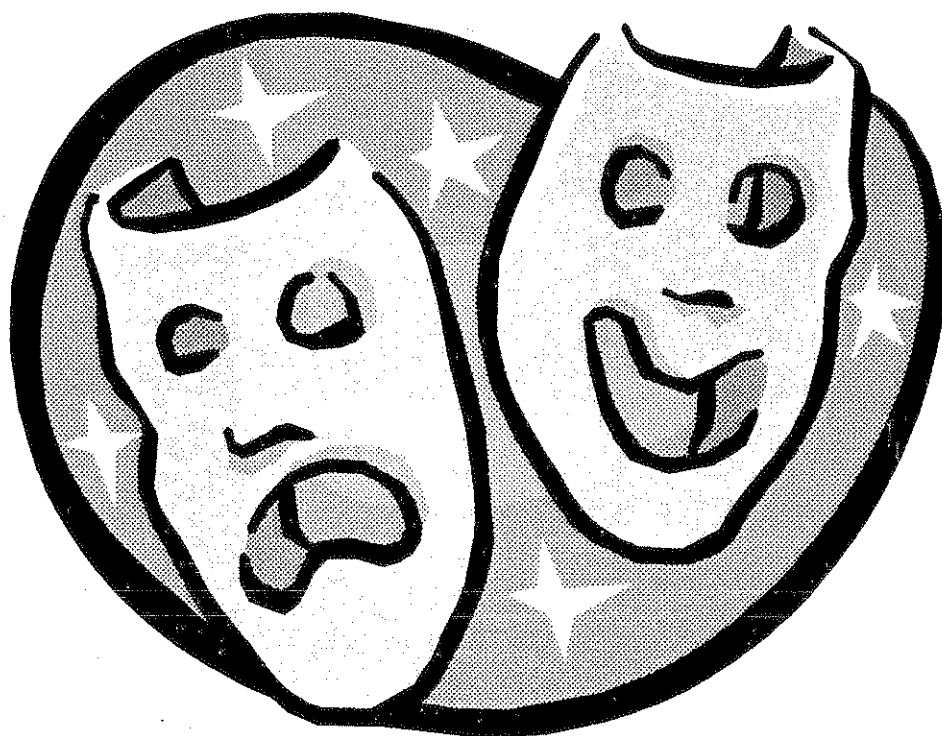


15

Drama 10



Monologue Selections

Drama 10
Monologue Selections

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This rather odd play involves six bird-like characters living in a “cage” and taken care of by “The Mistress”. Into their midst. The Mistress introduces The WILD ONE – the newest member of the group. The rebellious WILD ONE tries to convince the reluctant others to escape their rather comfortable “prison”. Here, she is talking to the meek and timid TWITTING.

The Wild One: I’m sorry to pick on you because you’re so easily frightened, but a beginning has to be made somewhere. I just want to tell you about out there. Do you remember out there? Out there where the wind blows and the sun shines. Where the heat and light and air have nothing to do with central heating or electric lamps or air conditioning. Do you remember the wind? It tickles and it buffets; it sighs and it roars; it swoops suddenly from the north tearing trees in its path; then, just as suddenly it changes into a whisper from the south, rustling in the grass. That’s the wind. Can you live without it? Of course you can – as long as you can forget about it. I’m reminding you again. I don’t want to hurt you. But does it hurt so much to remember? Do you remember the clouds? Little white puffs against a wash of blue; fiery streamers of flame and gold blazing across the sky in the hallelujah of a sunset. The clouds. Remember them? Those high-borne miracles. Remember? You must remember. Remember the winter. Yes, even the frost. When every pool became a mirror and every spray a crystal cluster. When the earth set rock hard, and each day was a test with bare life at the end. When owls hooted at the frozen moon and hawks plummeted down the thin air. Yes, remember even hunger and death. But can you remember that and be content with this? Don’t you want to escape – even into memories? Please. I’m trying to help. I want to set you free. Where am I failing? Am I too articulate? Should I have limited my words, scaled down my imagination to your mind? I can’t. I would if I could because I want to reach you. But I can’t. you’re all out of reach. **(Black out)**

A young girl recalls a tragic experience.

Tiffany: (Holds up a newspaper.) His picture is right here on the front page and under his picture it just said two words – “Suicide Victim”. And my picture is right beside his and under my picture it says “Suicide’s Companion”. There we are, a dead person and a live person and only four words – “Suicide Victim” and “Suicide Companion”. (Pause.) I still don’t understand it. I had been thrilled when he asked me to go to the PNE. All my friends were jealous. See, he was the captain of the football team and he was on the honor roll all the time and he had his own car ... and, well, he picked me up in his old Mustang and we drove to the fair. He seemed kind of quiet at first, as if something was bothering him, but when we got there, everything was great. He threw some baseballs at some old bottles and won me a stuffed tiger. And we ate and went on some rides and we laughed. And we went into the Fun House and looked at our reflections in the mirrors. You know, the ones that make you look fat or skinny or short? And we came out and bought tickets for the Ferris Wheel and we got on and it went around and around and around. Then, it stopped. We were way up at the top. Everything looked so beautiful ... like a tiny fairyland filled with miniature people. And thousands of lights in a million different colors. And ... he looked at me ... he touched my face and stroked my hair. And he smiled ... that beautiful smile of his ... and he stood up, real careful so he didn’t rock the seat and scare me. And he just stood there, smiling and looking down. And he really didn’t jump. He just kind of leaned sideways ... and he was gone. (Pause.) He was gone. One minute he was touching my face and stroking my hair and the next minute he was just a tiny speck on the ground with all the miniature people gathering around him and the thousands of lights still showing a million different colors ... like nothing had happened. But there he was ... just a speck on the ground.

(Black out)

Cavale is a young woman who, because of her childhood, has a very low view of herself. In the following monologue, she describes one incident that contributed to this view.

Cavale: When I was little, I had this real neat hideout where I had made this waterfall with old tires and junk, and my own hut. I used to go there when people were giving me a hard time. I used to go there a lot. And you know what? No one ever missed me, ever asked where I had been for so long. It's as if they hadn't even noticed that I was gone ... or they were glad I was or somethin'. People were always giving me shit. Ya know what? I was in a play once. It was a school play. I was real glad I was in it 'cus I thought that plays were just for pretty people to be in and here I was with my dumb eye patch and those stupid metal plates in my shoes to correct my duck feet the play I was in was called "The Ugly Duckling" and I really liked that 'cus of the happy ending and all that. And I got to be the ugly duckling and I had to wear some old tattered black cloth and get crap flung at me, but I didn't mind 'cus at the end I'd be that pretty swan the ugly duckling turns into. (Pause.) But you know what they did? At the end of the play I had to kneel down and cover myself with that black cloth and this real pretty blonde girl dressed in a white satin ballet dress rose up behind me as the swan. I hated it. I never got to be the goddamned swan! Here I had taken all the crap and paid all the dues and up rose ballerina Cathy like the North Star. And afterwards, all the parents could talk about was how pretty she looked. Even mine. (Pause.) Boy, I ran to my hideout and I cried and I cried. And I looked into the pool of my waterfall and I hated what I saw. And I wondered if I would ever get to be the swan. I'd like to be the swan ... just once. **(Black out)**

***NOTE: I have used the author's original wording here. Feel free to change it if you wish.

Jane is a girl in her late teens who is relating a childhood experience to her psychiatrist. Some of the details she relates are obviously true, while others seem to come out of Jane’s disturbed imagination.

Jane: When I was eight years old, I tool to the theatre with lots of other children. We had come to see the production of “Peter Pan”. I remember thinking that there was something wrong with the whole show; strange things kept happening. Like when the children could fly, the ropes would keep breaking and the actors would come thumping to the ground and they’d have to be carried off by the stage crew. There seemed to be an unlimited number of understudies to take the children’s places, and then THEY’S fall to the ground. And then the crocodile, at one point it fell off the stage, crushing several children in the front row. Several understudies took their places in the audience. And Wendy seemed to get fatter and fatter every scene so by the end of the second act, she was immobile and had to be pushed around in a cart.

You remember how in the second act, Tinkerbell drinks some poison that Peter’s about to drink in order to save him? And then Peter turns to the audience and says that Tinkerbell’s going to die because not enough people believe in fairies, but if everyone claps real hard to show that they DO believe in fairies, then maybe Tinkerbell won’t die. So we all started to clap. We clapped real hard. My palms hurt and even started to bleed because I clapped so hard. But suddenly, Peter Pan turned to the audience and said “That’s not enough. You didn’t clap hard enough. Tinkerbell’s dead.” Well, everyone started to cry. The actor walked offstage and refused to continue with the play, and they finally had to bring down the curtain. All the children in the audience were crying and the ushers came and helped us up the aisles and into the street. I don’t think any of us were the same after that experience. I think it warped my sense of life. I mean, nothing seems worth trying if Tinkerbell’s just going to die. **(Black out)**

Valerie Castle is a young starlet whose brain-size is in reverse proportion to her bustline. Val is engaged to an aging actor – Jed Jericho. Both Val and Jed are very concerned with their appearance in public; in fact, Val is so vain that she will not wear the glasses that she badly needs in public. The following scene takes place on Oscar Award night. Val has been selected as a last-minute replacement to make a presentation of the award for Best Actor, a category that Jed is nominated for. The scene opens as Val approaches the podium.

Val: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Before making the presentation for Best Actor, I would like to extend my personal thanks to Denise Harbison, who was originally slated to present the award, for giving me this exciting opportunity. I know dear Denise would love to be here with us tonight but, unfortunately, she is in the jug. (She apparently hears someone offstage in the wings, glances that way.) ... What? (Listens a second.) Oh really? (Turns back to audience and squints at what must be a cue card out in the darkness.) Oh, I'm sorry. I read that wrong – Denise is in the jungles – of Peru – filming her latest picture. (Laughs.) Sorry about that, Denise, it was a natural mistake. Now, where was I? (Squints at cue cards again.) This is hard to read without my glasses – (Panics. Quickly adds.) – that is, of course, if I wore glasses! (Laughs weekly. Clears throat continues.) This has indeed been a marvelous year for motion pictures – the sort of films that make Hollywood what it is. Where else could they make films like last year's blockbusters – "Return to Lilliput" ... "Moonlight over Pittsburgh" ... "Attack of the Giant Monster Blood Beast" ... the list is endless! But there were movies even greater than these – movies whose stars are out front right now awaiting the decision of the Academy. So let's not keep them waiting any longer. The nominees for best actor are ... Rex Ragan for "Tarzan and the Call Girl", Jed Jericho for "The Invincible Man", and the late Tubby Franklin in "A Man and His Trapeze". (Calls offstage.) May I have the envelope, please? (Listens.) What? (Looks down at the podium.) Oh, I've already got it. (Laughs and opens envelope.) And ... the winner ... is ... (Squints.) Oh damn! Will somebody please read this to me? **(Black out)**

“East of Eden” is a story of a father (Adam) and his two sons (Aron and Cal) set in California in 1917. the story is meant to parallel in many ways the story from the Bible of Adam and his two sons Cain and Abel. In the Bible, Cain is sent to live “east of the garden of Eden” after he kills his brother because he felt that Abel was much favored by their father. In this modern story, Adam does greatly favor Aron over Cal. He continually finds fault in everything that Cal does and always sides with Aron over any issue. Abra is originally Aron’s girl, who eventually becomes to love Cal. Near the end of the story, Adam suffers a stroke and is left in a state in which he sits in a chair and stares into space. The following monologue occurs just after Cal has fled the room in tears after trying to reconcile with his father. Abra is left in the room with Adam.

Abra: Mr. Trask. (Pause.) Mr. Trask ... can you hear me? Is it just Cal you won’t answer? Can you answer? (No response.) I think that you can understand me, though. I think behind your eyes you’re just as alert as ever and understand everything that I say – only you can’t show it. Mr. Trask, excuse me for speaking to you this way, ... but, Mr. Trask, it’s awful not to be loved. It’s the worst thing in the world. Don’t ask me how I know that. I just know it. It makes you mean and violent and cruel. And that’s the way Cal has always felt. All his life! I know you didn’t mean it that way ... but it’s true. You never gave him your love. You never asked for his. You never asked him for one thing. (Pause.) Cal is going away, Mr. Trask, but before he goes, well ... Cal did something very bad and I’m not going to ask you to forgive him for that or bless him or anything. Cal has got to forgive you for not having loved him or for not having shown your love. And he has forgiven you. I know he has. But you must give him some sign that you love him ... or he’ll never be a man. All his life he’ll feel guilty and alone unless you release him. Please help him. (Pause.) I love Cal, Mr. Trask. And I want him to be strong and whole. And only you can do it! Try! Please try! Find a way to show him! If you could, if you could ask him or something. Let him help you, so that he knows that you love him ... Let him do something for you! (Pause.) Excuse me, Mr. Trask, for daring to speak to you in this way, but I just had to! Cal means more to me than anything. And if you can’t at least try ... try to help him, then ... then damn you. Damn you! (Overcome, she exits.)(**Black out**)

A cowgirl tells a friend how her childhood dreams were discouraged.

Bonanza Jellybean: I'm talking about our fantasies. You know the difference between fantasy and reality, don't you? Fantasy is when you wake up at four o'clock on Christmas morning and you're so crazy excited that you can't possibly go back to sleep. But when you go downstairs and look under the tree – partner, that's reality.

They teach us to believe in Santa Claus, right? And the Easter Bunny. Wondrous critters, both of them. Then one day they tell us, "Well, there really isn't any Santa Claus or Easter Bunny, it was Mama and Daddy all along." So we feel a bit cheated, but we accept it because, after all, we got the goodies, no matter where they came from, and the tooth fairy never had much credibility to begin with. Okay. So they let you dress up like a cowgirl, and when you say, "I'm gonna be a cowgirl when I grow up," they laugh and say, "Ain't she cute." Then one day they tell you, "Look, honey, cowgirls are only play. You can't really be one." And that's when I holler, "Wait a minute! Hold on! Santa and the Easter Bunny, I understand; they were nice lies and I don't blame you for them. But now you're screwing around with my personal identity, with my plans for the future. What do you mean I can't be a cowgirl?" When I got the answer, I began to realize there was a lot bigger difference between me and my brother than what I could see in the bathtub.

Yep, it's true; any boy anywhere can grow up to be a cowpoke even today if he wants to bad enough. One of the top wranglers on the circuit right now was born and raised in the Bronx. Little boys may be discouraged from adventurous yearnings by parents and teachers, but their dreams are indulged, nevertheless, and the possibilities of fulfilling their childhood expectations do exist. But little girls? Partner, you know that story as well as me. Give them doll babies, tea sets, and toy stoves, and if they show a hankering for more bodacious playthings, call them

tomboys, humour them for a few years and then slip them the bad news. If you've got a girl who persists in fantasizing a more exciting future for herself than housewifery, desk-jobbing, or motherhood, better hustle her off to a child psychologist. Force her to face to reality. And the reality is, we got about as much chance of growing up to be cowgirls as Eskimos have got being vegetarians. **(Black out)**

The character speaking this piece is a female guard at the Frick Museum. She is a lonely young woman who has very low self-esteem and self-worth. In this scene, she is telling a male co-worker how she spent the previous evening.

The Guardess: Last night? Oh, last night, I had a great time. I went out with a bunch of friends and we ... we (Pause.) No. That's not true. Do you want to know the truth? Do you? Well, the truth is that I went and bought a whole shopping bag full of all kinds of cosmetics last night, after I left here and before I went back to my apartment to feed my seven cats. I went to five different places – and they were all very nice and pleasant and helpful. I spent a lot of money because I thought I had to, and because I thought all that make-up, well, I thought it would somehow really be a brand-new beginning, a fresh start. I didn't just buy make-up either. I bought things that I've never bought before: lovely bars of bath soap and a jar of skin cream and packets of bath oil – seven different colours and fragrances in all – and this immense and very expensive bottle of bubble bath powder. It was the brightest shade of pink you've ever seen! I spent so much money – money I really couldn't afford. (Pause.) She is trying not to cry.) Well, I went home and I stood in front of my bathroom mirror and I began to put on the brand-new make-up that I had just bought: the lipstick, the eye-shadow, the soft liners, the whole works! I was just experimenting, that's all, just trying to do what I thought was finally the right thing in my life. (Wipes a tear.) But I lost control or something. I don't know. I lost faith in myself or maybe I thought I was being a silly school girl-like fool. I looked like a mess in the mirror, like some clown out of a pathetic scene in some movie! I took the whole immense bottle of the pink bubble-bath powder and I poured every speck of it under the bathtub faucet and I put the water onto full pressure. Then, I went back to my reflection in the mirror and I began to cry. I took the brightest of the red lipsticks and I wrote all over the mirror! I wrote: "I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!" And then I fell to the cool tile of the floor and sobbed and I let the huge gigantic billows of spreading bright pink bubbles and soft foam just cover me up, all over me 'til you couldn't see me anymore. That's what I did last night! **(Black out)**

This monologue was originally written for a stewardess in the play "New Faces of 1968" but is equally appropriate for a male steward. There are no props necessary – general or hand – as all can be mimed with great effectiveness. The performer may be dressed in as traditional a uniform as possible of an airline steward/ess. The performer simply stands and delivers the standard speech that occurs on all airline flights as a matter of routine, despite the fact that most regular passengers have heard it many times before and are really not listening. This speech is not quite the "standard" airline speech, however. The key to the delivery is the cheeriness of the performer. No matter how awful the descriptions of what might happen, the performer never stops smiling or loses his/her calm, cool manner.

Stewardess/Steward: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome aboard Consolidated Airlines Flight 207 from New York to Paris. I am your first-class steward/ess and I am here to make your trip as comfortable as possible. Since most of our flight will be over water, I direct your attention to the inflatable lifejackets under each seat of the airplane. Should an emergency water-landing be necessary, I will inform you and you will don your jacket and remain seated until we are down. Once we are in the water, just tug at the two short things and your jacket will inflate. At this time, you may come up the aisle in an orderly fashion and exit into the raging sea through the emergency door. There will be an ample time for everyone to plunge into the freezing water before the plane sinks, but we ask that first-class passengers be allowed to exit first – just in case.

We are currently flying at an altitude of thirty thousand feet at an airspeed of 450 miles per hour. (Staggers slightly, look quickly right and left, then recover your poise with a little laugh and continue.) Whoops, that was a shock, wasn't it! Not to worry, it's the pilot's first flight. (Notices out window.) Those of you on the left side of the plane will note that one of our engines seems to have burst free. That loud whistling noise is caused by the rush of air through the large jagged hole in what remains of the wing. Those passengers on the right side of the plane will notice a rarely seen view of the Atlantic Ocean directly below their windows as we plummet sideways into the sea. After we have hit the ocean with the terrific force that it appears we will, those of you still conscious will please move to the emergency exit. Stand clear when it is opened so you are not swept away by the icy water that will gush in with killing force. Make sure you keep your ticket stub with you, since any survivors will be placed in lifeboats according to class. (Another peek out window.) Ten seconds until touchdown. Kindly observe the "No Smoking" signs until the salt water has extinguished the engines. And thank you for flying Consolidated. **(Black out)**

Harold Chasen is as young man whose hobby is to fake his own suicide in order to get his mother's attention. Hardly a day goes by without a stabbing, shooting, poisoning, or hanging. His mother is a shallow woman who believes she can solve Harold's problems by marrying him off. She decides to enlist him in a computer-dating club. They proceed to fill in the application form. Harold never says a word as he fills in the blanks.

Mrs. Chasen: I have here, Harold, the form sent by the National Computer Dating Service. They screen out the fat and the ugly; so it is obviously a firm of high standards. (Reads.) "Here is the personality interview which you are to fill out and return as soon as possible. Please include a recent photograph of yourself." Are you ready, Harold? Here is the first question. "Are you comfortable meeting new people?" Well I think that's a 'yes'. Don't you agree, Harold? "Should sex education be taught outside the home?" I would say no, wouldn't you, Harold? We'll give it a 'D' there. Three – "Should women run for president of the United States?" Well I don't see why not. Absolutely, yes. "Do you remember jokes and take pleasure in relating them to others?" You don't do that, do you, Harold? No, absolutely no. "Do you often get the feeling that perhaps life isn't worth living?" Hmmm. What do you think, Harold? 'A'? 'B'? I'll put down 'C' – not sure. "Is the subject of sex being over-exploited by our mass media?" That would be 'yes', wouldn't it? "Is it difficult for you to accept criticism?" No. we'll mark 'D'. "Do you believe in capital punishment for murder?" Oh yes, I do indeed. "In your opinion, are social affairs usually a waste of time?" Heavens, no. "Can God influence our lives?" Oh, yes. Absolutely yes. "Does your personal religion or philosophy include a life after death?" Oh, yes indeed. That's absolutely. "Did you enjoy life when you were a child?" Oh, yes. You were a wonderful baby, Harold. "Do you think the sexual revolution has gone too far?" It certainly has. "Do you find the idea wife-swapping distasteful?" I find the question distasteful. "Do you have ups and downs without obvious reason?" That's you, Harold. That's you all over. There – we're finished. I'll send it in tomorrow. **(Black out)**

Rachel Samstat is a cookbook author whose life collapses around her. She describes her life in hilarious detail. This monologue is titled "Rachel Samstat's Jewish Prince Routine" and describes her errant husband Mark.

Rachel: You know what a Jewish prince is, don't you? (Pause.) If you don't, there's an easy way to recognize one. A very simple test. A very simple sentence. "Where's the butter?" (Pause.) Okay, we all know where the butter is, don't we? The butter is where it always is. The butter is where it's been kept since the beginning of electricity. The butter is in the refrigerator. The butter is in the refrigerator in the little compartment in the door clearly marked "Butter". But the Jewish prince doesn't men "Where's the butter?" He means "Get me the butter." He's too clever to say "Get me" so he says "Where's." And if you say to him (Shouts), "In the refrigerator!" (Back to normal voice.) and he goes to look, a medical phenomenon that has not been sufficiently remarked upon. The effect of the refrigerator light on the male cornea. Blindness. Total and complete blindness. (Imitates.) "I don't see it anywhere." (Pause. Back to normal voice.) "Where's the butter is only one of the ways to Jewish prince reveals himself. Sometimes he puts it a different way. He says "Is there any butter? As if it's something only purchased on the rarest occasions. And we all know whose fault it is of there isn't, don't we? (Pause.) When he's really being ingenious, he puts it in a way that's meant to sound as if what he needs most from you is your incredible wisdom and judgment and creativity. He says, "How do you think the butter would taste with this?" He's usually referring to dry toast. I've always believed that the concept of the Jewish princess was invented by a Jewish prince who couldn't get his wife to fetch him the butter. **(Black out)**

Wanda was in her teens when President Kennedy was shot in Dallas. She was shattered by the event, having idolized the president. In the following monologue, she fantasizes about what might have been.

Wanda: I have a dream ... well, I used to have it ... I don't have it any more. It takes place in Dallas ... on that day ... and we see them getting off the plane and waving. It's like a movie. And then we see them driving in their limousine with the bubbletop left off in spite of the rain. And we cut ... just like a movie ... to the Dealey Plaza in front of the Texas School Book Depository. And there's sound now, people cheering and bands playing. And Mrs. Kennedy turns her head and waves and you can see her smiling face and then her little pillbox hat. And then it cuts like a movie to a window in the Depository and you can see this shadowy figure with a rifle. And then you're looking through the rifle and you can see the President's head, caught in the little crosshairs of the gunsight like the head of a saint in the Old Master paintings. And then it cuts to a tree full of birds and you hear two shots ... two ... and all the birds flutter up out of the tree at once. And the cheers change to screams and we hear Governor Connally's voice in the car saying, "Speed up the car, driver, we've been hit" and then this big hand, J.F.K.'s hand, pats the Governor on the shoulder and a voice, Jack's voice, says, "No need to speed up the car, Governor Connally, I got the poor Commie," and we see the shadowy figure with the rifle falling, in slow motion, out of the window down the building's face ... like a tear ... and we see Jack blowing on a pistol like in the movies. And Jackie hugs him and she says, "Oh, Jack!" And the bands play again and people cheer ... It's just a dream I have. Used to have. I told you it was silly. **(Black out)**

This is one of William Shakespeare's delightful comedies of young love and all its foibles. Helena is in love with Demetrius who seems to be in love with Hermia who, in turn, is in love with Lysander, with whom she has made plans to elope. Helena has just heard their marriage plan and makes one of her own to get her love back. As Puck says, "What fools these mortals can be."

Helena: How happy some o'er some can be!
 Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
 But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
 He will not know what all but he do know.
 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
 So I admiring of his qualities.
 Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
 Love can transpose to form and dignity.
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
 And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
 Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste.
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
 So the boy Love is perjured everywhere.
 For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,
 He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolved, and show'rs of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
 Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
 Pursure hher; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
 But herein mean I enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither and back again.
(Black out)

Cindy tells of the breakdown of her parents' marriage and how it has affected her.

Cindy: Mom and Dad broke up last December. Right before the holidays. You'd think they could have at least waited until after. (Pause.) I knew. I felt it coming. They'd been at each other for a long time. Arguing, always bickering. And it kept getting worse. It was awful. Sometimes, I could hear them all the way upstairs. It's terrible hearing people saying hurtful things to each other. But when it's your parents, ... (Pause.) I wonder how long they'd felt this way about each other. Felt this hatred, this deep hatred. It couldn't have always been like that. I suppose it never is. At first, I mean. I've given it a lot of thought. And I think these things happen because people let things build up over the years, not saying what's on their minds. I mean, like when things are bugging them, you know? I think what it all boils down to is honesty. But complete honesty's tough. I mean, being straight about what you're feeling isn't always easy. It seems so much easier to avoid that kind of stuff. But when you do, you really don't get rid of it. Ever. You just push it down inside where it turns rotten and ruins you and your relationship. That happened to me once. I was going out with a guy named Harry Andrews. I really liked him at first, but after a while, well, I just couldn't tell him how I really felt. I guess he was having the same problem because finally one day we got into a huge screaming fight and it was all over just like that. (Pause.) With me and Harry, though, it was only six months. Mom and Dad were together TWENTY YEARS. Just think of what twenty years of dishonesty must do to people. In time, eventually, ... it all comes out like bullets.

(Black out)

A street hustler tells about what happened when she finally found someone she really cared about.

Val: I was workin' in a restaurant in Santa Monica. One night, Ben walks in with a group and I had banjo eyes for him right off. So I dumped a bowl of soup in his lap. Three days later, we're livin' together. I took care of him and his house while we worked on the plans for some arts center or somethin'. He was an architect. He'd be at his drafting table all day. One day, we took a swim, a trot on the beach, and when we got home, with the sunset being so romantic and all, we, well ... it was great. We zoomed up to Mars, then flew to Venus, and Bammo! Rave reviews all around! Then, you know, we just lay there for a while and I reached over to get my glass of wine, and I dumped it all over the place. I got up and said, "I'll get a towel." "Okay," said Ben, "Get the little yellow one." There was this nice little yellow towel we kept by near the bed in a drawer, but the laundry had just come back and it was down the hall. I got up, went to the john, washed up, got the towel, and by the time I got back to the bedroom, the sun had set and it was dark. I said his name, but he was asleep. So I figure to let him rest while I get dinner in the works. About seven o'clock, I fixed him a rum and diet cola and go back to the bedroom to wake him up for the news on TV. "Hey, Ben," I said; no answer. I switched on the lights. (Pause.) He was lying on his back, those big brown eyes wide open. I ... I ... then I touched him ... he was already cold. Would you ever imagine those would be the last two things two people would ever say to each other: "I'll get a towel." "Okay, get the little yellow one."?

(Black out)

This avant garde play centers around an old woman in a rocking chair who seems to drift in and out of reality. An impatient Social Worker has just left the Old Woman's rat-infested apartment to call for help to take her away. After she has left, the Old Woman speaks.

The Old Woman: She's gone, isn't she? Thank God! I hope she never comes back.

Tellin' me I don't know rats when I grow'd up with 'em. Why, I knew rats 'fore I knew my own name. (She hears the whisper of squeaks and small scurrying feet.) Oh, so you're back. Come for that story, huh? Well, settle down and I'll tell it ... It was – oh yeah, I can feel it now. (Shivers.) January, February. My baby brother in his crib cryin'. Mama in the next room, "Hush up! You hear me?! I ain't gonna tell you no more. You hush up 'fore I come in there and give you somethin' to cry about!" That's when I got up, scared as I was there'd be rats runnin' over my toes, I got up to tell my baby brother Mama ain't lyin'. She say uyou got a whoopin' comin', and there ain't no two ways about it. And – when I got to the crib, he wasn't cryin' no more, so I figured to run back to bed, only – I noticed somethin' in the crib, somethin' movin'. It was too dark to tell, so I reached down to touch my baby brother, only what I touched wasn't him. That's when I got to screamin', "Mama! Mama!" She got there, lit the lamp, and got to screamin' herself 'cus you could hardly see my baby brother 'cus the rats all over him. Mama snatched him up so fast all I could see was rats jumpin' out of her arms. Then she was runnin' out of the house, runnin' through the night, "Help me! Help me! Somebody help me!" I just stood there froze where I was and couldn't feel nothin'. Couldn't feel no love for my baby brother. Couldn't feel no hate for them rats. Couldn't feel the cold floor 'neath my feet. It was like I was someplace far away watchin' and what I saw was rats runnin' everywhere leavin' footprints made of blood, my brother's blood, only I wasn't there no more. I was somewhere far away watchin' and what I saw was hunger eatin' up the world 'til there wasn't no more world, eatin' up the day and night 'til there wasn't no more day and night, eatin' up God 'til there wasn't no God and none of His works, 'til there was just hunger eatin' itself, 'til there was nothin' left at all. **(Black out)**

Edna is at her father's bedside as he lay dying. Her father had been a hard man, alienating himself from his family with his stern beliefs. Long ago, he had forced Edna to have an abortion because she became pregnant while not married. The abortion had left Edna sterile, a fact for which she has never forgiven him. Now, as he is near death, Edna finds that she still does love her father and tries to help him. Edna had been in a car accident years ago and had been "legally dead" for seven minutes. She has seen "the other side" and returned. In the second part of this monologue, Edna tries to comfort her father with her knowledge of the "after-world".

Edna: Daddy, what happened to make you so hard? What hurt you? What made you stop loving? (Pause.) I wanted my baby, Daddy. But you made me feel dirty and ashamed. And you let that horse doctor kill my little girl and make it so I can never have children again. (Pause.) God, Daddy, you drove us all away from you; Mama into her deep silence where she stayed until she died, Sam to Viet Nam where they killed him. All of us. I wish you could tell me what it was. I wish I could have helped you. I loved you so much. Daddy, listen, I want you to know that I still love you ... and I can help you now. I can. Honest. I know you know you're dying. I know you're afraid ... but you don't have to be. See, when I had the accident, I died for a while and I saw it. It's wonderful! Oh, Daddy, it's so wonderful! Everybody's there. Mama, and Sam, and Joe, and Mr. Jordan the grocer. You remember him? And my friends Jody and Cora ... and Uncle Amos and Aunt Clara. They're all there. And there's music ... like chimes ... and you begin to feel like you understand everything. It's all clear and right. You don't feel your body anymore, or any pain, or anything bad. There's no you you can touch, or see, or anything. It's just you in the idea of you. Oh, Daddy, it's wonderful. And there's this light. It's so bright and loving, you can hardly look into it. But you can. And it feels like it's reaching out to you. And everybody, Mama and Sam and Joe, helps you toward it. And pretty soon ... you begin to feel like you're made of the same light. Daddy, I promise you it's all there. I promise you. (Pause.) So don't be afraid. (Pause.) Daddy, can you hear me? Can you? **(Black out)**

Joan of Arc, the teenage girl who heard voices and led soldiers into battle, is a legendary figure. This play does not romanticize Joan. It presents her as a girl who wanted who lead a man's life, a girl too young to understand tact, and yet old enough to be shrewd when needed. It also portrays Joan's enemies not as villains, but as men who were convinced they were doing the right thing. The time of the play is fifteenth century France. The following monologue takes place at Joan's trial for heresy. She has just been told that instead of being burned at the stake, she will be imprisoned for life.

Joan: Perpetual imprisonment! Am I not then to be set free? Give me that writing (This refers to the paper with the court's judgment on it. She snatches the paper and tears it into fragments.) Light your fire: do you think I dread it as much as the life of a rat in a whole? My voices were right. Yes, they told me you were fools, and that I was not to listen to your fine words nor trust your charity. You promised me my life; but you lied. You think that life is nothing but not being stone dead. It is not the bread and water I fear. I can live on bread; when have I asked for more? It is no hardship to drink water if the water be clean. Bread has no sorrow for me, and water no affliction. But to shut me from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers, to chain my feet so that I can never again ride with the soldiers nor climb the hills, to make me breathe foul damp darkness, and keep from me everything that brings me back to the love of God when your wickedness and foolishness tempt me to hate Him; all this is worse than the furnace in the bible that was heated seven times. I could do without my war horse; I could drag about in a skirt; I could let the banners and the trumpets and the knights and soldiers pass me and leave me behind as they leave the other women, if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the larks in the sunshine, and the lambs crying in the healthy forest, and the blessed church bell that send my angel voices floating to me on the wind. But without these things I cannot live; and by your wanting to take them away from me, or from any human creature, I know that your counsel is of the devil, and that mine is of God. His ways are not your ways. He will that I go through the fire, to his bosom; for I am His child, and you are not fit that I should live among you. This is my last word to you. **(Black out)**

Agnes' mother is dying. In the following monologue, Agnes explains why she has been writing letters in her dead sister's name to her mother.

Agnes: Our whole family was very close. Especially after my father died. We were just children then. Mother worked hard to keep us together. Then, one day, my sister Claire ... there was this boy ... well, she just left us. Just like that. (Pause.) Claire was so beautiful. Her and Mother fought all the time. They were so much like each other. I would get frightened when they fought and I'd hide in my room. But suddenly the fight would be over and they would laugh and hug each other. Then, all of us, we'd all laugh ... But she left us. We never heard from her. Then one morning we got a letter from a man in California. There had been an accident ... and Claire was dead. (Pause.) It was after Claire died that Mother got sick. All of a sudden, she was "old". And she isn't, you know. But she just seemed to give up. I couldn't bring her out of it. Claire could have. But I couldn't. (Pause.) About the letters ... after Mother's last operation, she came home and she seemed so happy. She laughed and joked like she used to. She told me she'd written a letter to Claire while she was in the hospital. She said she was very nice to her and asked her to come home. (Pause.) Claire had been dead for a long time. I didn't know what to do. I tried to talk to her but she wouldn't listen. When no letter came, Mother would be upset. Every day, she'd wait for the mail. She started to get worse again. So ... (Pause.) I started writing the letters ... for two years now. It means so much to her. It's something for her to hope for, to live for. (Pause.) She hasn't got much time left, you know. And I don't mind writing letters. It's not hard. You see, Mother doesn't really listen to them anymore. It doesn't matter to her what they say. It's just so she knows Claire is coming.

(Black out)

The scene is a graveyard. There is a gravestone and bench onstage. Laura enters. She is in her mid-twenties. The grave is her father's. She has not seen him in seven years, since she left home one afternoon while he was at work. Laura and her father once enjoyed a close father/daughter relationship but her father changed, as did their relationship. Laura found it necessary to leave for her survival. They have not spoken or seen each other for the past seven years. Now Laura's father is dead and she has come to see his grave. She stands for a moment, looking at the grave and then speaks.

Laura: Hello, Father. It's me ... Laura. I would have come sooner but I only just heard that you'd ... died. It's been a long time, hasn't it ... seven years. Seven years. In all that time, we never saw each other, we never even talked. Of course, we never really talked, did we? At least, not for a long time. I mean, we talked, but I don't think either of us heard or cared what the other said. But it wasn't always like that, remember? When I was little, we had so much fun together. I was your "little princess" and you were my "big cuddly teddy bear". We'd make up wonderful stories together and then we'd act them out – just you and me. And you could make all those funny voices and make me laugh. Whenever I was sad or afraid, you could always find a way to make me smile. Like the first day I went to school. I remember how frightened I was, and you made up that silly story about the little girl – the princess – and her magic lunch box and how it could do all those wonderful things but, of course, only if the little princess went to school. And I laughed and went off to school with my "magic lunchbox" and I wasn't afraid anymore. (Pause.) But you changed. I don't remember exactly when or why it happened but things weren't the same between us anymore. It got harder and harder to please you. If I got four A's and a B on a reports card, you wanted to know why the B wasn't an A. I remember once, you came to my school play I was in. you even took the afternoon off to come. I was so proud, but after, you could only talk about how much better I could have done this and that. My teacher was happy, but you weren't. and that was what mattered. I tried so hard to make you proud of me. Damn it, I really tried! It became the most important thing in my life. The only thing in my life! Why? Because I loved you. I still do. I haven't said it for long time but I really do love you. I just gave up trying to please you. Finally, I gave up on you. I left. Just like that – boom! Packed up and left. Seven years ago. (Pause. Gently touches headstone.) I love you, ... Dad. Sleep in peace. (Exits.) **(Black out)**

In this play, tow young men live in a studio apartment where they also publish a small magazine. Norman has fallen totally for Sophie, the girl who has just moved next door. As her following monologue attests, Norman is overly attentive. Sophie is from the south, an all-American girl, and genuinely upset as she talks to Norman in this scene. She is carrying a basket.

Sophie: Mr. Cornell, Ah have tried to be neighborly, Ah have tried to be friendly and Ah have tried to be cordial ... Ah don't know what it is that you're tryin' to be. That first night Ah was appreciative that you carried mah trunk up the stairs ... The fact that it slipped and fell five flights and smashed into pieces was not your fault ... Ah didn't even mind that personal message you painted on the stairs. Ah thought it was crazy, but sorta sweet. However, things have now gone too far ... (Goes down on the table) Ah cannot accept gifts from a man Ah hardly know ... (Puts the basket on the table) especially canned goods. And Ah read your little note. Ah can guess the gist of it even though I don't speak Italian. This has got to stop, Mr. Cornell. Ah can do very well without you leaving little chocolate-almond Hershey bars in mah mailbox – they melted yesterday, and now Ah got three gooey letter from home with nuts in 'em – and Ah can do without you sneakin' into mah room after Ah go to work and paintin' mah balcony without tellin' me about it. I stepped out there yesterday and mah slippers are still glued to the floor. And Ah can do without you tying big bottles of "Eau de Cologne" to mah cat's tail. The poor thing kept swishin' it yesterday and nearly beat herself to death ... and most of all, Ah can certainly do without you watchin' me get on the bus everyday through that high-powered telescope. You got me so nervous the other day Ah got on the wrong bus. In short, Mr. Cornell, and Ah don't want to have to say this again, *leave me ay-lone!* (Black out)

Blanche tells of the death of her young husband. She is sitting at the kitchen table with a candle in front of her.

Blanche: He was a boy, just a boy, when I was a very young girl. When I was sixteen, I made the discovery – love. All at once and much, much too completely. It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow, that's how it struck the world for me. But I was unlucky. Deluded. There was something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't effeminate looking – still – tat thing was there. He came to me for help. I didn't know that. I didn't find out anything until after our marriage when we'd run away and come back and all I knew was I'd failed him in some mysterious way and wasn't able to give the help he needed but couldn't speak of! He was in the quicksands and clutching at me – but I wasn't holding him out, I was slipping with him! I didn't know that. I didn't know anything except I loved him unendurably but without being able to help him or help myself. Then I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room I thought was empty – which wasn't empty. But had two people in it ... the boy I had married and an older man who had been his friend for years ... Afterward, we pretended that nothing had been discovered. Yes, the three of us drove out to Moon Lake Casino, very drunk and laughing all the way. We danced the Varsouviana! Suddenly, in the middle of the dance, the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few moments later – a shot! I ran – we all did! – all ran and gathered about the terrible thing at the edge of the lake! I couldn't get near for the crowding. Then, somebody caught my arm. "Don't go any closer! Come back! You don't want to see!" See? See what? Then I heard all the voices say – Allan! Allan! The Grey boy! He'd stuck a revolver in his mouth, and fired – so that the back of his head had been blown away! (She sways and covers her face.) It was because – on the dance floor – unable to stop myself, I'd suddenly said, "I saw! I know! You disgust me!" And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that's stronger than this ... kitchen candle. **(Black out)**

Evelyn is eighteen and has been diagnosed as a schizophrenic. She was to be placed in a sanitarium but was kidnapped by her grandfather who believes she is possessed by a demon, thus explaining her strange behaviour. While she is waiting for her grandfather and his friends to begin the exorcism ceremony that they feel will cure her, Evelyn meets Arthur Brooks – a man for whom life is “utterly meaningless”. Despite his downcast attitude, Evelyn finds that she can talk comfortably with Arthur, although her conversation frequently turns to confusing, crazed ramblings. The following is part of Evelyn’s conversation to Arthur.

Evelyn: Have I told you about my grandfather? My grandfather and I are very close. I’m much closer to him than I am to my own father. I’d rather not talk about my father, if you don’t mind. It’s a danger spot for me. You know, when I was nine years old, I shaved all the hair off my head because that is the practice of really orthodox Jewish women. I mean, to be a rabbi’s wife, you must shear your hair and wear a wig. That’s one of my compulsive dreams. I keep dreaming of myself as a rabbi’s wife. I have discovered through many years of unsuccessful psychiatric therapy that religion has a profound sexual connotation for me. Oh dear, I’m being tiresome about my psychiatric therapy again, aren’t I? Really, being insane is like being fat. You can talk about nothing else. Anyway, I’m supposed to be going into the sanitarium again. I won’t be put into the violent ward, though, so I’ll be able to go to the cafeteria for ice cream. People ask me to be in a lot of movies, you know, when I have the time did you see “David and Bathsheba” with Susan Hayward? That was really me. I don’t tell many people that. They don’t want me to be in movies. My mother, I mean. You’re the new rabbi, you know. Sometimes I’m the new rabbi, but they’re all afraid of me. The temple is sixty cubits long and made of cypress and covered with gold. Did you see “The Ten Commandments”? I saw that on Tuesday. I was in that. I was the girl who danced. I was in that. Do you see that boy over there? Go away. Leave us alone. He’s insane. He’ll never leave me alone. You stay here. I’ll be right back. I’m going to tell him. He’s insane. I’ll be right back. (Exits.) **(Black out)**

This monologue was originally written in poetry form. It is subtitled: "From the Diary of an Anorexic". The young woman becomes anorexic in order to take control of the only thing in her life she can – her body. Hunger is the beast which lies within her. She will control the beast or die trying.

Anorexic Woman: I have rules and plenty of them. Some things I don't touch. I'm king of my body now. It obeys me. Who needs a mother – a food machine, those miles and miles of guts? Once upon a time, I confess, I was fat – gross. Gross belly, gross ass, no bones showing at all. Now I say, "No, thank you." A person in my own right, and no poor loser. I smile at her plate of brownies. "Make it disappear," she used to say. "Join the clean plate club." I guess that's what I want: to disappear. That's pretty much what the doctor said, touching me with his icy stethoscope, prying apart my smile with that dry Popsicle stick, and he said it to Mother. And now all she says is "What kind of crazy person would starve herself to death?" There I am, my gut flipflopping at the smell of hot bread, my bone marrow turning to hot mud as she eases the fat glistening duck out of the microwave, the fat swimming with sweet orange sauce. I wish it would disappear; that I ... (Pause.) If I could just let myself suck a bone – do bones have calories? – I wouldn't need to touch a bite of anything else. I am so empty. My gut must be loopy thin as spaghetti. I start to chew my smile. Is lip-skin fattening? I know hunger as a person inside me, half toad, half dwarf. I try to mother him; I rock and rock him to sleep like a mother by doing countless sit-ups. He leans his gargoyle head against the fat pillow of my heart and he sleeps. But when he awakens, he raves, a crazy person, turned on by my perpetual motion, by the disappearing tricks of my body; his shaken fist tickles drool to my smile. He nibbles my vagus nerve for attention. Behind the bone cage of my chest, he is bad enough. He's worse in my gut where his stamped foot means binge and then puke. Don't touch me, Hunger. Mother ... don't you gut my brain. Bones are my sovereigns now, I can touch them here and here. I am pure person, magic, revealed as I disappear into my final fat-free smile, where there is no pain. **(Black out)**

Laura and Walter are husband and wife. Laura always thought that they had a happy marriage. Now, Walter has died and she is learning all about his escapades from other people. Laura refuses to believe Walter is really dead. She confronts him as she lies in the funeral parlor. Although the part of Laura was originally meant to be for a woman in her fifties, age means little difference to this speech. Laura could easily be played as a woman in her twenties.

Laura: Hello, Walter. (Slight pause.) It's me. Your wife. (Slight pause.) I bet you thought you'd never see me again. I bet you thought you could lie and cheat on me and walk away without facing the music. That was your style, wasn't it? Well, this time, you're mistaken. You have a lot of explaining to do, mister. You're not getting off so easy this time. Oh, no. What you did ... I still can't believe it. How could I have been so stupid? So blind for so many years? Is it true, Walter? Did you sleep around with all those women? Is it true or false? How many were there, Walter? I want a definite figure. Everybody's been telling me stories; all week long I've been hearing stories about you, and I want a direct answer. Look at me. Look me straight in the eyes so I know your not lying. (Slight pause.) Whose silk panties did I find in your dresser? They weren't mine. I buy mine on sale at Woodward's. (Pause.) I'll tell you something, Walter. I don't believe you're dead. I really don't. if you wanted to talk, you'd talk. Nothing ever shut you up before. (Pause.) Walter, I have to know the truth. From you. How do you expect me to go on when I'm so angry at you that I can't see straight? What am I supposed to do with the rest of my life? Every time I hear your name, I want to explode. I want to ... Sit up! Sit up! We're going to get to the bottom of this whether you like it or not! What I don't understand is why you fooled around with other women. Didn't you always say that I satisfied you? Were you lying to me when you said that, Walter? Was it my fault? Look at me. I'm warning you, mister, I'm not going to let them bury you until I get a satisfactory answer. Talk. Go ahead. Talk. **(Black out)**

Southern Comfort, a girl in her late teens/early twenties tells a friend about her unlucky history with boys.

Southern Comfort: It's not a very pretty story. I grew up right here in Houston. I was pretty, I was the state baton twirler champion, and I only dated football players. Sound familiar? The typical American girl. The first boy I went all the way with was Bobby Barton. Bobby was the state champion high school quarterback and since I was champion too, it seemed only natural that we get together. It was in the back seat of his daddy's car on the eleventh date. I really enjoyed it and Bobby did too. We started going into the back seat on every date we had. Then, one day after school at football practice, somebody tackled Bobby and he just didn't get up. I mean, he was dead. (Pause.) So then I started dating Bobby's best friend, Terry Walsh, who played right guard and who'd been the one who accidentally killed Bobby when he tackled him. I went all the way with Terry on the fourth date. He had a sports car so we had to spread a blanket on the ground. Terry got killed during a playoff game in Austin. My senior year at Sunset I started dating and going all the way with Tiny Walker, who played left and used to be Terry and Bobby's real good friend. Tiny was small but powerful and had been tackled lots of times by players way bigger than him. But when Tiny died just like that I stopped dating football players. I felt like I was a jinx on them, you know? Besides, people were starting to say things behind my back. I stopped twirling the baton, started drinking, and got to hate Houston so much that I ran away from home and now I'm trying to get into show business. I still sleep around a lot, but only with musicians. They don't die on you like football players. (Pause.) I told you it wasn't a very pretty story. **(Black out)**