-neet)*

I never sent you away like I was supposed to.

*(MARTIN films the lights for a few more moments until they settle down somewhat. Then he turns on his portable light and steps into its glare to speak directly to the camera reporter-style.)*

MARTIN

*Aqsarniit.* That's how we say "northern lights." Some people call them *Aurora borealis*. That's Latin. And aurora's okay, but *aqsarniit* is better. To us Inuit, they've always been more than light in the sky.

*Aqsarniit* means "ball player"—because my people say that's what those guys are doing up there. Playing football with a walrus head. All those souls of people who died from losing blood, maybe while having a baby, or by murder or suicide. They're up there trying to have some fun, I guess. Trying to forget what happened to them, maybe. Or to remind us life goes on, no matter what.



My mom never liked these northern lights. Never let me stay outside if *Aqsarniit* were too busy up there.

She had rules: *Don't let them get too close. Don't make fun of them. Don't you ever whistle at them.*

Whistling makes them come close. You're not supposed to look at them if they get too close. Supposed to go find shelter. Otherwise, they might scoop you up. Cut your head off. Maybe play football with your head instead of the walrus head.

Sometimes, you'll even hear the sound of their knives sharpening. Like one *ulu* sharpening another. An *ulu* is a woman's knife—looks like a smiling face. If you hear that, the *ulu*it sharpening, it might already be too late for you.

So, if you whistle, you have to clap. To send them away, restore the balance. You're always supposed to clap to send them away.

My mom didn't want me messing with those northern lights, no matter what. Her rules were strict and I knew them. Just never been so good at following rules, I guess.

I never told her what I did. Never told anybody.

*(MARTIN shuts off his camera and light and looks back up to the northern lights.)*

MARTIN

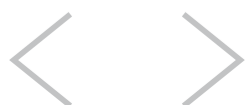
But *you* know. You *know* I never set it right. So you follow me around. And now... now I like you sticking close to me.

*(There's a flash of headlights and, from a distance, the sound of car doors opening and slamming shut. MARTIN immediately starts packing up his gear.)*

MARTIN

Yeah great. Cops. And I don't feel like playing cowboys and Indian tonight. "Just filming the sky, officer. With my own high-end gear. Bought and paid for." Yeah, why wouldn't they believe that?

*Martin grabs up his gear and is gone.*



## SCENE 6

*(The same night. MARILYN sits in the living room with a large cardboard box of photos and mementos. She wears a slinky nightgown. A glass of wine sits beside her. She's also smoking the last bit of a joint. She pulls out one photo she particularly likes.)*

MARILYN

Aha! Proof positive.

*(She waves the photo triumphantly.)*

MARILYN

Fucking proof positive. Oh—and here too!

*(She grabs up another photo.)*

MARILYN

I knew it! Oh, and don't you look good, Tom. There in your Speedo. Mmm mmm. It's too bad it all turned out the way it did. We actually were pretty good together. Just one of those things, I guess. We were young. So naive. I didn't do so badly, though. Not really. Not when you think about the big picture. Turns out you got the last laugh, though. You're just splitting your gut in the great beyond, aren't you? It *is* pretty funny. I pretend you're dead and you get back at me by dying. Let's all have a good laugh.

*(laughs aloud)*

You always could make me laugh.

*(She raises her glass and toasts the picture before sorting through a few more photos. She picks one up and after considering it for a moment... uses a pair of scissors to cut off half of the photo. She crumples the discard half, then takes another sip of wine.)*

*(CAITLIN enters in her pyjamas. She looks around the room.)*



CAITLIN

What are you doing?

MARILYN

Good, you're up. Look.

*(MARILYN grabs one of the photos she was looking at a moment earlier.)*

MARILYN

Who's that? Tell me who that is?

CAITLIN

What?

MARILYN

There. That's me.

CAITLIN

That's me and Dad.

MARILYN

No! There in the corner. That's my foot.

CAITLIN

Your foot? That's not a foot. I can't tell what that is, but it's not—

MARILYN

It's my foot.

CAITLIN

Your foot?

MARILYN

My foot at Gull Lake. At a picnic.

CAITLIN

I take it there are no other photos of you there.





MARILYN

I must have been the one taking the pictures. But there's your proof.  
Proof positive.

*(MARILYN blows her a kiss making a big, childlike smacking sound. She finds this immensely funny.)*

CAITLIN

What a mess. And it's freezing. Why does the house have to—

MARILYN

Look at this. If I'm not mistaken, that would be my finger. In that one. You can kind of see my ring.

CAITLIN

You mean, if you're stoned you can see it.

MARILYN

Go back to bed.

*(CAITLIN starts to walk away but stops.)*

CAITLIN

I was walking in snow.

MARILYN

What?

CAITLIN

My dream. I just remembered it. I was walking in snow. I had to keep moving or I'd be frozen over. There was a blizzard and when it finally lifted, it was the night I... the night I was in hospital. I could see you and Martin right beside my hospital bed. You were talking. Then I saw you kiss him.

MARILYN

That's ridiculous. Only family is allowed in intensive care.

CAITLIN

It was so real. Can I turn up the heat?



MARILYN

Put on a housecoat or just go back to bed. But first, take a look at this one.

*(MARILYN holds up a photograph.)*

CAITLIN

This is going to take forever to put back.

MARILYN

It's not going back. I'm getting a bunch of these framed and we're finally going to get them up where we can see them. Take this one of you and Tom—and me.

CAITLIN

Me and Dad—and your foot?

MARILYN

I could get it blown up and dry-mounted—as a big poster, for your room.

CAITLIN

Mom... what is it with all this?

*(CAITLIN runs her hand through some of the photos.)*

CAITLIN

After all this time. I don't get it.

*(CAITLIN picks up the crumpled half photo Marilyn had cut off previously. She unfolds it.)*

CAITLIN

This is me! Why am I crumpled up?

MARILYN

I needed a good one of Tom alone to frame.



CAITLIN

You're unbelievable.

MARILYN

What? It was a terrible one of you.

CAITLIN

I don't want a poster. I don't want any of these, okay?

MARILYN

Caitie, hon. It's just... putting up a few pictures might not be a bad idea for you, you know. Because... it's a little odd you don't remember me at the picnics. You're blocking when you should be—

CAITLIN

*(in one steadily increasing  
torrent)*

Blocking? I wish! Mom, I was five when you told me Dad died. I was seven when you kicked Bill out. I was nine when that slob Les moved in—and when he moved out. Jerry, wasn't so bad—I don't know why you had to go cheat on him, especially with that artist guy who couldn't draw worth a damn! Remember him? Then, what, it was Brian? Right. Brian of the too-tight pants. God. It's been a bloody parade through here. All your men. All your dramas. And, the whole time, I've been right here, watching all the floats go by. You probably forget half their names but I can tell you everything. Who liked cream in their coffee. Who drank Pilsner. Who was sleeping with you just to try to get to me. It's all up here, Mom. Freeze frames. Right down to the last pixel. Along with every stupid slogan you ever came up with for every company that ever needed you to lie about its products. I remember it all! So you're out of your mind if you think I'm going to start believing in some made-up Kodak family moment featuring your foot and **FORGET ABOUT WHAT YOU DID TO ME!**

MARILYN

I'm sorry you're upset. You just don't need to take it out on me.



CAITLIN

You told me he died. You told a five year old child *Daddy died*.

MARILYN

To us, he had. And you're the one who had the dream that started it all. Dreaming *Daddy's dead*. Do you honestly forget how that all started?

CAITLIN

I just want to know—do you actually start to believe your own stories? Or do you know exactly what you're doing every step of the way?

MARILYN

I do not need this. It was bad enough you crying in front of the waiter at dinner. Thank God, Maureen showed up.

CAITLIN

Yeah, like you didn't call her from the bathroom.

MARILYN

I can't do this.

CAITLIN

You called her! You think I didn't check your cell?

MARILYN

Go to bed. You have bags under your eyes.

CAITLIN

Bags. Thank you, Mom, for paying attention to all the important things in my life.

MARILYN

You're welcome. I bought a new concealer if you want to try it tomorrow.

CAITLIN

Concealer.



MARILYN

Estée Lauder. It's very good. Very light.

CAITLIN

Change the subject. Same old. Same old. Only thing is—I'm not talking to you about make-up!

MARILYN

What is your problem?

CAITLIN

If you say something, it's true. Your saying it makes it true. Right? And so you believe it.

MARILYN

I have no idea what you're talking about.

CAITLIN

A polygraph. Any day. You'd pass it.

MARILYN

You're ranting.

CAITLIN

And if people show any doubt in what you're saying, any doubt at all, you either change the subject or bring in a third party. There's always some third party.

MARILYN

Third party? What are you—?

CAITLIN

Yeah, there's always some supposed third party who agrees with you. Proves you right.

MARILYN

What is wrong with you? Are you coming down with something? Is that it? Are you getting that flu?



CAITLIN

This is exactly what I'm talking about! You tell Maureen you're too sick to help her move and then, bang, a week later, you act like you really were sick. But you weren't Mom. You made it up! You just didn't feel like helping her. You think I forget all that fake coughing into the phone!

MARILYN

Just today, Donna, at the office, she said she could see I was still shaking that bug, that I still wasn't quite up to snuff.

CAITLIN

Oh my God! Do you hear yourself!

MARILYN

I thought you were cold. Where's your housecoat?

CAITLIN

Remember when they found out Lisa was dyslexic. You told everybody I was dyslexic too. What, was it cool that week to have a dyslexic child? How annoying for you when the doctor didn't agree with your diagnosis. Then it was bulimia that I supposedly had—when it was you who ran for the bathroom after every meal.

MARILYN

Planning to go for a walk on the bridge now—to punish me some more? Or slash your wrists, maybe? Is that over now or what?

*(MARILYN has hit a nerve.)*

CAITLIN

*(chastened)*

It's over.

MARILYN

Really?

CAITLIN

It's been months.



MARILYN

Well, then. I guess you're fine.

CAITLIN

No. Not fine. But okay. I'm okay.

MARILYN

Right.

CAITLIN

But I've always been okay.

MARILYN

Really.

CAITLIN

I made mistakes because something always felt wrong—but there was something wrong, Mom. It just wasn't me. Everything in my life was a lie. Now that I know that, everything is different.

MARILYN

Well, I'm glad you're feeling better.

CAITLIN

Do you have the slightest idea what I'm trying to tell you? The person with the problem isn't me, Mom.

MARILYN

Is this from Dr. Klein? Blame your mother?

CAITLIN

Blame him. That's good.

MARILYN

You have no idea what it was like for me. You—on and on and on about *Daddy, Daddy, Daddy*. I couldn't tell you the truth but I had to end it somehow or we both would have gone crazy.

CAITLIN

What do you -?



MARILYN

Do you ever stop for one second to think about me? Or anyone other than yourself? I was trying to protect you. Like with Maureen. What do I do? Tell her I'm sick or hurt her feelings? Especially when I really wasn't feeling that great. I mean I could feel something coming on. But no, I'm supposed to let her think I just don't care? You think that's better?

CAITLIN

Lies crush a person. The truth doesn't.

MARILYN

Is that so?

*(Beat.)*

MARILYN

Tom was mentally ill, Caitie.

CAITLIN

Right.

*(CAITLIN starts to move away.)*

MARILYN

No, you listen to me. You hear this. You have dreams about him searching through your room. It's because you remember him doing that. He used to go through your room at night and, no, he wasn't abusing you but he was searching through everything, looking for codes in your colouring books. Afraid you were an enemy alien. Your father was a head-case. I said what I had to for us both to survive.

CAITLIN

I don't believe you.

MARILYN

Be honest with yourself. You're just like him. When you started falling apart all I could think was "like father, like daughter." I didn't know what to do. Then you pull that stunt on the bridge. I should





have known Tom would end up doing the very same thing.

CAITLIN

What do you mean?

MARILYN

*(taking a deep breath)*

You're right. I haven't told you everything.

*(MARILYN again tries to take a deep, long breath, like she can't quite fill her lungs.)*

MARILYN

It's just... I've worried about you so much. And, sweetie, there are some things that people are just better off not knowing so maybe you shouldn't be -

CAITLIN

TELL ME!

MARILYN

Tom killed himself.

*(Beat.)*

MARILYN

I didn't want to have to tell you that. Everyone knows what I've been through with you. What you've put me through. So nobody wanted to say anything about it. Not to you.

CAITLIN

Oh God.

MARILYN

I begged them not to say a word about it to you. I didn't want you to have that to deal with, not after—

*(MARILYN struggles for another deep breath.)*

CAITLIN

It's okay, Mom.



MARILYN

I've made a lot of mistakes... but I'm trying to make things better, Caitie. For me and you. Don't you see that? Can't you see... I've always tried... I never wanted to lie to you. I did what I thought was best for you. I did what I had to.

CAITLIN

Mom. Breathe.

MARILYN

I never wanted to hurt you. Can't you see that?

CAITLIN

Just breathe, alright?

MARILYN

Don't you turn against me, too. I need you. I thought... I thought you needed me too.

CAITLIN

Mom.

MARILYN

Please, Caitie. I've tried my best. I have.

CAITLIN

It's just... Mom. Mom, I know you have. Okay? I just... . Breathe Mom. Just slow down and take a breath. It's better knowing. It is. I'm okay. I promise. And, Mom? I do need you. And I'm sorry. I really am so sorry.

*(CAITLIN cradles Marilyn in her arms, rocks her.)*

*(MARILYN's breathing calms down as she steadies herself.)*

SCENE 7

*(The next morning. CAITLIN is alone*



*in the living room. She is pulling items from the box of mementos. Old scrapbooks and yearbooks, toys and dolls, pictures and postcards. Items come out. Items are thrown back. She is sifting.)*

CAITLIN

Memorabilia. From the Latin: *memorabilis*: “memorable, worth remembering.” This...

*(She lifts out a neon plastic Margarita glass.)*

CAITLIN

... was worth remembering? Must have been quite a Margarita, Mom.

*(CAITLIN drops it back into the box. She continues pulling things out in a ramshackle way. A trophy is unearthed. She examines it.)*

CAITLIN

You gotta be kidding me. Badminton? My mother played a sport? With actual sweating involved?

*(She spies something near the bottom of the box and dives for it.)*

CAITLIN

Oh my God. Polly! Porcelain Polly.

*(She pulls out a badly damaged baby doll. Its soft stuffed body is fine... but its porcelain face is completely smashed.)*

CAITLIN

*(to the doll)*

You were supposedly thrown away forever. “Little girls who smash their dollies don’t get to keep them to cry over them.” *The* most beautiful doll I’d ever seen. Smashed. Completely smashed. How



could I have... why would she keep this? Why not throw it away like she said?

*(She stares at the doll before setting it down and rummaging through the box with more vigor—and much more anger.)*

CAITLIN

What a bunch of crap! What a total bunch of crap this is! I don't know why we don't fucking get rid of each and every—ow!!

*(As she angrily rustles through things, she cuts her hand on something. The motion is quick, sharp—an obvious and understandable accident.)*

*Her reaction is odd. After the initial shock of the cut, CAITLIN strokes the blood on her hand, watches it, seems to find peace in it.)*

CAITLIN

Unbelievable. Even when I quit... maybe some things are just in our blood.

*(She watches herself bleed.)*

CAITLIN

Such a deep, deep red. Pulsing inside us all.

*(After a few more moments watching herself bleed, CAITLIN takes a deep breath, then digs into her housecoat pocket. She pulls out a wad of tissue, some of it old and bloodied. As she pulls out the tissue, a pink razor drops from her pocket.)*

*She picks the razor up, re-pockets it, and then sits holding the tissue to her hand.*

*CAITLIN then dumps all the memorabilia back into the box before going to the telephone and dialing.)*



## CAITLIN

Hey, it's Caitlin, again. I'm going to come in to work after all... .  
Yeah... a bit better, yeah... . Is Barry there yet? Oh good. I'm going  
to leave in about two minutes so I still might get there before he  
does. Okay, thanks. See you soon.

*(CAITLIN exits to her bedroom, pulling the  
housecoat off as she goes to change for work.)*

SCENE 8

*(Later that day. At the bookstore where  
CAITLIN works. CAITLIN is searching  
for a book in the back. MARTIN flips  
through a book, waiting for her. He finds  
something he likes.)*

## MARTIN

Hey, you gotta hear something!

## CAITLIN

*(yelling, off)*

Just a sec. I'll be right there. Why do you want to read about  
Coppola, anyway?

## MARTIN

Are you kidding? Francis Ford Coppola. Martin Auksaq. We're  
practically the same guy. Practically identical. Same birthday. We  
both love Italian food—I live on pasta, seriously—and he even has  
restaurants. Plus, he was sick a lot, when he was a kid. Like me.  
Because of that he got into puppetry and making home movies, also  
just like me. Identical, I'm telling you. Someday when we meet—

## CAITLIN

*(off)*

Puppetry?

## MARTIN

Except for that. Plus, well, he's not Inuk. That I know of.



*(CAITLIN enters with new shipment of books. The hand she cut is bandaged. She looks through the box.)*

CAITLIN

Nope. No, Coppola bios, sorry. But I'm sure you could order one.

MARTIN

It's okay. I'll wait, see if one shows up. I like to come in and hunt for fortune cookies.

CAITLIN

Fortune cookies?

MARTIN

I close my eyes and grab a book. Open it up and see what I get. See what it says to me. This is what I just got:

*"In drifts of sleep I came upon you  
Buried to your waist in snow.  
You reached your arms out: I came to  
Like water in a dream of thaw."*

It's called "The Rescue." Seamus Heaney. Irish, eh? They can write, those Irish guys. Write and fight. Who needs Latin, eh?

CAITLIN

The word "Rescue" probably is Latin. Or from it, anyway. I should look it up.

MARTIN

Whatever it is, it's you and me, Caitie. The Rescue. Cause that's how I found you: In drifts of sleep I came upon—

CAITLIN

*(shutting it down)*

Let me put that back for you.

*(CAITLIN reaches for the book.)*



MARTIN

Hey, what happened to your hand?

CAITLIN

Nothing. I cut myself, that's all.

MARTIN

Man oh man. You've gotta be more careful, Caitie.

CAITLIN

You can stop rescuing me now.

*(taking the book)*

Did Mom tell you to get me away from the funeral tea?

MARTIN

She just...

CAITLIN

She said she told you to take me out somewhere, away from everybody.

MARTIN

She said she could tell you wanted out of there. But I could tell that too.

CAITLIN

Really?

MARTIN

Yes, really. Are things okay?

CAITLIN

What things?

MARTIN

Things with you and your Mom. About what you wanted to ask her. About your dad's family?



CAITLIN

I got some answers, yeah. Finally.

MARTIN

Good. So, she... so things are... um... ?

*(Beat.)*

CAITLIN

It turned out to be no big deal.

MARTIN

Oh. That's good.

CAITLIN

Yeah, it's good. You face things... and now... now, we all just move on from here. I'm sorry we ever dragged you into it.

MARTIN

Into what?

CAITLIN

Everything. Our screwed up world.

MARTIN

How do you know I'm not dragging you guys into my world?

CAITLIN

Guess I don't. Time will tell, hey?

MARTIN

Try it tonight. Come out to where I'm shooting. You can be my special guest—live on the set of the hot new film, "*Whistling at the Northern Lights*." Working title. We'll see. Anyway, I'm making the movie you wanted. About the northern lights. My first documentary.

CAITLIN

That's good. Really good. But—





MARTIN

They're going to be good tonight—my *Aqsarniit*. I can feel it. They'll be dancing all around tonight. So you're in?

CAITLIN

I don't think so.

MARTIN

You staying back at your Mom's again?

CAITLIN

It's where I live.

MARTIN

Cait. I'm sorry.

CAITLIN

Most of my stuff is still at home anyway.

MARTIN

Hey. Don't do this. Push me away.

CAITLIN

I'm not.

MARTIN

You're still coming with me tomorrow, though, right? To hear that band.

CAITLIN

I don't think so. No.

MARTIN

Oh come on, I told the bass player I'd check them out. They might want me to shoot a video for them. Actual paying gig. So you'll come, right? At least to that. Your mom said you were talking about wanting to go.

CAITLIN

What? No, I wasn't.



MARTIN

Or just that you wanted to go out tomorrow. To see me film them or something.

CAITLIN

I never said that. What the hell is she—she's screwing around with my life again.

MARTIN

Hey, don't freak out. Maybe I got it wrong.

CAITLIN

Would you mind not discussing me with her?

MARTIN

She's only looking out for you, Cait.

CAITLIN

Right. How much do you talk to her, anyway?

MARTIN

Cait.

CAITLIN

Seriously. Does she phone you or something? You guys compare notes.

MARTIN

No... it's not like that.

CAITLIN

What is it like, then?

MARTIN

She asks me how you're doing sometimes. That's all. I mean she's—

CAITLIN

Well, she's going to stop doing it. And so are you.



MARTIN

Okay, okay. But... tomorrow. I'll just come over to get you tomorrow. Okay? After work.

CAITLIN

How about I just call you—[if I decide to]

MARTIN

No, no, no. Come on. I'm coming over to get you. Otherwise, we got problems, girlfriend. I mean... if I can't spend time with you, make my Inuk pasta for you, how are you ever going fall madly in love with me? Hey? Besides, we both need to dance, shake everything out of us. Alright?

CAITLIN

Is that advice from my Mom?

MARTIN

Just from me. I swear.

*(Beat.)*

MARTIN

And the doctor. You gotta listen to the doctor, Cait.

CAITLIN

WHAT?

MARTIN

The only doc you need: yours truly. I got myself a PhD online for twenty bucks. Doc Martin. It's official.

CAITLIN

You're unbelievable.

MARTIN

Hey, you smiled. So. You're going with me tomorrow night?

CAITLIN

It's doctor's orders?



MARTIN

Absolutely.

*(He waits for the smile... that finally comes from Caitlin.)*

MARTIN

Alright! See you then, Caitie Cat.

*(MARTIN exits. CAITLIN goes to put the book away. She takes it and reads aloud.)*

CAITLIN

*“In drifts of sleep I came upon you  
Buried to your waist in snow...”*

*(CAITLIN takes the book and walks with it, reading. She then sets it down as we move into the next scene.)*

## SCENE 9

*(Late that night. The northern lights ripple and glow. They pull Caitlin into her dream and reflect the action once she's in it—although Caitlin doesn't notice them.)*

*CAITLIN DREAMS: We hear the sound of cold winter wind. CAITLIN walks to the bridge, following the northern lights. After staring up at them, she sits up on the rails and stares down groggily, but intently. She is shaking. MARTIN approaches.)*

MARTIN

Hey! Hey you! What are you doing there? You don't want to do that. Come on. Let me—come on.

*(CAITLIN pushes him, feebly, but enough to make her just about lose her balance. MARTIN grabs her and pulls her off the*



*rail and onto the sidewalk. He crouches down beside her. She is shaking so much he can feel her shudders go right through him.)*

MARTIN

Oh man. You've taken something, haven't you? Pills. What did you take? What's your name? Can you tell me your name? Talk to me. Who are you? Hey, hey, stay with me here. You're going to be okay. You hear me? You're going to be okay.

*(We hear the sound of an approaching car; the light from its headlights grows brighter. Still holding on to Caitlin, MARTIN tries to wave down passing cars through the following.)*

MARTIN

Help! Hey! Stop! Hey, stop! We need some help over here.

*(A car horn blasts. A voice shouts from the car.)*

VOICE

Fucking Indian.

MARTIN

Fuck you, man. Stop! Hey! Man oh man. HELP!! Somebody!!  
SOMEBODY FUCKING HELP!!

*(CAITLIN is shaking hard. He holds her close—touches his head to hers.)*

MARTIN

Come on. Come on now. You're going to be okay.

*(CAITLIN struggles.)*

CAITLIN

Let go.

MARTIN

You think it won't matter or something? It matters to me, okay? I'm



getting you help. Come on. Up you get.

*(Martin lifts Caitlin up and helps her off the bridge. He sets her down into a bed and steps back. We hear the sound of a heart monitor—a rhythmic punctuation to Martin’s mantra-like words... )*

MARTIN

You’re going to be okay. You’re going to be okay. You’re going to be okay.

*(His words repeating and echoing, MARTIN retreats and exits as the sound of the heart monitor fades into the distance—a fading dream. CAITLIN lies motionless in her bed for several moments before gasping and sitting upright.)*

#### SCENE 10

*(MARTIN is just outside town. His video camera is set up on its tripod and he’s shooting the northern lights. It’s a spectacular show. After shooting in silence for a few moments, he speaks as he shoots.)*

MARTIN

You guys are extra wild tonight, eh. I knew you would be. I could feel it. I can just hear you, Mom: “Don’t you go rile them up. You don’t mess with *Aqsarniit* when they’re like that.” I always did like to poke at things, see what happens. So here’s me, all these years later, trying to shake off what happened after that night. The night I riled them up.

*(MARTIN stops filming, turns on his light and steps into its glare, talking directly to the camera.)*

MARTIN

They were blazing red the night before my mom died. Never seen



them red like that before. I could hear the *uluit*, sharpening. And here's my secret: I whistled at them. And I didn't clap to send them away, to set things right. And... my mom died. Right the next day. Messed me up for a long time.

But, hey, I've been doing research. Been Googling big time. And I guess I should say goodbye to the old rules and all the old ball players up there. I should say goodbye to them and all my guilt. Say hello, instead, to sunspots and solar winds and the whole magnetic field.

Then I wouldn't need to clap to send them away. 'Cause what do a bunch of charged up electrons care if I whistle at them or clap?

*(MARTIN shuts off the portable light and camera. He looks up to the swaying, rippling lights in the sky.)*

MARTIN

Don't worry. I know what's true. I know I should clap, restore the balance. Send you away. But it would be a lonely sky without you, Mom.

*(MARTIN nods as he watches the northern lights blaze. Then, he turns his camera back on and begins filming his Aqsarniit once again.)*

### SCENE 11

*(The next day. CAITLIN is in the living room wearing a heavy sweater over a hoodie and sweats. Music is playing. It's in Latin, but contemporary—something with a distinct beat. (Possibly a modern arrangement of Hildegard von Bingen's 12th century "Praise for the Mother.")*

*CAITLIN is obsessively fiddling with something in her pocket. She finally goes over to throw away what only appears to be a wad of tissue.*



*As she does, MARILYN enters, carrying a couple of bags. During the following exchange, MARILYN will take out an assortment of picture frames and start choosing photos to put in them.)*

MARILYN

Hey there.

*(CAITLIN glances at her—then turns up her music.)*

MARILYN

I said hello.

*(CAITLIN refuses to even make eye contact with her.)*

MARILYN

That music is positively CREEPY! Could you PLEASE—

*(CAITLIN snaps off the music before Marilyn can finish her sentence.)*

CAITLIN

Hardly anyone sings in Latin anymore, Mom. It's a dying art.

MARILYN

Yeah, well it's killing me.

CAITLIN

You'd like something catchier? One of your Madonna faves, maybe? "Like a Virgin."

MARILYN

I had to come up with a whole new ad campaign for the utilities branch today. Which all had to fit in with the communications plan for the rate hike.

CAITLIN

Impossible. But you did it.





MARILYN

With style. We're going with "I've got the power."

CAITLIN

"*You've* got the power?"

MARILYN

No, "*I've* got the power."

CAITLIN

But it's the company saying it. You want people thinking the company has all the power?

MARILYN

People only think about themselves. They hear "I" in the slogan—it's them. And in the TV spots, they see a montage of people—just like them—making positive, healthy lifestyle choices. In control and loving life.

CAITLIN

And the massive rate hike that's going to slam people?

MARILYN

We don't even mention it. No, the campaign is all about making people see it's their choice to control how much energy they use—so, when their bills go up, they'll only blame themselves for using too much.

CAITLIN

And this doesn't seem even the tiniest bit dishonest to you, does it?

MARILYN

Lose the attitude if you want to hear my good news.

CAITLIN

Who is he?

MARILYN

Ken. After my dazzling presentation, he picked me to oversee the new cable campaign. Guess who's pissed? Laurie. I'll have to get up



to speed fast. That'll mean lots of intense meetings with Ken.

CAITLIN

Mr. "Hands-Off" Manager?

MARILYN

Turns out he likes being "hands-on." Very hands-on. I'm going away with him next weekend.

CAITLIN

This after, what, one grope by the photocopier?

MARILYN

What is with you? You are not putting me out of my good mood. Not when I have a date to get ready for later tonight.

CAITLIN

Right. And this is the Ken, the-manager-whose-wife-is-pregnant, Ken? The wife you like so much.

MARILYN

Eat something. You get in such a mood when you haven't eaten.

CAITLIN

I'm eating out. With Martin.

MARILYN

Good. You need some hands-on action yourself.

CAITLIN

Back off, Mom! God.

MARILYN

Well it's true.

CAITLIN

You told him I wanted to go out tonight. To see him filming some band I'd never heard of. Why did you tell him that?



MARILYN

I thought that's what you said.

CAITLIN

We're just friends, you know.

MARILYN

You should rethink that. He's just so... I don't know... like if you licked his skin, it would be sweet.

*(CAITLIN looks hard at MARILYN.)*

MARILYN

He'd be good for you is all I mean. And I think it's great that he's Indian. Or Eskimo or whatever it is.

CAITLIN

Inuk. He's Inuk.

MARILYN

Inuk, fine. Whatever. I just mean, there's a really nice cultural thing going on there. Different energy.

CAITLIN

Mom.

MARILYN

God. I can't win. It's just... some parents would be uncomfortable about it. I'm not one of them. That's all I'm saying. Now, won't that look good?

*(MARILYN holds up a photo with a frame covered in butterflies.)*

MARILYN

See the edge of the frame? Butterflies. Aren't they perfect?

*(CAITLIN stares at her.)*

MARILYN

Ken is different. I've never met a man quite like him. I can honestly



say I've never felt this way before.

CAITLIN

Freak show. I live in a fucking freak show. Sorry, I'd bite my tongue—but I'd have to bite it off.

MARILYN

You really should go back to see Dr. Klein. You want to end up like Tom? Like father, like daughter.

CAITLIN

I can't believe you just said that.

MARILYN

I'm just calling it like I see it.

CAITLIN

Oh. My. God.

MARILYN

What? Do you want to smoke a little something? That might help to—

CAITLIN

Leave me alone.

MARILYN

I give up. All that therapy. And no idea how to let go and move on.

*(CAITLIN snatches up some photographs from one of Marilyn's piles and walks into the living room with them. She stands looking at them intently.)*

MARILYN

If you want a photo, let me put it in a frame first.

*(CAITLIN tears the photograph. MARILYN leaps up to grab it.)*

MARILYN

What are you doing?



*(CAITLIN tears it again. And again.)*

MARILYN

Stop that. Right now.

*(CAITLIN throws the pieces of a photograph into the air and watches them fall like snow.)*

CAITLIN

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust. I'm finally letting go of the past, Mom. Do you know the Inuit have no word for history?

*(CAITLIN goes for another photo.)*

CAITLIN

Hey look, you at Gull Lake.

*(CAITLIN rips it.)*

CAITLIN

All gone.

*(CAITLIN throws down the pieces and grabs another photo.)*

MARILYN

I've got the negatives, Caitie. Do you hear me? I HAVE ALL THE NEGATIVES!

*(MARILYN starts to pick up the pieces.)*

MARILYN

And you wonder why I want a little coke now and then. You wonder why I get excited over a new man in my life, every now and then. After all your stunts.

*(The doorbell rings. CAITLIN goes to the back window to peek out, then calls through the door.)*

CAITLIN

Martin, I'll be right out!



*(Marilyn stops picking up the photos.)*

MARILYN

Don't keep him standing out there, Caitie. It's rude. Besides, I asked him to pick up a few things for me.

CAITLIN

What?

MARILYN

COME ON IN, MARTIN. CAITIE'S NOT READY.

CAITLIN

Leave my friends alone!

*(As MARTIN opens the door, CAITLIN stands blocking his way in.)*

CAITLIN

Do you mind waiting outside? I'll be right there.

MARTIN

I've got all this stuff.

MARILYN

COME ON IN WITH THOSE!

*(MARTIN enters with a bag full of photo albums.)*

MARTIN

*(to Caitlin)*

Um, Marilyn asked me to pick these up for her. Photo albums.

MARILYN

You got them, great!

MARTIN

I'd seen these ones down at the liquidation place... so when I was there, like, I was going anyway...



*(CAITLIN steps back as MARTIN carries the bag over to Marilyn.)*

MARTIN

This is all they had left.

MARILYN

Fantastic. You're such a sweetie.

MARTIN

Cait. Um. I couldn't borrow a car for tonight. Sorry.

CAITLIN

It's okay. We'll walk. It's not far.

MARILYN

Oh look, they're perfect. Acid free paper and everything. What do I owe you?

MARTIN

Hey, they were cheap. Let me give 'em to you... and Caitie.

CAITLIN

You're making him run errands for you?

MARILYN

No, no, no, I insist.

*(MARILYN goes for her purse and pulls out her wallet. She starts counting out some bills.)*

MARTIN

I hear there's some good photos of you, Caitie. When you were little. Can I see them?

CAITLIN

Martin, let's just go.

MARILYN

Don't be rude.



*MARILYN sets the purse and money aside to reach for some photos.*

MARILYN

Sit down for a sec, Martin. Let me show you the photos while Caitlin is busy making herself pretty. Go doll yourself up, Caitie.

*(MARILYN gives Caitlin a push. MARTIN goes over to Marilyn and her array of photographs.)*

MARTIN

You know, I could put these on disc for you guys, if you want.

MARILYN

Oh, wouldn't that be great? Would you like a drink?

MARTIN

Um... that's okay.

MARILYN

Sure you will. Cait sweetie, get Martin here a glass of wine. Or a beer? What would you like?

MARTIN

Nothing. Thanks.

MARILYN

Oh, come on.

CAITLIN

Mom. He doesn't drink.

MARILYN

Since when?

MARTIN

Umm...

CAITLIN

Since always.





MARILYN

Well, we've got some diet something or other in there that shouldn't be too flat.

MARTIN

I'm okay.

MARILYN

Take a look at this.

*(MARILYN hands MARTIN one of the photographs.)*

MARILYN

It's me, Cait, and Tom at Gull Lake.

MARTIN

I don't see you.

MARILYN

Light must have got into the camera. But I'm there just behind that streak.

MARTIN

Oh.

CAITLIN

So you want to head out, Martin? I'm not going to change—we can just go.

*(CAITLIN pulls off her sweater and grabs a bag.)*

MARILYN

Oh for Pete's sake. At least put on some lipstick. Can you believe she's my daughter? Honestly. Look at this one.

I like this one.

MARTIN

Yeah. That's good.



CAITLIN

Mom. We've got to go. Martin's going to be hungry.

MARILYN

We have a ton of food right here! When did I make that salmon thing?

*(MARILYN goes to the fridge door.)*

MARILYN

I'm sure that's still okay.

CAITLIN

Mom, I made it a week and a half ago. We're going out.

*(MARILYN pulls out a container and beckons to Martin.)*

MARILYN

Come here. Smell that and see if it's still okay.

*(MARILYN hands Martin a plastic container before turning back to the fridge.)*

MARILYN

Or this. What about this? For God's sake, neither of you are exactly swimming in money. Which reminds me.

*(MARILYN goes for her purse as MARTIN opens the container and peeks inside.)*

MARTIN

Is it curry?

MARILYN

Maybe it has gone off then.

CAITLIN

Come on, let's go.

MARTIN

Alright.



CAITLIN

*(in a whisper to Martin)*

This is too weird.

MARILYN

Wait a second. The money.

*(MARILYN thrusts a wad of bills at Martin.)*

MARTIN

That's way too much.

*(MARILYN shakes her head.)*

MARILYN

Let me treat you guys. But think of me, okay? I'll be all nerves.

*(quietly, to Martin)*

First date tonight. Wish me luck.

CAITLIN

Try not to be too shy.

MARILYN

*(to Martin)*

Make sure she eats. She gets in such a mood if she doesn't. But, before you go—Martin, I want your opinion on my new dress.

*(MARILYN pulls a dress out of one of her bags and holds it up to her. There's almost nothing to it. She prances around a bit.)*

MARTIN

Whoa. Wow. But, hey, why not? Go for it.

CAITLIN

It's a go-for-it dress, all right.



MARTIN

I just meant, um... go, have fun.

MARILYN

Let me try it on. Give you the full effect. I'll be right back.

*(MARILYN takes off with the dress in her hands.)*

CAITLIN

I'm outta here.

*(CAITLIN heads out the door. MARTIN hesitates, unsure of what to do... then follows after Caitlin.)*

## SCENE 12

*(The fire escape of a club. It's nearly closing time. Retro punk music is heard blasting, off. CAITLIN stands holding a beer beside Martin. MARTIN is looking into the viewfinder of his video camera, playing back the last footage he shot.)*

MARTIN

Man oh man. Look at that. You were really into it.

CAITLIN

It was fantastic! I love it when it works, really works. When the whole world is drowned out and all you feel is the music and the bass is pounding the hell out of your heart and you're flying. Just flying! With a thousand hands there to catch you if you need them—but you don't need them! I just want to scream!

*(CAITLIN blasts out a scream then takes another sip of beer.)*

CAITLIN

Aw, I needed this. I thought we'd never get here tonight.



MARTIN

Whoa.

*(looking at the viewfinder  
playback)*

You really got slammed there. Fell right down. That's gotta hurt.

*(MARTIN reaches for Caitlin, looks at her  
face.)*

MARTIN

You okay?

CAITLIN

A little pain is good, now and then. Reminds you you're alive!

MARTIN

Isn't a basic human impulse to avoid pain?

CAITLIN

Yeah. It is. Definitely. From now on. I quit pain. You know that?  
Here's to quitting pain! And living like other humans do.

*(CAITLIN laughs as she raises her beer as a  
toast.)*

MARTIN

There's other ways to remember you're alive, you know.

*(MARTIN strokes her cheek, then kisses  
her.)*

MARTIN

So. Was that so terrible?

CAITLIN

Definitely not terrible.

*(CAITLIN kisses him back and then some.)*

MARTIN

Told you you'd come round.



CAITLIN

You! You're something. Hilarious.

*(She laughs.)*

Thank you.

MARTIN

For?

CAITLIN

For always pressing fast-forward when I'm stuck on rewind.

*(MARTIN takes the beer out of her hand, sets it down.)*

MARTIN

Let's go.

CAITLIN

Hey, I'm not done.

MARTIN

Neither am I.

*(MARTIN kisses her again as he steers her away.)*

### SCENE 13

*(The house. It's late.*

*The light is dim in Marilyn's kitchen as MARILYN shuts the door. As car headlights fill the room briefly we get a glimpse of her standing in a satin robe. The phone rings. She answers.)*

MARILYN

Hello... . From the driveway? You're calling me from the driveway?

*(MARILYN laughs and, holding the phone,*



*goes to look out the window. She waves.  
We hear the car outside back out and drive  
away, the sound slowing disappearing as  
Marilyn continues talking on the phone.)*

MARILYN

Yeah, well, I miss you already too. I know. Don't worry. I know. My lips are sealed. I'm Vegas, baby. What happens here... you got it. Oh, okay. I'll let you go.

*(hushed)*

I'm looking forward to the mountains. Yeah. Mmm mm. B-bye. Talk soon.

*(MARILYN hangs up. She picks up her dress, bra and panties from the living room floor. Still holding them, she stops to pour herself the last bit of a bottle of wine. She sets down her glass, then makes for the phone again. She picks it up and dials.)*

MARILYN

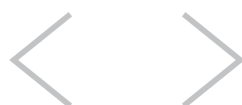
Hi Ken. It's funny—your voice sounds so businesslike on this machine. Calm, cool, and professional.

Which only makes sense, obviously. I mean, I'm glad I'm getting to know your bedroom voice, but no doubt your clients would be distracted by it. Certainly drives me to distraction.

*(laughs)*

Anyway, I thought I'd just leave you a little message to greet you on Monday morning. A little message to say... oh, I don't know. Just that it was so great tonight. Wasn't it? It's amazing the connection we have. After such a short time. I mean, we've been working together for a while now but this is... well, you know what I mean. Ooh! And what you said, about me being your sanctuary, your little haven, aw, it's so sweet. It really means a lot to me. I feel it too. I do. Anyway, I know you won't get this 'til Monday morning, but I just wanted to phone and, I don't know, say all this and let you know I'm still thinking about you. So when you get this message... um....

*(beat)*



Only you can check your voice mail, right? I damn well hope you're the only one who can check your... Uh. God. Um, anyway, when you get this message... Umm. So. Anyhoo.

*(beat)*

This is a message for Kenneth Greer. So... if he could give please... um... please give me a call whenever he uh... whenever is convenient. I'm looking forward to our week- our upcoming... umm... meeting. So. Alrighty then. Bye now. Good talking to you.

*(MARILYN hangs up the phone.)*

MARILYN

Whoopsy. Whoopsy-daisy.

*(MARILYN laughs to herself as she gets up to go to bed.)*

#### SCENE 14

*(Later that night. The northern lights are brighter than we've ever seen them. CAITLIN and MARTIN are nearing the bridge on the way to Martin's place from the club. MARTIN stops short as they get closer to the bridge.)*

MARTIN

Sorry, Cait. I didn't think.

CAITLIN

It's okay. I've come this way a million times already.

MARTIN

Not on foot, though. Let's go back and—

CAITLIN

Three months. It's weird to think that, hey? That it's only been three months since—





MARTIN

Let's call a cab.

CAITLIN

I'm okay, Martin. I am. You rescued me, remember? And, hey, I looked up your poem. Rescue *is* Latin. Or from it, anyway. *Re*, back. And one website said it's from *quater*. Shake back.

MARTIN

Hey, that's good. Shake back. Shake awake, little cat. Like I said, it's you and me, Caitie.

*(CAITLIN looks up and sees the northern lights.)*

CAITLIN

Oh my God, look!

*(CAITLIN hurries out onto the bridge. MARTIN follows her.)*

MARTIN

What?

CAITLIN

The northern lights!

MARTIN

I told you they follow me around.

CAITLIN

I can't believe how bright they are. It's so weird to see them like this. Right in the city.

MARTIN

They're busy up there tonight. They're close. Know what my Mom would say?

CAITLIN

What would your mom say?



MARTIN

She'd call me her little pup—*Qimmilaaq*—

*(pronounced: KIM-il-AK)*

—and then she'd say, “Don't you mess around with them. You leave *Aqsarniit* alone, little pup.”

*(CAITLIN strokes his cheek. MARTIN holds her close.)*

CAITLIN

So, just how would a person mess with northern lights?

MARTIN

Tease them. Disrespect them. Whistle at them.

CAITLIN

Right.

MARTIN

It's no joke.

CAITLIN

You never talk about your mom.

MARTIN

I am tonight. *(beat)* I wish you could have met her.

CAITLIN

Me too.

*(MARTIN squeezes her.)*

CAITLIN

There's something I haven't told you. I found out why everyone was so weird with me at the funeral. Mom finally told me.

MARTIN

Uh huh.



CAITLIN

My dad killed himself. And they all knew what I'd done. Here on the bridge. That's why they were so weird with me. They were all thinking, "like father like daughter."

*(MARTIN nods.)*

CAITLIN

You don't seem surprised.

*(Beat.)*

MARTIN

Your mom told me.

*(CAITLIN breathes this in.)*

CAITLIN

Whoa. So you knew? All along?

MARTIN

I'm sorry, Cait, she just—

CAITLIN

No, it's—I guess it's like a surprise but not. You know? But, you know, I honestly don't care anymore what she tells you or anybody else. Not anymore. Because it's not "like father, like daughter." It doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to be history repeating itself.

MARTIN

Yeah. Exactly.

CAITLIN

I don't even need the word history, right?

MARTIN

Right.

CAITLIN

Cause I am where I am and I can choose what my life will be. And you know what I choose?



*(CAITLIN pulls Martin close and kisses him.)*

CAITLIN

What do you think of my choice?

MARTIN

Excellent, excellent choice.

*(She kisses him again until they both start laughing. They're two kids who can't believe they've just won the toy they wanted at the fair.)*

CAITLIN

It all feels so good. Dangerously good. You know?

MARTIN

I'm dangerous?

CAITLIN

Not you. Just, feeling this way. Me, on the edge. Finally not afraid... of anything—not even your big, bad northern lights.

*(CAITLIN throws her head back and whistles wildly at the northern lights.)*

MARTIN

Cait! Don't! Quit it!

*(CAITLIN keeps whistling until she can't because of laughing.)*

MARTIN

Don't do that! Why would you do that?

CAITLIN

Come on.

*(CAITLIN tries to kiss him.)*



MARTIN

No, Cait. I'm serious.

CAITLIN

Don't be mad. I'm just kidding around.

MARTIN

It's not funny.

CAITLIN

Hey, I'm sorry.

MARTIN

Clap your hands, okay?

CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

Just clap. Your hands.

CAITLIN

What are you talking about? Hey, we don't have to be afraid of anything anymore. Everything's good. It's all good. I mean, I don't even care if you know everything now. Like, I never told you what led up to that night when... when you found me.

MARTIN

Forget it, let's just go.

CAITLIN

No, I want you to know everything now. I do.

*(CAITLIN's story is a river—it starts slow, a trickle, then rushes faster and faster.)*

CAITLIN

For weeks, Mom had been all wild-eyed over some Mystery Man guy who was *totally different* and she'd *never felt this way before* and we were going to have a *very different life* from now on. And I'm



just trying to hang on to something sane through all this, you know, feeling pretty messed up as usual, but trying to hang on, take a breath, don't let her craziness be my craziness. All that. And I was going to this party—only because I'd started seeing this guy, Danny, and he was going to be there. Or he said he'd be there. Anyway, I kept trying to get out the door but Mom, God, it was like tonight. It was like she was on coke or something although she supposedly never touches the stuff. Yeah, whatever. She was going on and on—*are my nails okay, is my skirt too tight?* Yeah, Mom, the green leather mini looks hot. Hardly an '80s moment going on there at all. I finally get to the party and Danny's nowhere in sight. I wait around, down a couple and he still hasn't shown so after a while I take off. Have no clue where I'm going, I'm just walking but suddenly there I am, heading home, walking up the driveway like I'm on autopilot and I sail right on into the living room, into this total freak show with all this music blaring—like bad, bad '80s pop, like the worst you've ever heard, I'm not kidding—and there in the midst of it, is, is, is, is Mom on the couch making out with some guy. Actually, the beautiful thing here, the finishing touch, really, is that Mom's there in *my* bra and tank, pouring out of them, actually. Because she had the bright idea I should lend them to her for her big date with Mystery Man. So I'm standing there, like some sort of stunned deer caught in the headlights while my Mom cavorts in *my* underwear and all this horrific music is blasting me from the inside out and just when I hear the unforgettable strains of "Let's Get Physical" start up, I realize who Mom's got on the couch with her. Danny. My boyfriend. Danny. And they are really having quite the fine old time. So Danny, *he's* her Mystery Man, right? WRONG! No, I found out later Mystery Man never showed. Danny just came over to pick me up. Never knew what hit him. So what do I do? Scream? Throw a fit? No. No, no, no, no, no. I head out the door before Olivia Newton John can even get to the chorus again and I go back to the party and I drink until I throw up on Shawna's new Ikea carpet. Lovely. Really made an impression there. Then I basically hid, I don't know, I guess, from the night of the party until the night I... the night you found me. I don't even know why I did anything that night. I didn't plan to. I'd gone out for a walk just to get away from her and, yeah, I had her sleeping pills with me but I never planned to do anything crazy. Honestly. It was just...

*(CAITLIN's manic rush slows right down.)*



CAITLIN

I saw a little girl walking along with her dad. Some little switch went off. I decided to take a pill for every crack in the sidewalk. Then I got near the bridge and... it was like the most powerful magnet in the... just... pulling me. I couldn't believe how much I wanted... it actually surprised me... how much I wanted to jump.

*(pause)*

Enter Martin, my guardian angel. You know the rest.

MARTIN

This is weird, Cait.

CAITLIN

I know. God. Don't you think I know that?

MARTIN

It's just... weirder than I thought.

*(MARTIN looks up at the sky, then claps his hands together several times. The northern lights keep dancing. They do not retreat.)*

CAITLIN

What are you doing?

MARTIN

I'm just cold, is all. I don't want to be out here anymore.

*(MARTIN claps his hands again, then rubs them together as if to warm them up. He then takes off, leaving CAITLIN behind. She watches him for a few moments, then hurries to catch up.*

*The northern lights blaze... .)*

SCENE 15

*(CAITLIN is sitting on the floor of Martin's apartment.*



*The northern lights play subtly above*

*Something German post-industrial or Joy Division (maybe “Eternal” or “She’s Lost Control”) plays on Martin’s laptop.)*

CAITLIN

Martin? What are you doing?

*(MARTIN enters and sits down on the floor a few feet away. He sits looking at her without speaking.)*

CAITLIN

I said I was sorry.

*(MARTIN looks steadily at Caitlin before speaking.)*

MARTIN

You never told me that about your mom.

CAITLIN

What? If I tried to tell you everything about my mom, that’s all we’d ever talk about.

MARTIN

So you never got caught with your *Mom’s* boyfriend? *Her* boyfriend Danny?

CAITLIN

Danny was seeing me.

MARTIN

It’s just... man oh man, Cait. It’s just weird, okay? Why would your mom—

CAITLIN

Either you believe me or you don’t.

MARTIN

You sure you guys aren’t in this together or something? Trading





stories like you trade your tops?

CAITLIN

Don't lump me in with her.

MARTIN

So your mom's nuts and you've got no problems?

CAITLIN

Everyone's got problems, Martin. But I'm not a liar. My mother is.

MARTIN

She's never lied to me.

CAITLIN

How would you know?

MARTIN

Fuck, who knows? Maybe everything's a lie.

CAITLIN

Why are you being like this?

MARTIN

I don't know what's true.

CAITLIN

You're not the only one.

MARTIN

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S TRUE!

CAITLIN

What is going on with you?

MARTIN

Cait, come on. Don't do this. Not to me.

CAITLIN

Don't do what? What are you—?



MARTIN

Your mom says when you feel guilty, you do things. Hurt yourself. She says that's why you... that night... she said it was because you slept with *her* boyfriend. She said your therapist even tried to warn her about it. Said it was eating away at you for months, right until that night, on the bridge, when you tried to—

CAITLIN

Oh my God. This is what she does. She twists everything around. Switches it all up so she gets the starring role, the sympathy, the whatever the fuck she's looking for. Even the third party to back up her story! My therapist, this time, as if he'd ever say anything to... You get this, right? I mean, you do remember she told me my dad was dead, all these years! He finally dies so, what, she's not a liar anymore? I'm the liar? That's how it works for you?

MARTIN

Roll up your sleeves.

CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

It shouldn't be a big deal. Just roll up your sleeves. I've never seen your arms.

CAITLIN

Leave me alone.

MARTIN

Just roll them up.

*(MARTIN reaches for her arms. CAITLIN pulls away.)*

CAITLIN

What? Did she tell you I'm a junkie on top of it all?

MARTIN

No. She says you cut yourself. You cut yourself with razors or



anything you can get your hands on. That all those accidents you have aren't accidents. She told me about all the times she's had to rush you to hospital. So, no matter what lies she might have told you about your dad, I know she cares about you. She worries about you all the time.

CAITLIN

And you believe that?

MARTIN

Cait, I want to believe everything you're telling me. I want to so badly. But ever since you tried to kill yourself... your mom's told me everything. How you disconnect. How you can't tell the difference, sometimes, between what's real and what's a dream.

CAITLIN

No. I know what's—

MARTIN

And you had a dream when you were little, after your dad took off.

CAITLIN

No. No, no, no, no, no.

MARTIN

A dream he died. She says it was so real to you, she couldn't talk you out of it. She finally went along with it, just agreed. Said, yeah, he was dead. And, yeah, that was a stupid thing to do, but she was young, Cait. Younger than you are right now. She didn't know what else to do.

CAITLIN

You can't believe this.

MARTIN

She told me you need help seeing what's real. About your dad. About Danny. About everything. But if all that's a lie and you're telling the truth, just show me. Show me your arms.

*(MARTIN reaches for Caitlin's sleeve. This time CAITLIN doesn't fight. She doesn't*



*move at all. MARTIN pushes up her sleeve... and is horrified by what he sees.)*

MARTIN

Man oh man, Caitie.

*(The northern lights glower.)*

SCENE 16

*(Two nights later. The northern lights gleam...)*

CAITLIN DREAMS: *Caitlin cowers on her bed, clutching her Polly Porcelain doll.)*

CAITLIN

No, Mummy. Don't take her. Not my Polly doll.

MARILYN

Little girls who smash their dollies don't get to—

CAITLIN

But I didn't, I didn't smash her, I didn't—

MARILYN

That's a lie. Don't you lie to me.

CAITLIN

No, I found her, Mummy. All broken. She was already—

MARILYN

Give her to me.

CAITLIN

No, Mummy, please.

*(MARILYN starts to pull the doll from Caitlin's arms.)*



CAITLIN

NO! Please no! I won't lie. I won't lie. I did smash her. Like you said. But I love her. Don't take her.

*(MARILYN takes the doll away from her.)*

MARILYN

Little girls who smash their dollies don't get to keep them to cry over them.

CAITLIN

No!

MARILYN

Little girls who smash their dollies ruin everything. Ruin everything for themselves. Especially when they're found out. You're found out, Caitlin. And now everyone will know. Because it's all on hidden camera.

CAITLIN

Hidden camera?

MARILYN

Martin. You can come out now.

*(MARTIN appears from a hiding place. He's been filming them.)*

MARTIN

I've been busy catching true little rolling scenes of right now. And look, it's you—

*(MARTIN shows her his videocamera's viewfinder.)*

MARTIN

You, right now, smashing your doll. Your daddy. Your whole life.

MARILYN

Into smithereens.



MARTIN

See? It's true. There's your proof.

MARILYN

It's you.

CAITLIN

Me?

MARILYN

You... ruining everything.

MARTIN

Every. Little. Thing.

*(Together MARILYN and MARTIN give CAITLIN one sharp push back down into bed. When she hits the pillow, the sound of smashing porcelain is heard. The northern lights flash at the sound of the smash.)*

### SCENE 17

*(The same night. Martin's apartment. The lights are off and he's gazing out the window into an empty sky. There is no sign of his Aqsarniit.)*

MARTIN

Hey, *Aqsarniit*? Where are you tonight? Even went to the edge of town to find you. No luck.

You left me, didn't you? Finally left me. Because I clapped. You came too close when Caitie whistled. I had to clap. But that was for her. Didn't mean to send you away from me.

Man oh man, looks empty up there now. So much endless black up there.

Funny thing is, Mom, I hear you. Clearer than ever. The old words are just flying back into my head now. Words I thought I forgot.



Words from home.

*Siqinniqtuq .*

*(pronounced: seer-kin-  
nirk-took)*

The sun shines.

*Aniguujjinik mangasimanirmit.*

*(pronounced: anig-GOO-  
JIN-ik MANGA-sim-  
MAN-irm-it)*

Overcomes the lies.

*Suliniq.*

*(pronounced: SOO-lee-nirk)*

Truth.

I can't see you anymore but you're still talking to me, aren't you, Mom? Sending all the old words back to me tonight. Not sure what to do with them all yet but I know you'll show me.

*(he smiles)*

Thank you, Mom.

*Qujannamiik.*

*(pronounced: khu-  
YANNA-meek)*

*(MARTIN stares out his window.)*

MARTIN

I don't see you. But I feel you, *Aqsarniit*. You're close. If you've left me, why do you feel so close? (beat) Hey. Just a sec. Is that you up there... ?

*(MARTIN contorts to try to look out the window at the right angle to see one part of the sky. As he does, the door of Martin's apartment opens quietly. CAITLIN steps*



*softly toward Martin whose back is to her.  
He doesn't hear her approach.)*

CAITLIN

Martin.

*(MARTIN jumps suddenly, slamming his  
head, and shouting at the same time.)*

MARTIN

*AJAIN!!*

*(pronounced: "Ah... (pause  
a bit, then say)... YAIN")*

CAITLIN

Sorry. I didn't mean to—

MARTIN

What are doing here? Ow, ow, ow.

CAITLIN

Sorry. I thought I'd... I didn't mean to...

MARTIN

Holy macaroni. Why'd you sneak up on me?

CAITLIN

I was afraid to knock. I thought you might not let me in.

MARTIN

So you try to kill me off? Give me a heart attack? Man oh man.

CAITLIN

Were you looking at the northern lights? Or should I say...  
*aqsarniit?*

*(pronouncing it awkwardly)*

*Aqsarniit.* Is that right?





MARTIN

Close enough. For a white girl. *Qallunaaq.*

*(pronounced: KAL-in-ak)*

*(MARTIN rubs his head, staring at Caitlin.)*

CAITLIN

I've never seen them like that. Not even the other day when we were on the bridge.

MARTIN

What are you talking about?

CAITLIN

The northern lights. They're amazing tonight.

*(MARTIN goes back to the window and looks out to see the pulsing colours of the northern lights. He turns to look at Caitlin.)*

CAITLIN

They were crazy the whole way over here.

*(beat)*

What's the matter?

MARTIN

Nothing.

CAITLIN

Is it not okay that I'm here? I mean, I'll leave if you don't want to see me. I get that you might not want—

MARTIN

No, it's not that. It's not that I don't want to see you. Even the other day it wasn't...

CAITLIN

Really?



MARTIN

I just don't get it, Cait. I don't get what's been—[going on]

CAITLIN

Look. All I want to say is... actually, I don't know what I want to say. But I do want to give you something.

*(CAITLIN pulls a bag out of her knapsack and dumps out a pile of plastic razors.)*

CAITLIN

I don't need them anymore.

*(Pause.)*

CAITLIN

I'm telling you the truth. I might not be over wanting it, but I haven't been doing it. Not for a long time. And you can believe me or not but I'm trying. I really am trying. I used to need to feel something, maybe just to know I was alive. But I feel things now. I do. I feel everything now.

It's the truth.

There's stuff I haven't told you, yes. But I'm ready to tell you everything and, I swear to you, when I'm done, you're going to look at my mom with new eyes.

MARTIN

Listen, I don't want to take sides here. This is between—[you and your mom]

CAITLIN

No. Sorry. Not an option. Not anymore.

MARTIN

What do you mean?

CAITLIN

You can't *not* take sides. Not now. Either I'm lying or she is. And



now you have to choose. Because I have. And I choose you, Martin. I choose the person who rescued me. The person I trust more than anyone I've ever trusted. The only person around here who even seems to know what the truth is. So. What's it going to be? Are you ready to hear me out or not? Have I ruined everything or not?

*(Pause.)*

MARTIN

You haven't... you haven't ruined anything.

CAITLIN

*(with a sharp intake of breath)*

I haven't?

*(beat)*

I thought I had... I thought I'd smashed it all to smithereens.

*(MARTIN shakes his head and reaches for her.)*

## SCENE 18

*(The next morning. MARTIN is alone in his apartment. He's looking at his computer, playing back some video footage of the northern lights. The door opens.)*

MARTIN

Another kiss goodbye? Man oh man. This is my lucky day—

*(MARTIN turns, expecting Caitlin. When he sees MARILYN, he picks up his video camera.)*

MARILYN

I've been calling you all morning. Why didn't you pick up?

MARTIN

I was busy. *We* were busy.



MARILYN

We?

MARTIN

Caitie and me.

MARILYN

Oh. So, she crashed here again? I wondered where she—

MARTIN

Not crashed, no.

MARILYN

Oh. I see.

MARTIN

Do you? Cause I'm not sure what I see now when I look at you. Just a sec. Yeah, that's better. That helps.

*(MARTIN turns the camera on Marilyn, shooting her, through the next exchange.)*

MARILYN

*(holding her hand up to block the camera)*

Do you mind?

MARTIN

It's the way it's gotta be. If you don't like it, you can—

MARILYN

Fine, fine. I'm not afraid to have my picture taken. I have nothing to hide.

MARTIN

Okay then.

MARILYN

We agreed you'd call me if Cait showed up here.



MARTIN

No, we didn't. That's not true. You always phone me to try to find out—

MARILYN

Fine, fine. Semantics. I *assumed* you'd call me if Cait showed up here.

MARTIN

Why would I do that?

MARILYN

I thought you were so concerned about her.

MARTIN

I am.

MARILYN

Well, if you're so concerned, you'd think you'd want to actually help her. Not just play along with her little fantasies.

MARTIN

Things are a little different according to Cait.

MARILYN

They always are.

MARTIN

You know what I mean. About what's been going on.

MARILYN

Oh, for God's sake, what do you think she'd say about what's been going on? Would you please shut that off?

MARTIN

I'm going to start keeping track of who says what.

MARILYN

So you'll film everyone you talk to?



MARTIN

Just you.

MARILYN

I see.

MARTIN

Cait says she's not cutting anymore. I believe her. She's telling the truth—and she's been telling the truth all along. About her dad. About Danny. About you.

MARILYN

Yeah, so I'm the villain, then. Right. I'm sure she had a lot to say. I bet she'd have even more to say if she knew about our relationship.

MARTIN

We don't have a relationship.

MARILYN

Right.

*(MARTIN shuts off the video camera.)*

MARILYN

Yeah, good time to cut.

MARTIN

Relationship. Don't call it that. It was one time. Before I... and only because you... besides, seeing her there, like that, on the bridge, it messed me up. I was out of it that night.

MARILYN

And Cait is so understanding. So forgiving.

MARTIN

Don't talk like that about her.

MARILYN

Listen, I just want to know... is she sounding out of touch at all? Getting confused again? Or the dreams. Is she talking about weird dreams again?



MARTIN

I can't do this. I promised I wouldn't talk to you about her.

MARILYN

Uh huh. But you two can talk about me. How honest have you been with her, anyway? You haven't told her, have you?

*(MARILYN looks at him hard.)*

MARILYN

No. Good call. She'd hate you, you know.

MARTIN

I wouldn't blame her.

MARILYN

Then aren't you lying too, just a little?

*(beat)*

You took advantage of me that night.

MARTIN

What?

MARILYN

I just mean... that is one way of looking at it. I was a mess. My daughter had just tried to kill herself. Who knows how Caitie would see it?

MARTIN

Man oh man.

MARILYN

Look, it's not about us, Martin. It's about Caitie.

*(MARILYN steps closer to him.)*

MARILYN

I'm worried about her, is that so hard to understand? She has given me a few reasons to worry, over the years. You know that. So just let me know if she starts saying anything about feeling guilty, okay?



Or if she starts talking about strange dreams again. That's when she pulls her best stunts. The ones that leave me worried sick.

*(MARILYN takes a deep breath. MARTIN doesn't move.)*

MARILYN

Whatever you think of me doesn't matter. All I've ever wanted is for Caitie to be okay. I'm glad she's got a friend like you. We should all be so lucky.

MARTIN

Come on. This has just been so...

MARILYN

Weird?

MARTIN

Yeah, weird. I'm just trying to get my head around it all, okay?

MARILYN

I know. Believe me, I know. When she didn't come back last night... I was... well, I was worried sick all night.

MARTIN

Then why didn't you call me last night?

MARILYN

I meant to. I just... I guess I had a few too many drinks. I was a mess. Next thing I knew it was morning. But I've been trying to reach you ever since I got up. You know that.

*(MARILYN struggles for another deep breath before she speaks.)*

MARILYN

Caitie's more fragile than you know. I'm very worried about what could happen to her.

*(MARILYN takes another deep breath. MARTIN touches her shoulder.)*





MARTIN

I'm not going to let anything happen to her.

MARILYN

Good. That's all I want—for her to be okay. She's my little girl. My Caitie. I need her.

*(MARILYN squeezes his arm, then kisses him lightly on the cheek before turning to walk away.)*

MARTIN

I need her too. I love her.

*(MARILYN stops.)*

MARILYN

Then I'm... I'm happy for you. For you both. You're great together. You are. It's just... more than ever, then... I think you owe it to yourself to learn a little more about what you're dealing with. Get all the facts in front of you. Ask her a few more questions about *my* boyfriend, Danny. How she met him, if you don't believe me. And here's something else. Ask why she hasn't told you about the *first* phone call we got. Not the call about Tom's death—the call about him going into hospital. Ask why she didn't go see Tom to say goodbye when she had the chance. He was in hospital for five days before he died. His family called. Tom was desperate to see her. She wouldn't go. Call the hospital if you want. Vancouver General. Tom's last name was Anderson. Ask how long he was there before he died. Ask whose name he kept calling. It wasn't mine. But, lo and behold, when it's too late, Caitie says she had a dream about him wanting to find her the night before he died. Just a dream. You figure it out. Look, I'm glad you care for Caitie. She needs someone to really care about her. Especially when she's started cutting again. If she'd ever quit.

*(MARTIN is visibly surprised.)*

MARILYN

Yeah. I caught her at it—before she went out last night. We had a bit of a scene about it. Next thing I knew, she'd grabbed up all the



razors in the house and stormed off. I didn't know what to think. I'm sorry to have to tell you this but I want you to know exactly what you're getting yourself into. Because, believe it or not, I care about you too.

*(MARILYN leaves.)*

*MARTIN pauses. After several moments, he moves to pick up his telephone and begins keys on his phone's keypad. He's calling 604 directory assistance and speaks his answers into an automated information system.)*

MARTIN

Hello?... .Vancouver, B.C.... Business... Vancouver General Hospital.

### SCENE 19

*(The bookstore. Later that day. CAITLIN is unloading a box of books. A door chime rings. MARTIN bursts into the shop.)*

CAITLIN

Whoa! Where's the fire?

MARTIN

Hey. Just wanted to see you. How you doing?

CAITLIN

Great. I'm great. Just like I was when I left you this morning.

MARTIN

Right.

CAITLIN

Are you okay?

MARTIN

Yeah. I uh...



CAITLIN

If you're here for your Coppola book, you're still out of luck.

MARTIN

No, that's okay. Hey, can you take a break or anything? Go grab a coffee, maybe.

CAITLIN

No, I don't get a break for a couple of hours.

*(CAITLIN looks at him again.)*

CAITLIN

What's going on?

MARTIN

Nothing. I... Cait, I just need you to promise me you'll tell me... if you ever feel like... I need you to tell me you'll never do it again. No more cutting. Ever.

CAITLIN

I told you. That's over. But I can't talk. Not here. After work, when I—

MARTIN

I'm not going to let you hurt yourself ever again.

CAITLIN

And I love that. I do.

*(MARTIN tries to hug her. CAITLIN pulls away.)*

CAITLIN

But I really can't talk.

MARTIN

I just need to know that you're—

CAITLIN

I'm okay. I am. But Martin, please. Not at work.



MARTIN

And no more secrets. Just the truth, straight up. Okay?

CAITLIN

Okay. Straight up.

MARTIN

Okay. I'm going. I'm gone.

*(MARTIN turns to go, but stops and comes right back.)*

MARTIN

I'm going, Cait, but, first I just have to say... I'm really sorry you ever went through that thing with your Mom—and that guy Danny.

*(Beat.)*

CAITLIN

Okay. Forget about it. Good riddance.

MARTIN

Sounds like it. I mean... how did you even meet that guy Danny, anyway?

*(CAITLIN is taken aback. She looks steadily at him.)*

CAITLIN

You've been talking to her again.

MARTIN

It's not like... she just... she came to see me. After you left for work. She said she wanted to see if you were okay.

CAITLIN

Right.

MARTIN

I didn't talk about you! Not a word. And she didn't say much either... it's just... okay, no secrets, right? She said I should ask



how you met Danny. And I don't even care! I just don't want secrets between us.

CAITLIN

Oh God.

MARTIN

It doesn't matter. Whatever it is.

CAITLIN

You're going to take it all wrong. It's complicated, okay? But here's the honest truth: when I saw Mom with Danny that night, *I* was dating him. But, yeah. Mom saw him first. He was a trainee at her firm. They had a thing. And, yeah, she introduced me to him. But I didn't start seeing him till way after that. And if I'd known they'd gotten together, I never would have.

*(beat)*

You don't believe me.

MARTIN

I do. I believe you. I'm glad you told me. And I don't mean for you to be the only one to have to explain things. I have things to tell you too, things I've messed up. I want to tell you everything. To make things right.

*(The door chimes ring again.)*

CAITLIN

I don't care. I don't want to know everything. And I really can't talk now.

MARTIN

We should be able to tell each other anything.

CAITLIN

Yes. Absolutely. But I've got to get back to work now.

MARTIN

No matter how hard it is to talk about. Like even if you could have gone to see your dad and didn't, you wouldn't have to hide it. It wouldn't—



CAITLIN

What?

MARTIN

Even if he asked to see you. I mean, your dad was a total stranger to you. Too little, too late, right? So why rush out there? If you'd had the chance, I mean.

CAITLIN

What are you talking about?!

MARTIN

You wouldn't have to tell me it was a dream if he really had been trying to see you.

CAITLIN

I can tell the difference between dreams and reality.

MARTIN

But if it hadn't been a dream. It would be okay.

CAITLIN

I have no idea what you're talking about.

MARTIN

*(in a flood)*

I know what it's like to want to pretend something never happened. Because I've been there too. I never told you what happened up north. After how we met, I just couldn't. My mom. My mom committed suicide. I was little, but I know what happened. I was there and I saw everything—and I mean everything. I still dream about her. Sometimes, on a good night, I'm big and strong enough to stop her. I get the gun away from her. And I'd rather tell you that story—the story of how I save her—than the other story of what really happened. But sometimes the truth has got to come out. So me telling you how my mom died is me giving you all the truth I can. And I've got more to tell you. Way more. I just don't want you to hate me. But you need to know you're safe. Safe enough to tell me anything. Because... I already know, Cait. I called the hospital.



CAITLIN

The hospital?

MARTIN

I thought your mom was lying. So I called the hospital to prove her wrong. They wouldn't tell me much so I called your uncle too. And I shouldn't have done it behind your back but I did and... anyway, thing is... I know.

CAITLIN

KNOW *WHAT?*

MARTIN

That your dad was there for five days before he died. And that you didn't go see him when he asked for you. But none of that changes how I feel about you. You don't have to hide it from me, anymore.

*(Pause.)*

CAITLIN

Dad was there. For five days.

MARTIN

It's okay, Cait.

CAITLIN

He asked for me?

MARTIN

Cait... ?

*(MARTIN moves toward her.)*

CAITLIN

Don't. Don't touch me.

*(CAITLIN stares silently for a moment... then takes off at a run.)*

*MARTIN pauses, confused, then takes out his cell phone.)*



SCENE 20

*(MARILYN is walking toward home on the bridge. She's in her office clothes, complete with string of pearls.*

*MARTIN runs up to her. He's out of breath.)*

MARTIN

Marilyn!

MARILYN

Martin, what are you doing here?

MARTIN

I called your office. They said you left for the day.

MARILYN

I wasn't feeling well. No surprise, after everything that's—

MARTIN

I called! I called the hospital!

MARILYN

Then we can put this behind us. At least you know what I've been dealing with.

MARTIN

Yes, he was there like you said. And, yes, he wanted to see her. But she didn't know!

MARILYN

Oh, come on.

MARTIN

She didn't have a clue!

MARILYN

She's in such denial. It worries me sick.





MARTIN

You don't get it.

MARILYN

Look, I don't care what you want to think about me—

MARTIN

I'm not thinking about you! I'm thinking about CAIT! You knew he wanted to see her before he died and you didn't let her know? I don't get it. I just don't get it. How can you even live with yourself?

MARILYN

Some people don't want to know the truth. Cait is one of those people.

MARTIN

Man oh man. How can you say that? How can you—

MARILYN

I'm not the only one who sees it! Just today, Donna in my office was saying the very same thing. She said she could always see that about Cait.

MARTIN

You're doing it. Exactly what she says you do.

MARILYN

You don't know what I'm doing. You have no clue what I'm going through. What I've been—[going through]

MARTIN

What *you're* going through?

MARILYN

Yes, what I've been going through. Do you know Caitie's latest stunts have cost me a relationship?

MARTIN

What?



MARILYN

Just today I had to put an end to a relationship with a man I care deeply about... all because I'm simply too emotionally spent to... and my job. It's a wonder I haven't... it's all I can do to concentrate on my work these days.

MARTIN

Your job. Your relationship. Your emotions. What you're going through. Why does it always come back to you?

MARILYN

To me? Have you heard a word I said? Every minute of my day is spent thinking about someone else. Trying to do the right thing for someone else. Find the right word. The right approach. The best way to soften the blow. And you're slamming me? You're standing there slamming me? You should be nominating me for humanitarian of the year.

MARTIN

Humanitarian of the—

MARILYN

I swear to God, this is it. I've had enough. I should quit my job and go into politics.

MARTIN

Politics? What are you—

MARILYN

Yes, politics. The way I keep soldiering on, holding my head up in the face of all this nonsense, all these attacks, these unfounded attacks, I know I could handle anything. The media. The opposition. Corporate interests. I'm ready, Martin. I am. You come and start filming me now. My campaign speech. It'll knock your socks off. Because I am ready, you hear me, I am ready to stand up and take it all on. Bring it on.

MARTIN

The media? The corporate interests?



MARILYN

You got it, kid. And another thing. I'm sick of all this deception. All these lies you and Caitie have drawn me into. I'm not having any more of it. From now on, I'm going to make sure Caitie knows everything.

*(looking at him  
significantly)*

Everything.

*(MARILYN walks on, leaving Martin on  
the bridge.)*

SCENE 21

*(CAITLIN is at home. She is wearing  
a heavy, long-sleeved sweatshirt and is  
repeatedly phoning a number on the home  
phone. She picks up the phone, dials the  
number by heart, listens, then hangs up.  
She does this again and again—somewhat  
unsteadily but with determination.  
Gradually, the volume of the receiver  
increases until we can hear what Caitlin is  
hearing: a recorded male voice, then a beep.*

*The voice echoes through the house again and  
again and again—almost like a Gregorian  
chant.)*

VOICE ON ANSWERING  
MACHINE

*“Hi. Um. Sorry you missed me. Leave a message after the beep. Thanks.”*

*(At some point, CAITLIN leaves the phone  
off its hook instead of hanging up. Even so,  
the voice mail message continues to play.*

*Her cell phone rings, abruptly cutting off  
the sound of the recorded voice. She does not  
answer it.*



*The lights come up on MARTIN in his apartment. He's on the phone, leaving a message. MARTIN holds the phone in one hand, a beer in the other.)*

MARTIN

Cait? Cait, it's me, Martin. I keep trying to call you. Are you at home? I was banging on the door. Where are you? Call me as soon as you get this message, okay? I've got to talk to you. I'm sorry. I fucked up and... I'm just so sorry. But even if you're mad, you gotta let me know you're okay. Please.

*(MARTIN hangs up and takes a drink.)*

MARTIN

I fucking hate history. It's always right there crouching, ready to pounce on you. Ready to drag you down, first chance it gets.

*(MARTIN takes another sip of beer as the light on him fades.)*

*CAITLIN begins to play music: another Gregorian chant (either another contemporary Hildegard von Bingen arrangement or perhaps a classical recording of "Os Iusti".*

*Her cell phone rings again. She ignores it. Increasingly, she has the air of someone slightly giddy, perhaps slightly drunk*

*MARILYN enters, carrying numerous bags. She's been shopping.)*

CAITLIN

Whoa! Power shopping. One two, three, four—how many have you got there? Let me guess. He's cheating on you. Oh, the irony.

MARILYN

God, Cait. I just went shopping.

CAITLIN

I know! Your dealer got busted. This would be serious.



MARILYN

I do not have the energy for—

CAITLIN

Oh, lemme get you a drink!

*(MARILYN watches her, wary.)*

MARILYN

Actually, I don't feel like it.

CAITLIN

Did the world end? Funny, I thought it might have.

MARILYN

Could you please shut that music off?

CAITLIN

Fine.

*(CAITLIN shuts off the music.)*

CAITLIN

Oh, I get it. You got fired! This would be even more serious. You're sure you don't want a drink?

MARILYN

Actually—and no smart-ass comments here, please—but I intend to cut down a bit. For the next while, anyway.

CAITLIN

Really?

MARILYN

I'm on a cleanse.

CAITLIN

Of course you are. It's all about the spiritual journey after all.

*(CAITLIN points to the candle by the photos of Tom.)*



CAITLIN

Love the shrine to Dad, by the way. You doing rosaries for him or something?

MARILYN

What's wrong with a few photos?

CAITLIN

It's the candle. Too much, maybe?

MARILYN

Aromatherapy. It's eucalyptus—very cleansing. Go smell it.

CAITLIN

Looks pretty Catholic to me. That's why I thought you wouldn't mind the Latin today.

MARILYN

What's wrong with a few pictures to celebrate the life of someone I once loved?

CAITLIN

What does Ken think of all the recent devotion to dad?

MARILYN

Doesn't matter what Ken thinks. I'm not seeing him anymore.

CAITLIN

BINGO!

MARILYN

Who doesn't check their own voice mail? Bizarre. Turns out his secretary is his wife's best friend.

CAITLIN

So you got busted? And he dumped you?

MARILYN

As a matter of fact, Ken came running to me. Flat out. His wife's left him. He's a total mess. All crushed about his kids, his life, what he's



doing, where he's going. Absolutely destroyed. I had to end things right then and there. Broke my heart to do it but he's way too needy to be in a relationship right now. Maybe I will have some wine. Just a swallow.

*(CAITLIN pours out some wine.)*

CAITLIN

*Hic est enim calyx sanguinis mei.*

MARILYN

Why the hell didn't you take Spanish?

CAITLIN

It means, "This is the cup of my blood."

*(MARILYN looks at her glass.)*

CAITLIN

Seriously. What would you do if that *was* blood in there? If I'd really lost it and—

MARILYN

What is your problem?

CAITLIN

Kidding!

*(MARILYN takes a sip. CAITLIN's cell phone starts to ring. She ignores it and comes to sit at Marilyn's feet.)*

MARILYN

Aren't you going to—?

CAITLIN

So. Dad. He asked to see me before he died.

MARILYN

Is that what Martin told you?



## CAITLIN

I called the hospital myself. Then I called Jim, my uncle, and got the whole story. The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Dad didn't just ask for me once. He asked again and again and again, right to the end. They all thought I wouldn't go see him. They said you told them I wouldn't go see him. You took that away from me. But you can't take away everything.

*(beat)*

I got to hear his voice today. I looked up his number in Vancouver—the number's not disconnected yet. It still has his voice mail. I heard his voice: "*Hi. Um. Sorry you missed me. Leave a message after the beep. Thanks.*" Words to live by. I'm going to ask Martin to record it off the phone for me so I always have it.

*(beat)*

Do you know his phone number, Mom? I do. I know it off by heart. 604. 736. 2033. 604. 736. 2033. 604. 736. 2033. 604. 736. 2033.

*(CAITLIN slides into a sing song voice and she recites the number. As she does, she turns on the spot, pulling off her sweatshirt. When she faces the audience, the T-shirt she's wearing underneath is soaked with blood.)*

## MARILYN

Oh my God.

## CAITLIN

I made sure I'll always remember it.

*(CAITLIN pulls up her T-shirt to reveal her abdomen. It's badly cut and bleeding.)*

## MARILYN

We're going to emergency, right now.

## CAITLIN

No, Mom. Some scars just have to heal on their own.





MARILYN

You are a fucking lunatic.

*(CAITLIN points to her abdomen.)*

CAITLIN

It's the number. See? Dad's number. 604. 736. 2033.

*(CAITLIN rubs some blood off.)*

CAITLIN

The zero's a bit messy. Everything got so slippery.

MARILYN

Oh my God, you stupid, stupid—another suicide attempt! That's really going to—

CAITLIN

Not suicide! This is to live with! For a scar that will always be with me! To remind me of Dad—and of who you are. I stayed away from the veins and arteries. This is something I want to live with, not die from.

MARILYN

We're leaving for the hospital now.

*(MARILYN grabs something from one of her shopping bags and throws it at Caitlin.)*

MARILYN

Hold this to stop the bleeding!

CAITLIN

Whoa, whoa, whoa. We're not done.

MARILYN

I'll call Dr. Klein to meet us there.

*(MARILYN goes to pick up the phone.)*

CAITLIN

We are definitely not done!



*(CAITLIN pulls a knife from her pocket and slices the telephone cord.)*

CAITLIN

Whoa! Is that ever straight out of a horror movie! I could get into this.

*(MARILYN drops the phone.)*

MARILYN

Put that knife down.

CAITLIN

Give me a good reason.

*(CAITLIN'S cell phone starts to ring again.)*

MARILYN

Just put the knife down. And give me your cell.

CAITLIN

Wrong!

*(CAITLIN pulls out another knife.)*

CAITLIN

Your turn to mark the occasion.

MARILYN

Where the hell is this coming from?

CAITLIN

The entrails of my mind. I finally opened it up. Come on. You like matching things. Mother-daughter sweaters. Mother-daughter boyfriends. Why not mother-daughter scars?

MARILYN

Cait. Please. Put those down. Stop sounding crazy.

CAITLIN

But I am crazy. Like father, like daughter, right? Too bad for you.



*(CAITLIN grabs Marilyn's hand and tries to guide it with the knife.)*

MARILYN

*(getting hysterical)*

Stop it! Stop it right now!!

CAITLIN

Cut the number. Not too deep. We just want a scar, remember?  
That's all. I'm not trying to kill you.

MARILYN

STOP IT!!

*(MARILYN pushes back hard, but CAITLIN gets the better of her.)*

CAITLIN

Now, the six and the zeros were a bitch so I'll make you a deal. If you go now, right now, you don't have to do the area code—act now and save!

MARILYN

Please, Caitie. Let go.

*(As MARILYN struggles harder, they end up on the floor.)*

CAITLIN

Start with the seven. Cut it! I mean it. Cut. The number. Now.

MARILYN

I'm not cutting myself.

CAITLIN

If you don't, I'll do it for you.

MARILYN

Oh, no you won't. I know you too well.

*(CAITLIN's cell starts to ring again.)*



CAITLIN

That's Martin. Maybe I should answer it and get him over here to help me.

MARILYN

Why do you think he'd help you, not me?

CAITLIN

I know him too well.

MARILYN

He only hangs out with you because I asked him to.

CAITLIN

Yeah, right.

MARILYN

Did Martin ever tell you about the night you tried to kill yourself?  
Did he tell you about us?

CAITLIN

You're lying. Do you ever stop?

MARILYN

You ask him. He might even be grateful. It's been a huge weight on his shoulders.

CAITLIN

You know what I'd be grateful for?

MARILYN

What?

CAITLIN

The truth.

MARILYN

The truth will set you free. You think that, don't you? You think it'll solve all your problems. Well, going, going, gone. Truth goes to the highest bidder.



Tom wasn't even your father.

*(CAITLIN lets go of Marilyn. MARILYN falls.)*

MARILYN

How do you like that? You don't recognize it, do you? The truth. When it hits you in the face like that.

Tom was nothing to you. Still want me to cut that phone number into my skin? Some meaningless number of a guy I was still sleeping with when you learned the word, "Daddy."

*(MARILYN gets back up.)*

MARILYN

Tom was decent. Believed in doing his duty and all that. He even got quite a kick out of you. Probably never would have left if I hadn't opened my mouth. Yeah. For the record, I did tell Tom the truth. It all got blurted out in a fight. I told him you weren't his and he took off. Right then and there. That's how strong the "father-daughter" bond between you was.

CAITLIN

I remember that fight.

MARILYN

Don't be ridiculous. You were way too small to remember any of—

CAT

I remember. It's the night my doll got smashed.

MARILYN

What? What are you talking about?

CAITLIN

You told me I smashed my baby doll. My Polly doll.

MARILYN

Your Polly doll? This is fucking unbelievable.



## CAITLIN

But I didn't. I never would have. I remember now. You were fighting. I heard it all. I heard you tell him I wasn't his. I remember thinking, he *is* my Daddy. He is *so*. I even came out to tell him that he was but it was too late. He'd already left. And that's when you knew I'd been listening in. And you, you grabbed the doll away from me and the next time I saw it, it was smashed. Her beautiful porcelain face. All smashed in.

## MARILYN

You were far too attached to that thing. It wasn't even clean. Who knows what it was stuffed with? Probably made in China before we ever knew what they stuffed into kids' toys.

*(Long pause.)*

## CAITLIN

Dad wasn't the crazy one in this family.

## MARILYN

Well, he always had tendencies as far as I'm concerned.

*(Another realization for Caitlin.)*

## CAITLIN

And you made that up too—him being mentally ill. There was nothing wrong with Dad, was there? Nothing at all. You told me that to fuck me up.

## MARILYN

He committed suicide. What does that tell you?

## CAITLIN

You say he did. That's all that tells me. The lies never stop, do they? You drove Dad away by telling him I wasn't his. But that was only one more lie on top of all the others and he realized it in the end. That's why he wanted to see me.

## MARILYN

Dreams versus reality, Cait. God. Where are you half the time?



CAITLIN

Oh, I'm right here. Putting an end to it.

*(In one quick motion, CAITLIN plunges the knife into Marilyn. MARILYN gasps. She's as deeply surprised as she is wounded. She can make no sound at all for several moments before she falls to her knees. CAITLIN drops the knife and watches her.)*

CAITLIN

Are they out?

MARILYN

What?

CAITLIN

The lies. Are they out of you yet?

MARILYN

Call 911.

CAITLIN

Horror movie, remember?

MARILYN

Your cell.

CAITLIN

Right, right. But not 911. I know a doc. A good doc. The best doc. Doc Martin. The only doc we need.

*(CAITLIN pulls out her cell phone and calls Martin.)*

CAITLIN

Hey, Doc. Doc Martin! No, I'm fine. Yeah. Yeah? I didn't hear it— must have been on silent. No, I'm okay. I am, but... I need you here. Something happened and... I need you. But no rush. Like... we can wait.



*(The lights shift...)*

SCENE 22

*(... and the northern lights shine out of a darkening sky.*

*Half an hour later.*

*MARILYN is curled up on the floor and silent, except for the periodic sound of her gasps as she struggles to breathe. She's been bleeding heavily.*

*CAITLIN is crouched, her back against the wall. Her hand still clutches her cell phone.*

*A rattling is heard at the door.)*

MARTIN

Hey Caitie! It's me.

*(MARTIN's voice is slightly slurred. He opens the door.)*

MARTIN

Knock, knock.

CAITLIN

Hi Martin.

*(MARTIN first sees Caitlin's bloody shirt... then Marilyn on the floor. MARILYN groans.)*

MARTIN

Cait? Oh God. Caitie. What happened?

*(MARTIN rushes over to Marilyn.)*

MARTIN

Marilyn? What the fuck is—Cait! Have you called an ambulance!!





*(MARILYN, half conscious, stirs. She's alive but in rough shape. MARTIN holds her.)*

CAITLIN

I only wanted her to cut the number.

MARTIN

We have to call an ambulance!

CAITLIN

I just wanted her to cut. The number. But then it all got—

MARTIN

Call 911!!

*(CAITLIN doesn't move.)*

MARTIN

Cait! RIGHT NOW!!

*(CAITLIN looks down at her cell phone. She stares at it like in a dream. MARTIN keeps his grip on Marilyn but tries to pull Caitlin toward him.)*

MARTIN

Give it to me!

*(MARTIN grabs the phone out of Caitlin's hands and calls 911.)*

MARTIN

Yeah. We need an ambulance over here! Someone's been stabbed. Two people, I think. No, not me... no.

*(MARTIN picks up the knife on the floor beside Marilyn.)*

MARTIN

A knife. It's bad. She's lost a lot of blood. I don't know. The address. Um... 79th Ave. 10601. Yeah. That's it. She's having trouble breathing! Yeah, I'm calm. I'm calm. Martin. Martin Auksaq. A



friend—a friend of the family. What do I do? Okay. Okay, I'll stay right here. Yeah. I'll stay calm. Just a sec. She's trying to say something.

MARILYN

*(viciously, between gasps)*

This... is... your fault.

MARTIN

What?

MARILYN

This is all your fault.

*(MARTIN stares at her uncomprehendingly... as CAITLIN moves slowly away from Martin and Marilyn and becomes more and more fascinated with the northern lights she sees, out the window, above her, even around her in the room. She tries to step toward them, loses her balance, regains it. They dance closer and closer to her... )*

### SCENE 23

*(A police light flashes, dappling the stage. The northern lights glimmer above it all. Sirens sound.*

*CAITLIN, MARTIN, and MARILYN stand in separate pools of light.*

*The realities they're each in shift from the kitchen, to a later police interview, to Caitlin's dream world.)*

CAITLIN

Tell me something... beautiful.



MARTIN

Martin Auksaq. A-u-k-s-a-q.

MARILYN

*(gasping)*

Martin. Martin Auqsaq. He stabbed me.

CAITLIN

My turn. There's light. So much beautiful light.

MARTIN

No, officer, that's not... . She doesn't know what she's saying.

MARILYN

He was... drunk. Tried to hurt my Caitie. I got... between them.

CAITLIN

Something smashed. It'll never get put back. But look, look how it reflects...

MARTIN

Yeah, I picked up the knife, but just... I don't know... to see it. I couldn't believe it.

MARILYN

Wasn't the first time... . There's something else... . I never wanted Caitie to know...

CAITLIN

Coloured shards of light. Ringing bells. I'm here. I'm finally here.

MARTIN

No, I would never do that. Never. I walked in and that's what I saw. Then I called for help.

MARILYN

Caitie would never hurt me.



CAITLIN

*Kyrie eleison.*

MARTIN

Cait, you gotta tell them. Tell them what happened.

MARILYN

She would never hurt me... it was Martin.

CAITLIN

Lord have mercy.

MARTIN

I didn't. I swear I didn't.

MARILYN

Who are you going to believe ? Me or this... Indian?

MARTIN

But I'm... that's not... you gotta believe me.

CAITLIN

*(looking at the brightening  
sky)*

Unbelievable.

*(MARILYN takes her last breath.  
CAITLIN watches her disappear into the  
raging light. She's passed.)*

CAITLIN

*Requiescat in pace. Rest in peace.*

*(A church bell rings... and a Gregorian  
chant (Os Iusti) begins to be heard. The  
northern lights dance above and around  
Caitlin. They are blazing blood red.  
MARTIN disappears into the darkness  
while CAITLIN looks around her,  
marveling at the light.)*



## CAITLIN

I know you're not supposed to talk in church, but I can't help it. Look... just look. The light. Such amazing light. Shining off the shards of stained glass windows. Glinting off the ice that's melting under my feet. And the voices. Such voices. Oh look. Look at the procession. So many people. All of them setting down their lies. Some with such heavy ones, heavy and foul. And the rest, with their little ones. White lies that seem like nothing. But don't be fooled. Down they all go. One by one. All the lies in the world piled onto the funeral pyre and I'm the one who gets to strike the match. They're brittle and dry. They burn so easily. Look. The little lies catch first, sparking and sputtering, tiny embers flying. So fast, so hot. Just look at them burn. The cruelest lies are last to go. They don't burn fast, they smolder. Mother in heaven, such a stench. Such thick, black smoke. Everywhere. There's no getting away from it. You have to wait it out, wait for the wind, the wind to change. And see? It's changing. It's changing already.

*(The scent of incense begins to rise.)*

## CAITLIN

Mmmm. That scent. The most beautiful incense. Look at the white smoke going up and up and up. This is it. The perfect funeral. And... I'm warm. I finally feel so warm. All the ice is melting. At last.

SCENE 24

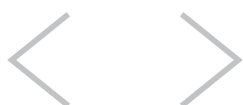
*(CAITLIN lies in her hospital bed. A heart monitor is heard. MARTIN waits by her side.*

*The northern lights glimmer above them, approaching.)*

## MARTIN

The police don't believe me. Why would they? Too busy playing cowboys and Indian. Yeah. All they see is some Indian who'd been drinking. And two white women, all cut up. Marilyn's gone, Cait. You've gotta stay with me here. And you've gotta tell them the truth.

*(MARTIN watches the northern lights*



*warily. They're the nearest we've ever seen them—and they're making a sound they've never made before: the sound of one ulu sharpening another.)*

MARTIN

You cut deeper than you meant to, I know that. So you've got to make a choice right now. Don't you go with them. Cait. You've got to send them away. Now.

*(CAITLIN exhales deeply, a long deep sigh. She closes her eyes. The northern lights dance more ominously; the sound of uluit clacking and sharpening gets louder.)*

MARTIN

You've been hunting her, *Aqsarniit*. But you can't have her.

*(MARTIN claps three sharp claps... to no avail. CAITLIN responds to his claps by sitting up and appearing to wake—but she watches the lights approach as if in a trance. Though he's clearly uncomfortable looking at them, MARTIN stares down the northern lights as he speaks to Caitlin.)*

MARTIN

They've got a taste for blood, Cait. They won't stop now unless you send them away. It's gotta be you. Clap. Restore the balance.

*(The northern lights ripple and draw near—the nearest we've ever seen them. The uluit sound close enough to cut.)*

MARTIN

Come on, Caitie—I know you're there in the world between. On your way to find your father. On your way to the light. But it's not just light up there. There's good and bad. Truth and lies. Just like here.

So... I hope my Mom finds you first. She'd give you a good hug, like you need. A whisper in your ear. Then she'd sing into your mouth,



fill your lungs, send you back to me. Wouldn't you, Mom? Cause you know what Caitie means to me. You know I need her.

*(Their light is reflected brightly on MARTIN and, most especially, on CAITLIN, who now stands—her arms still reaching toward the light.)*

MARTIN

*“In drifts of sleep I came upon you...”*

I had it all wrong about the rescue, didn't I? It wasn't me saving you. It's you saving me too. Saving each other.

*“You reached your arms out: I came to...”*

You've got to come back to me. To tell them the truth. Tell them they have it all wrong. You'll do that, won't you, Caitie. You'll come back... to save me. Won't you? You'll—

*(MARTIN stops short at a bright flash. CAITLIN breathes in... and turns to MARTIN who holds her eyes for several long seconds. It's a plea. It's a statement. It's a question.)*

*At last, CAITLIN claps. Three times. There is one last sharp sound of an ulu; the lights ripple through the sky like a visual echo of it.*

*CAITLIN and MARTIN stare first at the sky then at one another as the northern lights recede.)*

**THE END**



**Jennifer Wynne Webber** is the author of numerous plays including *Beside Myself*, published by Scirocco Drama, and one novel, *Defying Gravity*, published by Coteau Books. In 2010, *White Lies* (under its former title, *Whistling at the Northern Lights*) was presented as a staged reading at Urban Stages Theater, an Off-Broadway company in New York. Urban Stages' Artistic Director, Frances Hill, subsequently nominated the play for the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

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