

# **Monologues WOMEN:**

## **This Is Our Youth** - Kenneth Lonergan

**JESSICA:** Well...OK...It's just – This is getting a little weird now, because when I talked to Valerie, she asked me if anything happened with us last night, and for some reason, I guess I didn't really tell her that anything did. So now she's gonna talk to Dennis and I'm gonna look like a total liar to someone I'm just starting to be close friends with and who I really care about! But honestly, Warren? I really don't care who you told, or what you told them, because people are gonna think whatever they think and you know what? There's nothing I can do about it. I should just really listen to my instincts, you know? Because your instincts are never wrong. And it was totally against my instinct to come over here last night, and it was definitely against my instinct to sleep with you, but I did and it's too late. And now my Mom is totally furious at me, I probably ruined my friendship with Valerie, and now like Dennis thinks I'm like easy pickings or something! And it's not like I even care what he thinks, OK? Because I don't actually know him. Or you. Or Valerie for that matter! So it really doesn't matter! I've made new friends before and I can make more new friends now if I have to. So let's forget the whole thing ever happened, you can chalk one up in your book, or whatever – and I'll just know better next time! Hopefully. OK?

## **Proof** - David Auburn

**CATHERINE:** I lived with him. I spent my life with him. I fed him. Talked to him. Tried to listen when he talked. Talked to people who weren't there . . . Watched him shuffling around like a ghost. A very smelly ghost. He was filthy. I had to make sure he bathed. My own father . . . After my mother died it was just me here. I tried to keep him happy no matter what idiotic project he was doing. He used to read all day. He kept demanding more and more books. I took them out of the library by the carload. We had hundreds upstairs. Then I realized he wasn't reading: he believed aliens were sending him messages through the Dewey decimal numbers on the library books. He was trying to work out the code . . . Beautiful mathematics. The most elegant proofs, perfect proofs, proofs like music . . . Plus fashion tips, knock-knock jokes – I mean it was nuts, OK? Later the writing phase: scribbling nineteen, twenty hours a day . . . I ordered him a case of notebooks and he used every one. I dropped out of school . . . I'm glad he's dead.

**Snakebit** - David Marshall Grant

**JENIFER:** I don't want to be an actress. I hate acting. I've always hated acting. It fills me with nothing but self-loathing. There, I said it. And, you know, you do your affirmations, you know, your prayers, that you'll be like, you know, so filled with self-love that all that won't matter. What am I saying? The whole thing's a joke. You know why I don't want to act? And don't tell Jonathon this. I've never told anybody this. I started to stutter. On stage. Can you believe that? Honestly. I would get to a word in the script, and when I came to it, I wouldn't be able to say it. I would freeze. Every time I would get to it. I couldn't get it out. I get fixated on a word. Last time, I was playing the blind Mexican flower vendor in Streetcar Named Desire. Don't ask me why. And all I had to do was say, "Flores para los muertos." There, I said it now. "Flores para los muertos." I had nothing else to say, just that. I sat around waiting all night. "Flores para los muertos. Flores para los muertos." I couldn't say it. Now I can say it. It's pathetic. Muertos. I couldn't say muertos. It wouldn't come out. I ended up saying, "Flores para los dead people." Blanche DuBois accused me of sabotaging her performance. All she wanted me to do was to say the line right. That's what I was not getting paid to do. And Jonathon made me feel so... You know, why don't I just leave him? I really should just leave him.

**Spike Heels** -Theresa Rebeck

**LYDIA:** I don't know you. You and I have never met. And you are wreaking havoc on my life. At first, I admired Andrew's interest in your welfare. He cares about people; he truly cares and I think that's wonderful. But these past few months, I must admit, I have become less interested in his interest. Not only do I listen to him talk about you incessantly, any time I come over to have dinner or spend the night here, I am bombarded by you. When you come home at night, we hear your little heels clicking on the ceiling. When you leave in the morning, we hear your little heels. When you go to bed we hear you brush your teeth and talk on the phone, and listen to the radio and on certain evenings I could swear that we can even hear you undress. I am not enjoying this. For the past two months, I have been under the distinct impression that any time I spend the night here, I am actually sleeping with two people- Andrew, and yourself. In fact, when you came home with Edward tonight my first thought was, my God, the bed is already crowded enough; now we have to fit Edward in too? Now. I don't know what went on between you and Andrew. I want you out of my life! Is that understood?

**Spike Heels** -Theresa Rebeck

**GEORGIE:** I understand you all right. This part, I think I got down solid. But what I don't have, you know- what I want to know is- if you're so fucking real, Lydia, then what the hell are you doing here? I mean, if you're so much better than me, then why even bother? You could just wait it out and I'll drift away like a piece of paper, like nothing, right? 'Cause that's what I am. Nothing. Right? So why the fuck are you up here, taking me apart? What an amazing fucking now job you are all doing on the world. And I bought it! We all buy it. My family- they're like, all of a sudden I'm Mary Tyler Moore or something. I mean, they live in hell, right, and they spend their whole lives just wishing they were somewhere else, wishing they were rich, or sober, or clean; living on a street with trees, being on some fucking TV show. And I did it. I moved to Boston. I work in a law office, I'm the big success story. And they have no idea what that means. It means I get to hang out with a bunch of lunatics. It means I get to read books that make no sense. It means that instead of getting harassed by jerks at the local bar, now I get harassed by guys in suits. Guys with glasses. Guys who talk nice. Guys in suits. Well, you know what I have to say to all of you? Shame on you. Shame on you for thinking you're better than the rest of us. And shame on you for being mean to me. Shame on you, Lydia.

**Spike Heels** -Theresa Rebeck

**GEORGIE:** Yeah, right, he "gave" me the damn job. I fucking work my ass off for that jerk; he doesn't give me shit. I earn it, you know? He "gave" me the job. I just love that. What does that mean, that I should be working at McDonald's or something, that's what I really deserve or something? Bullshit. Fuck you, that is such fucking bullshit. You think I don't know how to behave in public or something?

Shit, I was a goddamn waitress for seven years, the customers fucking loved me. You think I talk like this in front of strangers; you think I don't have a brain in my head or something? That is so fucking condescending. Anytime I lose my temper, I'm crazy, is that it? You don't know why I threw that pencil, you just assume. You just make these assumptions. Well, fuck you, Andrew. I mean it. Fuck you.

I mean, I just love that. You don't even know. You've never seen me in that office. You think I'm like, incapable of acting like somebody I'm not? For four months I've been scared to death but I do it, you know. I take messages, I call the court, I write his damn letters. I watch my mouth, I dress like this – whatever this is; these are the ugliest clothes I have ever seen – I am gracious, I am bright, I am promising. I am being this other person for them because I do want this job but there is a point beyond which I will not be fucked with! So you finally push me beyond that point, and I throw the pencil and now you're going to tell me that that is my problem? What, do you guys think you hold all the cards or something? You think you have the last word on reality? You do, you think that anything you do to me is okay, and anything I do is fucked because I'm not using the right words. I'm, like, throwing pencils and saying fuck you, I'm speaking another language, that's my problem. And the thing is – I am America. You know? You guys are not America. You think you are; Fuck, you guys think you own the world. I

mean, who made up these rules, Andrew? And do you actually think we're buying it?

### **Cocktails at Pam's** - Stewart Lemoine

ESTELLE: No, I don't. I hate it. Actually, do you want to know what I really hate? I hate the fact that although I despise green pepper, everyone else alive seems to love it. I mean, it really doesn't bother me so much that I don't like the taste, because the reasons for that are certainly scientific or medical. No, what bothers me is that everyone else likes it and because they do, it is so much in evidence. On pizza, in salads....The other night I found some in stroganoff! Oh....yuck... And a myth has sprung up you know. People have said to me, "Well, if you don't like it just pick it out." But that's so stupid. Just because you pick it out doesn't mean the flavor's going to go away. Green pepper doesn't work like that. It is insidious and pervasive, like noxious fumes that kill you and your family while you sleep. Jesus, the way some people talk, you'd think it was parsley! I've even seen, yes it's true, green pepper that's been sliced cross-wise to make a sort of shamrock shaped ring. That's supposed to be decorative. Do you believe it? That's like making a garnish to make the bile really rise up in the throats of your dinner guests!

(Estelle looks at the others who are standing quite motionless)

Look, I know you all like green pepper and so you think I'm over-reacting. But what I'm trying to say is that acceptance of these foodstuffs can never be taken for granted. You can't assume it. It's not a given. No. This is something that has caused me a lot of unhappiness and I just don't want to go through that anymore.....I do like red pepper though. I want you all to know that.

### **Oleanna** - David Mamet

**CAROL:** The issue here is not what I "feel." It is not my "feelings," but the feelings of women. And men. Your superiors, who've been "polled," do you see? To whom evidence has been presented, and who have ruled, do you see? Who have weighed the testimony and the evidence, and have ruled, do you see? That you are negligent. That you are guilty, that you are found wanting, and in error; and are not, for the reasons so-told, to be given tenure. That you are to be disciplined. For facts. For facts. Not "alleged," what is the word? But proved. Do you see? By your own actions. That is what the tenure committee has said. That is what my lawyer said. For what you did in class. For what you did in this office. They're going to discharge you. As full well they should. You don't understand? You're angry? What has led you to this place? Not your sex. Not your race. Not your class. YOUR OWN ACTIONS. And you're angry. You ask me here. What do you want? You want to "charm" me. You want to "convince" me. You want me to recant. I will not recant. Why should I...? What I say is right. You tell me, you are going to tell me that you have a wife and child. You are going to say that you have a career and that you've worked for twenty years for this. Do you know what you've worked for? Power. For power. Do you understand? And you sit there, and you tell me stories. About your house,

about all the private schools, and about privilege, and how you are entitled. To buy, to spend, to mock, to summon. All your stories. All your silly weak guilt, it's all about privilege; and you won't know it. Don't you see? You worked for twenty years for the right to insult me. And you feel entitled to be paid for it.

**Oleanna** - David Mamet

**CAROL:** Why do you hate me? Because you think me wrong? No. Because I have, you think, power over you. Listen to me. Listen to me, Professor (pause) It is the power that you hate. So deeply that, that any atmosphere of free discussion is impossible. It's not unlikely. It's impossible. Isn't it? Now. The thing which you find so cruel is the selfsame process of selection I, and my group, go through every day of our lives. In admittance to school. In our tests, in our class rankings Is it unfair? I can't tell you. But, if it is fair. Or even if it is unfortunate but necessary for us, then, by God, so must it be for you. (pause) You write of your responsibility to the young. Treat us with respect, and that will show you your responsibility. You write that education is just hazing. (pause) But we worked to get to this school. (pause) And some of us. (pause) Overcame prejudices. Economic, sexual, you cannot begin to imagine. And endured humiliations I pray that you and those you love never will encounter. (pause) To gain admittance here. To pursue that same dream of security you pursue. We, who, who are, at any moment, in danger of being deprived of it. By the administration. By the teachers. By you. By, say, one low grade, that keeps us out of graduate school; by one, say, one capricious or inventive answer on our parts, which, perhaps, you don't find amusing. Now you know, do you see? What it is to be subject to that power. Who do you think I am? To come here and be taken in by a smile. You little yapping fool. You think I want revenge. I don't want revenge. I WANT UNDERSTANDING.

**Wit** - Margaret Edson

**DR. VIVIAN BEARING:** That certainly was a maudlin display. Popsicles? "Sweetheart"? I can't believe my life has become so...corny. But it can't be helped. I don't see any other way. We are discovering life and death, and not in the abstract, either; we are discussing my life and my death, and my brain is dulling, and poor Susie's was never very strong to begin with, and I can't conceive of any other...tone. (Quickly) Now is not the time for verbal swordplay, for unlikely flights of imagination and wildly shifting perspectives, for metaphysical conceit, for wit. And nothing would be worse than a detailed scholarly analysis. Erudition. Interpretation. Complication. (Slowly) Now is a time for simplicity. Now is a time for, dare I say

it, kindness. (Searchingly) I thought being extremely smart would take care of it.  
But I see that I have been found out. Ooohhh.  
I'm scared. Oh, God. I want...I want...No. I want to hide. I just want to curl up into a little ball.

### **A Bright Room Called Day** - Tony Kushner

**ZILLAH:** Dear Mr. President,

I know you will never read this letter. I'm fully aware of the fact that letters to you don't even make it to the White House, that they're brought to an office building in Maryland where civil-servant types are paid to answer the sane ones. Crazy, hostile letters - like mine - the ones written in crayon on butcher paper, the ones made of letters cut out of magazines - these get sent to the FBI, analyzed, Xeroxed and burned. But I send them anyway, once a day, and do you know why? Because the loathing I pour into these pages is so ripe, so full-to-bursting, that it is my firm belief that anyone touching them will absorb into their hands some of the toxic energy contained therein. This toxin will be passed upwards - it is the nature of bureaucracies to pass things vertically - till eventually, through a network of handshakes, the Under-Secretary of Outrageous Falsehoods will shake hands with the Secretary for Pernicious Behavior under the Cloak of Night, who will, on a weekly basis in Cabinet meetings, shake hands with you before you nod off to sleep. In this way, through osmosis, little droplets of contagion are being rubbed into your leathery flesh every day - in this great country of ours there must be thousands of people who are sending you poisoned post. We wait for the day when all the grams and drams and dollops of detestation will destroy you. We attack from below. Our day will come. You can try to stop me. You can raise the price of stamps again. I'll continue to write. I'm saving up for a word processor. For me and my cause, money is no object.

Love,Zillah

### **Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**HARPER:** I feel better, I do, I...feel better. There are ice crystals in my lungs, wonderful and sharp. And the snow smells like cold, crushed peaches. And there's something... some current of blood in the wind, how strange, it has that iron taste. Where am I? (looking around, then realizing) Antarctica. This is Antarctica! Oh boy oh boy, LOOK at this, I... Wow, I must've really snapped the tether, huh? I want to stay here forever. Set up camp. Build things. Build a city, an enormous city made up of frontier forts, dark wood and green roofs and high gates made of pointed logs and bonfires burning on every street corner. I should build by a river. Where are the forests? I'll plant them and grow them. I'll live off caribou fat, I'll melt it over the bonfires and drink it from long, curved goat-horn cups. It'll be great. I want to make a new world here. So that I never have to go home again. I can have anything I want here—maybe even companionship, someone who has...desire for me. There isn't anyone...maybe an Eskimo. Who could ice-fish for food. And help me build a nest for when the baby comes. Here, I can be pregnant. And I can

have any kind of baby I want. I'm going to like this place. It's my own National Geographic Special! Oh! Oh! (She holds her stomach) I think... I think I felt her kicking. Maybe I'll give birth to a baby covered with thick white fur, and that way she won't be cold. My breasts will be full of hot cocoa so she doesn't get chilly. And if it gets really cold, she'll have a pouch I can crawl into. Like a marsupial. We'll mend together. That's what we'll do; we'll mend.

### **Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**HARPER:** Night flight to San Francisco; chase the moon across America. God, it's been years since I was on a plane. When we hit 35,000 feet we'll have reached the tropopause, the great belt of calm air, as close as I'll ever get to the ozone. I dreamed we were there. The plane leapt the tropopause, the safe air, and attained the outer rim, the ozone, which was ragged and torn, patches of it threadbare as old cheesecloth, and that was frightening. But I saw something that only I could see because of my astonishing ability to see such things: Souls were rising, from the earth far below, souls of the dead, of people who had perished, from famine, from war, from the plague, and they floated up, like skydivers in reverse, limbs all akimbo, wheeling and spinning. And the souls of these departed joined hands, clasped ankles, and formed a web, a great net of souls, and the souls were three-atom oxygen molecules of the stuff of ozone, and the outer rim absorbed them and was repaired. Nothing's lost forever. In this world, there's a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead. At least I think that's so.

### **Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**HARPER:** People who are lonely, people left alone, sit talking nonsense to the air, imagining...beautiful systems dying, old fixed orders spiraling apart...

When you look at the ozone layer, from the outside, from a spaceship, it looks like a pale blue halo, a gentle, shimmering, aureole encircling the atmosphere encircling the earth. Thirty miles above our heads, a thin layer of three-atom oxygen molecules, product of photosynthesis, which explains the fussy vegetable preference for visible light, its rejection of darker rays and emanations. Danger from without. It's a kind of gift, from God, the crowning touch to the creation of the world: guardian angels, hands linked, make a spherical net, a blue-green nesting orb, a shell of safety for life itself. But everywhere, things are collapsing, lies surfacing, systems of defense giving way...This is why, Joe, this is why I shouldn't be left alone.

### **Assassins** - John Weidman

**LYNETTE:** I was like you once. Lost. Confused. A piece of shit. Then I met Charlie...I was sitting on the beach in Venice. I'd just had a big fight with my daddy about, I don't know, my eye make-up or the bombing of Cambodia. He said I was a drug addict and a whore and I should get out of his house forever. I went down to the beach and sat down on the sand and cried. I felt like I was disappearing. Like the whole world was dividing into two parts. Me, and everybody else. And then this guy came down the beach, this dirty-looking little elf. He stopped in front of me and smiled this twinkly devil smile and said, "Your daddy kicked you out." He knew! "Your daddy kicked you out"! How could he know? My daddy didn't tell him, so who could've? God. God sent this dirty-looking little elf to save a little girl lost on a beach. He smiled again and touched my hair and off he went. And for a minute I just watched him go. Then I ran and caught his hand, and until they arrested him for stabbing Sharon Tate, I never let it go.

### **How I Learned to Drive** - Paula Vogel

**LIL' BIT:** I never saw him again. I stayed away from Christmas and Thanksgiving for years after. It took my uncle seven years to drink himself to death. First he lost his job, then his wife and finally his driver's license. He retreated to his house and had his bottles delivered. One night he tried to go downstairs to the basement--and he flew down the steep basement stairs. My aunt came by weekly to put food on the porch--and she noticed the mail and the papers stacked up, uncollected. They found him at the bottom of the stairs. Just steps away from his dark room. Now that I'm old enough, there are some questions I would have liked to have asked him. Who did it to you, Uncle Peck? How old were you? Were you eleven? Sometimes I think of my uncle as a kind of Flying Dutchman. In the opera, the Dutchman is doomed to wander the sea; but every seven years he can come ashore--and if he finds a maiden who will love him of her own free will--he will be released. And I see Uncle Peck in my mind, in his Chevy '56, a spirit driving up and down the roads of Carolina--looking for a young girl who, of her own free will, will love him. Release him.

### **Crimes of the Heart** - Beth Henley

**BABE:** After I shot Zackery, I put the gun down on the piano bench, and then I went out into the kitchen and made up a pitcher of lemonade. I was dying of thirst. My mouth was just as dry as a bone. I made it just the way I like it, with lots of sugar and lots of lemon- about ten lemons in all. Then I added two trays of ice and stirred it up with my wooded stirring spoon. Then I drank three glasses, one right after the other. They were large glasses- about this tall. Then suddenly my stomach kind of swole all up. I guess what caused it was all that sour lemon Then what I did was? I wiped my mouth off with the back of my hand, like this? I did it to clear off all those little



beads of water that had settled there. Then I called out to Zackery. I said, "Zackery, I've made some lemonade. Can you use a glass?" But he didn't answer. So I poured him a glass anyway and I took it out to him. And there he was, lying on the rug. And he was looking up at me trying to speak words. I said "What?? Lemonade?? You don't want it? Would you like a Coke instead?" Then I got the idea- he was telling me to call on the phone for medical help. So I got on the phone and called up the hospital. I gave my name and address and I told them my husband was shot and he was lying on the rug and there was plenty of blood. I guess that's gonna look kinda bad. Me fixing that lemonade before I called the hospital. I tell you, I think the reason I made up the lemonade, I mean besides the fact that my mouth was bone dry, was that I was afraid to call the authorities. I was afraid. I - I really think I was afraid they would see that I had tried to shoot Zackery, in fact that I had shot him, and they would accuse me of possible murder and send me away to jail. I mean, in fact, that's what did happen. That's what is happening - 'cause here I am just about ready to go right off to the Parchment Prison Farm. Yes, here I am just practically on the brink of utter doom. Why, I feel so all alone.

#### **Pterodactyls** - Nicky Silver

**EMMA:** Hello everybody. I'm dead. How are you? I'm glad I killed myself. I'm not recommending it for others, mind you---no Dr. Kevorkian am I. But it's worked out for me. Looking back, I don't think I was every supposed to have been born to begin with. Of course the idea that anything is "supposed to be" implies a master plan, and I don't believe in that kind of thing. When I say I shouldn't have been born, I mean that my life was never all that pleasant. And there was no real reason for it. I was pretty. I had money. I was lucky enough to be born in a time and into a class where I had nothing but opportunities. I look around and there are crippled people and blind people and refugees and I can't believe I had the gall to whine about anything! I had my health---oh sure, I complained a lot, but really I was fine. And I had love! Granted the object of my affections was a latent, or not-so-latent homosexual as it turned out, who was infected with the HIV virus, who in turn infected me and my unborn baby---but isn't that really picking nits? I can never thank Todd enough for giving me the gun, because for the first time, I'm happy. The pain is gone and I remember everything.

#### **Raised in Captivity** - Nicky Silver

**BERNADETTE:** Can't we be honest, at last, for once? How long can we possibly pretend we're happy? A year? Many years? The rest of our lives, I suppose. But one more day will break me....

Go after her. We're strangers, really. You see a world in dreams and I don't want to. I have to

find some happiness in things, things I can touch, my things, my child, my skin. So go.[]I no longer need you. We've made so many compromises and told so many lies. I thought I only deserved crumbs—Don't worry, Kip. You'll have money. I'll see to that. You helped me escape, and more than that, you gave me what I wanted when I didn't know I wanted it. A child, the chance to do something right. But don't insult me with feelings. I think, I always knew, you didn't love me either. You simply hated your life as much as I hated mine. So can't we call things even and go our separate ways? You'll never be poor. I owe you everything. Here. (She holds out the tickets to Kip)

### **Laughing Wild** - Christopher Durang

**WOMAN:** I want to talk to you about life. It's just too difficult to be alive, isn't it, and try to function? There are all these people to deal with. I tried to buy a can of tuna fish in the supermarket, and there was this person standing right in front of where I wanted to reach out to get the tuna fish, and I waited a while, to see if they'd move, and they didn't—they were looking at tuna fish too, but they were taking a real long time on it, reading the ingredients on each can like they were a book, a pretty boring book if you ask me, but nobody has; so I waited a long while, and they didn't move, and I couldn't get to the tuna fish cans; and I thought about asking them to move, but then they seemed so stupid not to have sensed that I needed to get by them that I had this awful fear that it would do no good, no good at all, to ask them, they'd probably say something like, "We'll move when we're goddam ready you nagging bitch" and then what would I do? And so then I started to cry out of frustration, quietly, so as not to disturb anyone, and still, even though I was softly sobbing, this stupid person didn't grasp that I needed to get by them, and so I reached over with my fist, and I brought it down real hard on his head and screamed: "Would you kindly move asshole!!!"

And the person fell to the ground, and looked totally startled, and some child nearby started to cry, and I was still crying, and I couldn't imagine making use of the tuna fish now anyway, and so I shouted at the child to stop crying—I mean, it was drawing too much attention to me—and I ran out of the supermarket, and I thought, I'll take a taxi to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I need to be surrounded with culture right now, not tuna fish.

### **'dentity Crisis** - Christopher Durang

**JANE:** Well, a few days ago I woke up and I heard this voice saying "It wasn't enough." Then it started to come back to me. When I was eight years old, someone brought me to a theatre with lots of other children. We had come to see a production of Peter Pan. And I remember something seemed wrong with the whole production, odd things kept happening. Like when the children would 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 stagehands. There seemed to be an unlimited

supply of understudies to take the children's places, and then they'd fall to the ground. And the crocodile that chases Captain Hook seemed to be a real crocodile, it wasn't an actor, and at one point it fell off the stage, crushing several children in the front row.

Several understudies came and took their places in the audience. And from scene to scene Wendy seemed to get fatter and fatter until finally by the second act she was immobile and had to be moved with a cart. The voice belonged to the actress playing Peter Pan. 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 he says that Tinkerbell's going to die because not enough people believe in fairies, but that if everybody in the audience claps real hard to show that they do believe in fairies, then maybe Tinkerbell won't die. And so then all the children start to clap. We clapped very hard and very long. My palms hurt and even started to bleed I clapped so hard. Then suddenly the actress playing Peter Pan turned to the audience and said "That wasn't enough. You didn't clap hard enough. Tinkerbell's dead." Uh... well, and... and then everyone started to cry. The actress stalked offstage and refused to continue with the play, and they finally had to bring down the curtain. No one could see anything through all the tears, and the ushers had to come help the children up the aisles and out into the street. I don't think any of us were ever the same after that experience.

### **The Perfect Wedding** - Charles Mee

#### **MERIDEE:**

So, I find you at last, and it turns out that you're in love with Ariel?

I thought the next big event of my life would be getting married but now I see the next big event will be dying. Because it's over and you went so fast in the arms of someone else how could anyone ever trust love again when it can disappear so fast and leave me all alone forever I was thinking all this time: we're so important to one another and it turns out I was wrong about the biggest thing in my life how can I think I can be right about anything else? the time you came home from being away I said to you, "you've come home" and you said yes and I said but I don't think so I think you left two months ago and you are never coming back because when I called one time I felt something had happened I heard it on the phone and you said I don't know What don't you know? I don't know if I can come back. Because you've fallen in love, I said? What? Because you've fallen for another woman? Don't trivialize it, he said. it felt as though all at once the city had been bombed out the house had been burned down I asked him: Have you had a love affair? He said no. You've fallen for someone else He said no.

You've had a fling. A one night stand. My heart had stopped. No, he said. I said I don't believe it.

Believe what you want, he said. And now I've stopped breathing. And I think the truth is I always came last and I hate you for that and now I see I'm dying the only person I've ever loved in my life my life itself and now you're gone and I will never have you back and if you do come back I will say to you just go just go because you are always just leaving me every time you go away and come back you say you can't come back to me and I always felt from the very first, from the first night we spent together, the pain of your rejecting me. so go this time you are

going to leave me eventually I have always known it, so leave me now I've pursued you and pursued you and pursued you in every way for all these years and you have rejected me and rejected me and rejected me I have to rip you out of my heart but it just tears me apart like a rag you say I say these things to manipulate you but how can I manipulate you? when you stick a knife into an animal it will kick and jerk and cry out before it dies it can't help itself I keep waiting for my love for you to stop, to stop but it won't end and I can't bear it I miss being with you, just hearing you breathe holding you through the night if I would dare I couldn't help myself either pretending I didn't care turning over myself in bed, turning my back to you hoping you would see my behavior as a mirror of your own seeing you should turn back to me not giving you everything I could everything you wanted every single thing because you sweet sweet soul you had deserved every single thing in life you wished. And I so regret not finding a way to find you, instead of withdrawing from you - and so making you feel, I suppose, not loved, not pursued, not treasured not precious as I felt you were. Not giving you all the things I felt for you. And so I keep trying over and over to let you go, and even as I say that it takes my breath away to think that I would let go of the only person in my life I have ever loved so completely, you've been my life itself to me, that's what I find so hard to let go of and why, when I come close to letting go, it feels like the only death I'll die. And is this the way I'm going to feel the rest of my life? Or will it go away like a single breath?

**Doubt** - John Patrick Shanley

**MRS. MILLER:** You accept what you got to accept and you work with it. ... Well he's got to be somewhere, maybe he's doin' some good too ... Well maybe some of them boys want to get caught. ... That's why his father beat him. Not the wine. ... I'm talkin' about the boy's nature, nun. Not anything he's done. You can't hold a child responsible for what God gave him to be. ... But then there's the boy's nature ... Forget it then. Forcing people to say things. My boy came to your school 'cause they were gonna kill him in the public schools. His father don't like him. He come to your school, kids don't like him. One man is good to him, this priest. And does a man have his reasons? Yes. Everybody does. You have your reasons but, do I ask the man why he's good to my son? No. I don't care why. My son needs some man to care about him. And to see him through the way he wants to go. And thank God this educated man, with some kindness in him, wants to do just that.

**Are You Ready?** - David Auburn

**WOMAN:** I'm the food critic for the Times, and I've been anxious for some time now to get my claws into the throat of that pompous evil weasel of a restaurateur and rip him to absolute shreds for the benefit of my rather unusually loyal readership. I'm sorry. I'm not a vindictive person. I think I'm basically a decent person but I'd been watching people humiliating

themselves for a table at that place for months, and the restaurant sucks, honestly: their foie gras is dry, their lapin en crouete a l'Aubergine tastes like something my cat coughed up when it had the flu last winter, their wine list is emaciated, their syphilitic pastry chef couldn't frost a cupcake if you held a gun to his mother's head... I'd been dying to get a crack at it but they wouldn't let me in, not even with a fake name. But tonight I was just walking by and I saw this nice-looking guy, just normal looking, not a big celeb or anything- he was waiting a table, so I thought, Why not me? Then I was offered a table and I leaped at it and now that supercilious creep is going to have a nasty surprise when he opens the paper tomorrow morning, I promise you. That does sound vindictive, doesn't it? I don't mean it to. I'm not a mean person. I'm just like anyone else. I like a decent meal. I like to rent a couple of videos and relax on a Sunday night. I like to drive up north for a weekend in the fall when the leaves start to turn. That sounds like a horrible personal ad, doesn't it? "Single Female, thirties, enjoys food film, and foliage, seeks single male twenties-thirties for a profound lifelong commitment"- Not that I'd ever ever write an ad like that- I'm not desperate, believe me, I'm fine. But all right, yes, I'd like to meet someone, I'd- I mean I meet plenty of people, At parties, or- Plenty of successful, brilliant, witty people- all right not plenty but some- and you try to be- but you know people get the paper, they read your stuff and you develop a reputation and even though you're just doing your job- like last month when I wrote that the new unbelievably expensive and pretensions sushi place downtown was enough to make an American feel a little less guilty about dropping the atomic bomb on Nagasaki- you can develop a reputation for, I don't know, harshness. And you start to wish you could make a clean break. You imagine what it would be like to meet someone totally new- like, I don't know, anyone- this guy here- just an attractive, well-dressed- I mean I'm not crazy about the tie, frankly, I would have gone with something a little less late-mid-eighties, but who cares? Doesn't matter. You have to be flexible. And you have to be ready: you couldn't plan it or hope for it. You would simply have to be prepared to recognize your chance when it came. When that person came along. I sometimes imagine something like that happening. Then I come to my senses and remind myself how unlikely that would be.

### **Fences** - August Wilson

**ROSE:** I been standing with you! I been right here with you, Troy. I got a life too. I gave eighteen years of my life to stand in the same spot with you. Don't you think I ever wanted other things? Don't you think I had dreams and hopes? What about my life? What about me? Don't you think it ever crossed my mind to want to know other men? That I wanted to lay up somewhere and forget about my responsibilities? That I wanted someone to make me laugh so I could feel good? You not the only one who's got wants and needs. But I held on to you, Troy. I took all my feelings, my wants and needs, my dreams...and I buried them inside you. I planted a seed and watched and prayed over it. I planted myself inside you and waited to bloom. And it didn't take me no eighteen years to find out the soil was hard and rocky and it wasn't never gonna bloom. But I held on to you, Troy. I held you tighter. You was my husband. I owed you everything I had. Every part of me I could find to give you. And upstairs in that room...with the

darkness falling in on me...I gave everything I had to try and erase the doubt that you wasn't the finest man in the world. And wherever you was going...I wanted to be there with you. Cause you was my husband. Cause that's the only way I was gonna survive as your wife. You always talking about what you give...and what you don't have to give. But you take, too. You take... and don't even know nobody's giving!

### **Reasons to be Pretty** - Neil LaBute

**CARLY:** I'm very attractive. I am. I've always been that way but it's no great big deal to me—if anything, it's worked against me for most of my life. (Beat.) It's about this (Points.) My face. I was born with it, people. That's all. I have been given this thing to wear around, my features, and I'm stuck with it. And yes, over the years it's gotten me things, I won't lie about that, dates and into clubs that I really wanted to get into or smiles from my father . . . but as I got older it suddenly became a kind of, I dunno what, but almost like a problem. A real bother that I don't have any control over. (Beat.) Listen, I'm not stupid, I know I should be thankful, that I should pray to heaven and be happy that I'm not scarred or missing an ear—I know girls who hate, I mean, despise their noses and mouths or the fact that their eyes are too far out on their faces . . . I don't have any of those problems and I'm happy about that. I look in the mirror and I see some beautiful woman looking back at me; my worst day, a line or two, a little pale or whatnot, but a really good face in there. Smiling. I'm not saying that I don't understand how I got lucky in many ways, I do get that, I do, I just want folks to comprehend that beauty comes with a price, just like ugly does. A different one, of course, and I'll take what I've got, but I've cried myself to sleep at night because of who I am as well, and you should know that . . . (Beat.) I hope my baby's OK,—did I mention that we found out it was a little girl? But I really hope she's no more than pretty, that's my wish. That she's not some beauty queen that people can't stop staring at because I'd hate that for her . . . to be this object, some thing that people can't help gawking at. 'Cause if she is—born like I was, is what I'm saying—if she ends up with a face that is some sorta magnet for men, the way I've been . . . I'd almost rather it was a situation where she was oblivious to it—not blind or anything, I wouldn't wish that on her, but close. Some sort of oblivion that gets pasted over her eyes so she can go about life and not be aware that people are cruel in many ways. . . not just with their words but with the ways they look at you and desire you and, and, and . . . almost hate you because of it. (Smiles.) I'm sorry, I didn't mean to get all heavy or anything, but I do think about it sometimes. My shift at work's kinda long, you know? It is . . . so I've usually got some time on my hands to, you know. . . whatever. Think, I guess.

### **Cloud Nine** - Caryl Churchill

**BETTY:** I used to think Clive was the one who liked sex. But then I found I missed it. I used to touch myself when I was very little, I thought I'd invented something wonderful. I used to do it to go to sleep with or to cheer myself up, and one day it was raining and I was under the kitchen table, and my mother saw me with my hand under my dress rubbing away, and she dragged me out so quickly I hit my head and it bled and I was sick, and nothing was said, and I never did it again till this year. I thought if Clive wasn't looking at me there wasn't a person there. And one night in bed in my flat I was so frightened I started touching myself. I thought my hand might go through into space. I touch my face, it was there, my arm, my breast, and my hand sent down where I thought it shouldn't, and I thought well there is somebody there. It felt very sweet, it was a feeling from very long ago, it was very soft, just barely touching and I felt myself gathering together more and more and I felt angry with Clive and angry with my mother and I went on and on defying them, and there was this vast feeling growing in me and all around me and they couldn't stop me and no one could stop me and I was there and coming and coming. Afterwards I thought I'd betrayed Clive. My mother would kill me. But I felt triumphant because I was a separate person from them. And I cried because I didn't want to be. But I don't cry about it any more. Sometimes I do it three times in one night and it really is great fun.

### Top Girls - Caryl Churchill

**GRET:** We come to hell through a big mouth. Hell's black and red. It's like the village where I come from. There's a river and a bridge and houses. There's places on fire like when the soldiers come. There's a big devil sat on a roof with a big hole in his arse and he's scooping stuff out of it with a big ladle and it's falling down on us, and it's money, so a lot of the women stop and get some. But most of us is fighting the devils. There's lots of little devils our size, and we get them down all right and give them a beating. There's lots of funny creatures round your feet, you don't like to look, like rats and lizards, and nasty things, a bum with a face, and fish with legs, and faces on things that don't have faces on. But they don't hurt, you just keep going. Well we'd had worse, you see, we'd had the Spanish. We'd all had family killed. My big son die on a wheel. Birds eat him. My baby, a soldier run her through with a sword. I'd had enough, I was mad, I hate the bastards. I come out of my front door that morning and shout till my neighbors come out and I said, "Come on, we're going where the evil come from and pay the bastards out." And they all come out just as they was from baking or from washing in their aprons, and we push down the street and the ground opens up and we go through a big mouth into a street just like ours but in Hell. I've got a sword in my hand from somewhere and I fill a basket with gold cups they drink out of down there. You just keep running on and fighting, you didn't stop for nothing. Oh we give them devils such a beating.

### Brighton Beach Memoirs - Neil Simon

**BLANCHE:** I'm not going to let you hurt me, Nora. I'm not going to let you tell me that I don't love you or that I haven't tried to give you as much as I gave Laurie . . . God knows I'm not perfect because enough angry people in this house told me so tonight . . . But I am not going to be a doormat for all the frustrations and unhappiness that you or Aunt Kate or anyone else wants to lay at my feet . . . I did not create this Universe. I do not decide who lives and dies, or who's rich or poor or who feels loved and who feels deprived. If you feel cheated that Laurie gets more than you, than I feel cheated that my husband died at thirty-six. And if you keep on feeling that way, you'll end up like me . . . with something much worse than loneliness or helplessness and that's self-pity. Believe me, there is nothing worse than human being who thrives on his own misfortunes . . . I am sorry, Nora, that you feel unloved and I will do everything I can to change it but I will not go back to being that frightened, helpless woman that I created! . . . I've already buried someone I love. Now it's time to bury someone I hate.

### **Brighton Beach Memoirs** - Neil Simon

**NORA:** Oh, God, he was so handsome. Always dressed so dapper, his shoes always shined. I always thought he should have been a movie star...like Gary Cooper... only very short. Mostly, I remember his pockets. When I was six or seven, he always brought me home a little surprise. Like a Hershey or a top. He'd tell me to go get it in his coat pocket. So I'd run to the closet and put my hand in and it felt as big as a tent. I wanted to crawl in there and go to sleep. And there were all these terrific things in there, like Juicy Fruit gum or Spearmint Life Savers and bits of cellophane and crumbled pieces of tobacco and movie stubs and nickels and pennies and rubber bands and paper clips and gray suede gloves that he wore in the wintertime. Then I found his coat in Mom's closet and I put my hand in his pocket. And everything was gone. It was emptied and dry-cleaned and it felt cold...And that's when I knew he was really Dead.

### **In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)** - Sarah Ruhl

**MRS. GIVINGS:** Do you want more children, Elizabeth? That is a tactless question, you don't need to answer, forgive me, sometimes I say whatever is in my head.

I want more children and my husband desperately wants more children but I am afraid of another birth, aren't you? When I have birth I remember so clearly, the moment her head was coming out of my body, I thought: why would any rational creature do this twice, knowing what I know now? And then she came out and clambered right on to my breast and tried to eat me, she was so hungry, so hungry it terrified me - her hunger. And I thought: is that the first emotion? Hunger? And not hunger for food but wanting to eat other people? Specifically one's mother? And then I thought - isn't it strange, isn't it strange about Jesus? That is to say, about



Jesus being a man? For it is women who are eaten - who turn their bodies into food - I have up my blood - there was so much blood - and I gave up my body - but I couldn't feed her, could not turn my body into food, and she was so hungry. I suppose that makes me an inferior kind of woman and a very inferior kind of Jesus.

**In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)** - Sarah Ruhl

**ELIZABETH:** My mother told me to pray each day since I was a little girl, to pray that you borrow everything, everyone you love, from God. That way your heart doesn't 'break when you have to give your son, or your mother, or your husband, back to God. I prayed, Jesus, let me be humble. I borrowed my child, I borrowed my husband, I borrowed my own life from you, God. But he felt like mine not like God's he felt like mine more mine than anything.

God must have this huge horrible cabinet - all the babies who get returned - and all those babies inside, they're all crying even with God Himself to rock them to sleep, still they want their mothers. So when I started to feel something for this baby, for your baby, I thought no, take her back God. When I first met her all I could think was: she is alive and Henry is not. I had all this milk - I wished it would dry up. Just get through the year, I thought. Your milk will dry up and you will forget. The more healthy your baby got, the more dead my baby became. I thought of her like a tick. I thought - fill her up and then pop! You will see the blood of my Henry underneath. But she seemed so grateful for the milk. Sometimes I hated her for it. But she would look at me, she would give me this look - I do not know what to call it if it is not called love. I hope every day you keep her - you keep her closer to you - and you remember the blood that her milk was made from. The blood of my son, my Henry. Good-bye, Mrs. Givings.

**Fading Joy** - Walter Wykes

**JOY:** [Looking up into the sky.] Hello? Mother Moon? It's me. Joy. Can you hear me?  
[Pause.] Hello? [Pause.] I know you're up there. I can see you, but ... you're so far away. Why are you so far away?

[Pause.] I just want to talk for a few minutes. Like we used to. Do you remember how we used to talk? It was such fun! What ... what was it we used to talk about? I've forgotten. Beautiful things, I ... I know that, but ... I can't ... I can't quite ... [Pause.]

I don't even remember how I got here. Isn't that strange? I know I came from someplace warm. Warm and dark. And water. There was water. I remember floating in the night sky ... or ... or deep in the ocean. And I remember voices. Big soft angel voices. They told me things. Secrets. They sang to me. Beautiful songs! About ... [Pause.]

I ... I can't remember what they were about anymore. I try, but ... they're gone. Won't you tell me, Mother Moon? Won't you whisper in my ear just one more time? Please?

[Pause.] Why won't you answer me? [Pause.] What have I done wrong?

**Marion Bridge** - Daniel MacIvor

**AGNES:** In the dream I'm drowning. But I don't know it at first. At first I hear water and I imagine it's going to be a lovely dream. Even though every time I dream the dream I'm drowning each and everytime I dream the dream I forget. Fooled by the sound of the water I guess and I imagine it's a dream of a wonderful night on the beach, or a cruise in the moonlight, or an August afternoon in a secret cove--but a moment after having been fooled into expecting bonfires or handsome captains or treasures in the weedy shore it becomes very clear that the water I'm hearing is the water that's rushing around my ears and fighting its way into my mouth and pulling me back down into its dark, soggy oblivion. No captains, no treasures, no bonfires for me, no in my dream I'm drowning. And then, just when it seems it's over--that I drown and that's the dream--in the distance, on the beach, I see a child. A tall thin child, maybe nine or ten. And his sister, younger, five. Then behind them comes their mother spreading out a blanket on the sand. It's a picnic. And beside the mother is the man. Tall. Strong. And broad shoulders good for sitting on if you're five, or even ten. Good for leaning on if you're tired, good for crying on if you're sad. And he's got his hands on his hips and he's looking out at the water, and he sees something. Me. And he reaches out and touches his wife's elbow who at that very moment sees something too and then the children, as if they're still connected to their mother's eyes, think they might see the same thing. And with all my strength--if you can call strength that strange, desperate, exhausted panic--I wave. My right arm. High. So they'll be sure to see. And they do. They see me. And then all of them, standing in a perfect line, they all wave back. The little girl, her brother, their mother and the man. They smile and wave. Then the mother returns to her blanket and the basket of food she has there, the man sits, stretching out his legs, propping himself up on one arm, and the little boy runs off in search of starfish or crab shells and the little girl smiles and waves, smiles and waves and smiles and waves. And then I drown. And that's so disturbing because you know what they say when you die in your dream. Strange. But stranger still I guess is that I'm still here.

### **A Streetcar Named Desire** - Tennessee Williams

**BLANCHE:** I, I, I took the blows on my face and my body! All those deaths! The long parade to the graveyard. Father, Mother, Margaret that dreadful way. So big with it, she couldn't be put in a coffin, but had to be burned like rubbish! You came just in time for funerals Stella. And funerals are pretty compared to death. Funerals are quiet, but deaths not always. Sometimes their breathing is hoarse, sometimes it rattles, sometimes they cry out to you, "Don't let me go!" Even the old sometimes say it- "Don't let me go". As if you could stop them! Funerals are quiet, with pretty flowers. And oh, what lovely boxes they pack you away in! Unless you were there at the bed when they cried out "Hold me" you'd never suspect there was struggle for breath and bleeding. You didn't dream, but I saw! Saw! And now you sit there telling me with your eyes that I let the place go. How in hell do you think all that sickness and dying was paid for? Death is expensive Miss Stella! And old Cousin Jessie, right after Margaret's, hers! The Grim Reaper put his tent up on our doorstep! Stella, Belle Reve was his headquarters. Honey, that's how it slipped through my fingers. Which of them left us a fortune? Which of them left us a cent of

insurance even? Only poor Jessie- one hundred to pay for her coffin. That was it Stella! And I with my pitiful salary at the school! Yes, accuse me! Sit there and stare at me, thinking I let the place go. I let the place go! Where were you Stella? In bed with your Polack!

### **Death of a Salesman** - Arthur Miller

**LINDA:** Then make Charley your father, Biff. You can't do that, can you? I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person. You called him crazy... no, a lot of people think he's lost his... balance. But you don't have to be very smart to know what his trouble is. The man is exhausted. A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man. He works for a company thirty-six years this March, opens up unheard-of territories to their trademark, and now in his old age they take his salary away.

Are they any worse than his sons? When he brought them business, when he was young, they were glad to see him. But now his old friends, the old buyers that loved him so and always found some order to hand him in a pinch--they're all dead, retired. He used to be able to make six, seven calls a day in Boston. Now he takes his valises out of the car and puts them back and takes them out again and he's exhausted. Instead of walking he talks now. He drives seven hundred miles, and when he gets there no one knows him anymore, no one welcomes him. And what goes through a man's mind, driving seven hundred miles home without having earned a cent? Why shouldn't he talk to himself? Why? When he has to go to Charley and borrow fifty dollars a week and pretend to me that it's his pay? How long can that go on? How long? You see what I'm sitting here and waiting for? And you tell me he has no character? The man who never worked a day but for your benefit? When does he get the medal for that?

### **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** - Tennessee Williams

**MAGGIE:** Oh Brick. I get so lonely. Living with someone you love can be lonelier than living entirely alone when the one you love doesn't love you. You can't even stand drinking out of the same glass can you? ... No! No, I wouldn't. Why can't you lose your good looks Brick? Most drinking men lose theirs. Why can't you. I think you've even gotten better looking since you weren't on the bottle. You were such a wonderful love. ... You were so exciting to be in love with. Mostly I guess because you were ... If I thought you'd never never made love to me again, why I'd find me the longest sharpest knife I could and I'd stick it straight into my heart. I'd do that. Oh Brick how long does this have to go on, this punishment? Haven't I served my term? Can't I apply for a pardon? ... Is it any wonder. You know what I feel like? I feel all the time like a cat on a hot tin roof.

### **Our Town** - Thornton Wilder

**EMILY:** Mama, I'm here! I'm grown up! I love you all, everything! I can't look at everything hard enough. Oh, Mama, look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mama! Wally's dead, too. His appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it - don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's really look at one another!...I can't. I can't go on. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back -- up the hill -- to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-bye , Good-bye world. Good-bye, Grover's Corners....Mama and Papa. Good-bye to clocks ticking....and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new ironed dresses and hot baths....and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you are too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it--every, every minute? (beat) I'm ready to go back.

### **A Raisin in the Sun** - Lorraine Hansberry

**BENEATHA:** Me?...Me?...Me, I'm nothing...Me. When I was very small...we used to take our sleds out in the wintertime and the only hills we had were the ice-covered stone steps of some houses down the street. And we used to fill them in with snow and make them smooth and slide down them all day...and it was very dangerous you know...far too steep...and sure enough one day a kid named Rufus came down too fast and hit the sidewalk... and we saw his face just split open right there in front of us... And I remember standing there looking at his bloody open face thinking that was the end of Rufus. But the ambulance came and they took him to the hospital they fixed the broken bones and they sewed it all up...and the next time I saw Rufus he just had a little line down the middle of his face...I never got over that...

That that was what one person could do for another, fix him up—sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world...I wanted to do that. I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that a human being could do. Fix up the sick, you know—and make them whole again. This was truly being God.

No—I wanted to cure. It used to be so important to me. I wanted to cure. It used to matter. I used to care. I mean about people and how their bodies hurt...  
I think I stopped.

### **Long Day's Journey Into Night** - Eugene O'Neill

**MARY:** I have to take it because there is no other that can stop the pain - all of the pain - I mean, in my hands. Poor hands! You'd never believe it, but they were once one of my god points, along with my hair and eyes, and I had a fine figure too. They were a musician's hands. I used to love the piano. I worked so hard at my music in the Convent - if you can call it work when you do something you love. Mother Elizabeth and my music teacher both said I had more talent than any student they remembered. My father paid for special lessons. He spoiled me. He

would do anything I asked. He would have sent me to Europe to study after I graduated from the Convent. I might have gone - if I hadn't fallen in love with Mr. Tyrone. or I might have become a nun. I had two dreams. To be a nun, that was the more beautiful one. To become a concert pianist, that was the other. I haven't touched a piano in so many years. I couldn't play with such crippled fingers, even if I wanted to. For a time after my marriage I tried to keep up my music. But it was hopeless. One-night stands, cheap hotels, dirty trains, leaving children, never having a home - See, Cathleen, how ugly they are! So maimed and crippled! You would think they'd been through some horrible accident! So they have, come to think of it. I won't look at them. They're worse than the foghorn for reminding me - But even they can't touch me now. They're far away. I see them, but the pain has gone.

### **The House of Bernarda Alba** - Federico García Lorca

**ADELA:** He loves me, he loves me. That's why you don't want me to see him. You don't care if he embraces someone he doesn't love. Nor do I. He can live with Angustias for a hundred years. But it's him embracing me that's so terrible for you, because you love him, you love him too! Martirio, Martirio, it's not my fault. There's no remedy here. Whoever must drown will drown. Pepe el Romano is mine. He will take me to the rushes by the shore. I can't stand the horror of living under this roof having tasted the sweetness of his mouth. I'll be whatever he wants me to be. With the whole village against me; scorched by their tongues of fire, hounded by those who call themselves decent people, I'll stand before them all with a crown of thorns on my brow, the one that a woman loved by a married man wears. Yes, yes. (Quietly) Let's go to sleep, let him marry Angustias. I don't care. I'll go and live in a little house all by myself, where he can see me whenever he wants, when need overcomes him.

### **Blood Wedding** - Federico García Lorca

**BRIDE:** Because I ran with another, I ran! You too, you would have gone. I was a woman on fire, wounded inside and out, and your son was a stream of water that could give me sons, land, health; but the other was a dark river, filled with branches, that brought me the murmur of its reeds, and its song between clenched teeth. And I went with your son who was like a child born of water, cold, while the other sent flocks of birds that prevented me walking, and sent frost into the wounds of a poor withered woman, a girl scorched by the flames. I did not want it. Listen to me! I did not want it. Do you hear? I did not want it. Your son was my goal, and I did not betray him, but the other seized me in his arms like a wave of the sea, struck me like the kick of a mule, and I must be dragged along forever, forever, forever, forever, even if I had been old and all your son's sons had held me back by the hair!

# **MEN:**

## **Snakebit** - David Marshall Grant

**JONATHAN:** I can't believe you never told me you slept with my wife three months before I was married. Don't say anything. I don't want you to say anything. I just think there's been too many secrets at the table, that's all. I don't want any more secrets, okay. I'm out in the hallway, you're in the kitchen. God, I miss you Michael. I want us to be closer. I need you, really. Please. I'm going to a shrink, okay? I'm going to cure myself. I have to. Nobody likes me anymore. She'll come home, I know she will. I mean, we've been married ten years, you make allowances. I'm a shit I admit it. But what nobody seems to give me credit for, is I hate myself. I accomplish a thing just to see how worthless it is. I know that. I eat myself basically. I keep winning, watching it prove nothing but my own failure. She's the only thing I didn't win, Michael. She took me. I don't know why. I have to keep her. We'll make up. We've been doing it for a decade. And if we can't, we'll bury it, like nuclear waste, and we'll move on. We've done it before. That's what people do. Do you remember when your mother died and I hugged you? I was a better person then. I want to help you. I'm sorry, I don't know what to say. You gotta feel snakebit. Michael, you're going to be fine. They know so much more now. I know you're going to be fine.

## **Buried Child** – Sam Shepard

**VINCE:** I was gonna run last night. I was gonna run and keep right on running. Clear to the Iowa border. I drove all night with the windows open. The old man's two bucks flapping right on the seat beside me. It never stopped raining the whole time. Never stopped once. I could see myself in the windshield. My face. My eyes. I studied my face. Studied everything about it as though I was looking at another man. As though I could see his whole race behind him. Like a mummy's face. I saw him dead and alive at the same time. In the same breath. In the windshield I watched him breathe as though he was frozen in time and every breath marked him. Marked him forever without him knowing. And then his face changed. His face became his father's face. Same bones. Same eyes. Same nose. Same breath. And his father's face changed to his grandfather's face. And it went on like that. Changing. Clear on back to faces I'd never seen before but still recognized. Still recognized the bones underneath. Same eyes. Same mouth. Same breath. I followed my family clear into Iowa. Every last one. Straight into the corn belt and further. Straight back as far as they'd take me. Then it all dissolved. Everything dissolved. Just like that. And that two bucks kept right on flapping on the seat beside me.

## **Laughing Wild**- Christopher Durang

**MAN:** The other night I dreamt my father was inside a baked potato. Isn't that strange? I was very startled to see him there, and I started to be afraid other people would see where my father was, and how small he was, so I kept trying to close the baked potato, but I guess the potato was hot, cause he'd start to cry when I'd shut the baked potato, so then I didn't know what to do. I thought of sending the whole plate back to the kitchen -- tell the cook there's a person in my baked potato -- but then I felt such guilt at deserting my father that I just sat there at the table and cried. He cried too. Then the waiter brought dessert, which was devil's food cake with mocha icing, and I ate that. Then I woke up, very hungry. I told my therapist about the dream, and he said that the baked potato represented either the womb or where I tried to put my father during the Oedipal conflict -- "what Oedipal conflict?", I always say to him, "I won, hands down." And then my therapist said my father cried because he was unhappy, and that I dreamt about the cake because I was hungry. I think my therapist is an idiot. Maybe I should just have gurus. Or find a nutritionist. But what I'm doing now isn't working.

**Laughing Wild** - Christopher Durang

**MAN:** I was in the supermarket the other day about to buy some tuna fish when I sensed this very disturbed presence right behind me. There was something about her focus that made it very clear to me that she was a disturbed person. So I thought - well, you should never look at a crazy person directly, so I thought, I'll just keep looking at these tuna fish cans, pretending to be engrossed in whether they're in oil or in water, and the person will then go away. But instead wham! she brings her fist down on my head and screams "would you move, asshole!" (Pause.) Now why did she do that? She hadn't even said, "would you please move" at some initial point, so I would've known what her problem was. Admittedly I don't always tell people what I want either - like the people in the movie theatres who keep talking, you know, I just give up and resent them -but on the other hand, I don't take my fist and go wham! on their heads! I mean, analyzing it, looking at it in a positive light, this woman probably had some really horrible life story that, you know, kind of, explained how she got to this point in time, hitting me in the supermarket. And perhaps if her life - since birth - had been explained to me, I could probably have made some sense out of her action and how she got there. But even with that knowledge - which I didn't have - it was my head she was hitting, and it's just so unfair. It makes me want to never leave my apartment ever ever again. (Suddenly he closes his eyes and moves his arms in a circular motion around himself, round and round, soothingly.) I am the predominant source of energy in my life. I let go of the pain from the past. I let go of the pain from the present. In the places in my body where pain lived previously, now there is light and love and joy. (He opens his eyes again and looks at the audience peacefully and happily.) That was an affirmation.

**Fat Pig** - Neil LaBute

**CARTER:** Dude, I understand. Like, totally. (Beat). I used to walk ahead of her in the mall or,

you know, not tell her stuff at school so there wouldn't be, whatever. My own mom. I mean ... I'm fifteen and worried about every little thing, and I've got this fucking sumo wrestler in a housecoat trailing behind me. That's about as bad as it can get! I'm not kidding you. And the thing was, I blamed her for it. I mean, it wasn't like a disease or like some people have, thyroid or that type of deal ... she just shoveled shit into her mouth all the time, had a few kids, and, bang, she's up there at 350, maybe more. It used to seriously piss me off. My dad was always working late ... golfing on weekends, and I knew it was because of her. It had to be! How's he gonna love something that looks like that, get all sexy with her? I'm just a kid at the time, but I can remember thinking that. Yeah, it's whatever, but ... this once, in the grocery store, we're at Albertsons and we're pushing four baskets around – you wanna know how humiliating that shit is? – and I'm supposed to be at a game by seven, I'm on JV, and she's just farting around in the candy aisle, picking up bags of “fun size” Snickers and checking out the calories. Yeah. I mean, what is that?! So, I suddenly go off on her, like, this sophomore in high school, but I'm all screaming in her face ... “Don't look at the package, take a look in the mirror, you cow! PUT 'EM DOWN!” Holy shit, there's stock boys – bunch of guys I know, even – are running down the aisle. Manager stumbling out of his glass booth there, the works. (Beat) But you know what? She doesn't say a word about it. Ever. Not about the swearing, the things I called her, nothing. Just this, like, one tear I see ... as we're sitting at a stoplight on the way home. That's all

### **The Amen Corner** – James Baldwin

**DAVID:** You think I want to hate you, Mama? You think it don't tear me to pieces to have to lie to you all the time. Yes, because I been lying to you, Mama, for a long time now! I don't want to keep on feeling so bad inside that I have to go running down them alleys you was talking about — that alley right outside this door! — to find something to help me hide — from what I'm feeling. I want to be man. It's time you let me be a man. You got to let me go. (A pause.) If I stayed here — I'd end up worse than Daddy — because I wouldn't be doing what I know I got to do — I got to do! I've seen your life — and now I see Daddy — and I love you, I love you both! — but I've got my work to do, something . . . Every time I play, every time I listen, I see Daddy's face and yours, and so many faces — who's going to speak for all that, Mama? Who's going to speak for all of us? I can't stay home. Maybe I can say something — one day — maybe I can say something in music that's never been said before. Mama — you knew this day was Coming.

### **Balm in Gilead** - Lanford Wilson



**DOPEY:** You know, though, what – I was thinking what she said; before that, about the cockroaches and all upstairs and she's right, it's a crawling bughouse up there; what really gripes me, she mentioned all the roaches playing like games on the floor up there. A roach's attitude just gripes the hell out of me. But what burns me, I've been reading up, not recently, but I saw it somewhere where not only was the roach – that same, exact, goddamn roach that we know – not only were they around about two million years before man, you know, before we came along: Anthropologists or whatever, geologists over in Egypt or somewhere, looking for the first city, they dug down through a city, and straight on down through another, you know, they're piled up like a sandwich or in layers like a seven-layer cake. And they cut down, down through one century to the one before it and the one before that, and every one they found more goddamned cockroaches than anything, and they got before man ever existed and like in the basement of the whole works, there those damn bugs still were, so they've been around, like I said for about a million years before we came along. But not only that! They've made tests, and they found out that a roach can stand – if there was going to be a big atom explosion, they can stand something like fourteen times as much radio-whatever-it-is, you-know-activity as we can. So after every man, woman, and child is wiped out and gone, like you imagine, those same goddamn cockroaches will be still crawling around happy as you please over the ruins of everything. Now the picture of that really gripes my ass.

#### **Balm in Gilead** - Lanford Wilson

**FICK:** I mean, I was just walking down the street and they came up on me like they was important, and they start pushing me around, you know. And they pushed me into this alley, not an alley, but this hallway and back down the end of that to this dark place at the end of the hallway and they start punching at me, and I just fell into this ball on the floor so they couldn't hurt me or nothing. But if I came down there with a couple of fighters, a couple of guys, like my friends, it wouldn't have to be you or anything, but just a couple or three guys, big guys, like walking down the street, you know. Just so they could see I got these buddies here. See I'm on H, I mean, I'm flying and I gotta talk man, but I'm serious now; just a few guys and they'd leave me be, maybe, because they'd think I had these buddies that looked after me, you know; cause I – you know – they kicked me up, if I wasn't on H, man, they'd be pains all through me – you know – walking down the street by myself – I start looking around and wondering who's out there gonna mess me up, you know. I get scared as hell, man, walking down around here, I mean, I can't protect myself or nothing, man. You know what I mean? You know what I mean? You know what I mean? You know? I mean if I had these couple – of big buddies – fighters – you – you know – if I had a couple of guys – like – big guys – that - you know, there's like nothing – I could – like, if you walked around with these buddies, I mean you could do, man – you could do anything . . .

#### **Boy's Life** - Howard Korder

**PHIL:** I would have destroyed myself for this woman. Gladly. I would have eaten garbage. I would have sliced my wrists open. Under the right circumstances, I mean, if she said, "Hey, Phil, why don't you just cut your wrists open," well, come on, but if seriously ... We clicked, we connected on so many things, right off the bat, we talked about God for three hours once, I don't know what good it did, but that intensity ... and the first time we went to bed, I didn't even touch her. I didn't want to, understand what I'm saying? And you know, I played it very casually, because, all right, I've had some rough experiences, I'm the first to admit, but after a couple of weeks I could feel we were right there, so I laid it down, everything I wanted to tell her, and ... and she says to me ... she says ... "Nobody should ever need another person that badly." Do you believe that? "Nobody should ever ..."! What is that? Is that something you saw on TV? I dump my heart on the table, you give me Joyce Dr. Fucking Brothers? "Need, need," I'm saying I love you, is that wrong? Is that not allowed anymore? (Pause) And so what if I did need her? Is that so bad? All right, crucify me, I needed her! So what! I don't want to be by myself, I'm by myself I feel like I'm going out of my mind, I do. I sit there, I'm thinking forget it, I'm not gonna make it through the next ten seconds, I just can't stand it. But I do, somehow, I get through the ten seconds, but then I have to do it all over again, cause they just keep coming, all these ... seconds, floating by, while I'm waiting for something to happen, I don't know what, a car wreck, a nuclear war or something, that sounds awful but at least there'd be this instant when I'd know I was alive. Just once. Cause I look in the mirror, and I can't believe I'm really there. I can't believe that's me. It's like my body, right, is the size of, what, the Statue of Liberty, and I'm inside it, I'm down in one of the legs, this gigantic hairy leg, I'm scraping around inside my own foot like some tiny fetus. And I don't know who I am, or where I'm going. And I wish I'd never been born. (Pause) Not only that, my hair is falling out, and that really sucks.

### **Arcadia** - Tom Stoppard

**VALENTINE:** If you knew the algorithm and fed it back say ten thousand times, each time there'd be a dot somewhere on the screen. You'd never know where to expect the next dot. But gradually you'd start to see this shape, because every dot will be a mathematical object. But yes. The unpredictable and the predictable unfold together to make everything the way it is. it's how nature creates itself, on every scale, the snowflake and the snowstorm. it makes me so happy. To be at the beginning again, knowing almost nothing. People were talking about the end of physics. Relativity and quantum looked as if they were going to clean out the whole problem between them. A theory of everything. But they only explained the very big and the very small. The universe, the elementary particles. The ordinary-sizes stuff which is our lives, the things people write poetry about - clouds - daffodils - waterfalls- and what happens in a cup of coffee when the cream goes in - these things are full of mystery, as mysterious to us as the heavens were to the Greeks. We're better at predicting events at the edge of the galaxy or inside the nucleus of an atom than whether it'll rain on auntie's garden party three Sundays from now. Because the problem turns out to be different. We can't even predict the net drip from a dripping tap when it gets irregular. Each drip sets up the conditions for the next, the smallest variation blows prediction apart, and the weather is unpredictable the same way, will always be

unpredictable. When you push the numbers through the computer you can see it on the screen. The future is disorder. A door like this has cracked open five or six times since we got up on our hind legs. It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong.

### **Fences** - August Wilson

**CORY:** You talking about what you did for me... what'd you ever give me? You ain't never gave me nothing. You ain't never done nothing but hold me back. Afraid I was gonna be better than you. All you ever did was try and make me scared of you. I used to tremble every time you called my name. Every time I heard your footsteps in the house. Wondering all the time... what's Papa gonna say if I do this?... What's he gonna say if I do that?... What's he gonna say if I turn on the radio? And Mama, too... she tries... but she's scared of you. I don't know how she stand you... after what you did to her. What you gonna do... give me a whupping? You can't whup me no more. You're too old. You're just an old man.

### **Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**LOUIS:** I ... don't know what to do anymore, I ... Last week at work I screwed up the Xerox machine like permanently and so I ... then I tripped on the subway steps and my glasses broke and I cut my forehead, here, see, and now I can't see much and my forehead ... it's like the Mark of Cain, stupid, right, but it won't heal and every morning I see it and I think, Biblical things, Mark of Cain, Judas Iscariot and his silver and his noose, people who ... in betraying what they love betray what's truest in themselves, I feel ... nothing but cold for myself, just cold, and every night I miss him, I miss him so much but then ... those sores, and the smell and ... where I thought it was going ... I could be ... I could be sick too, maybe I'm sick too. I don't know. Tell him I love him. Can you do that?

### **Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**JOE:** When I pray, I pray for God to crush me, break me up into little pieces and start all over again. I had a book of Bible stories when I was a kid. There was a picture I'd look at twenty times every day: Jacob wrestles with the angel. I don't really remember the story, or why the wrestling—just the picture. Jacob is young and very strong. The angel is ... a beautiful man, with golden hair and wings, of course. I still dream about it. Many nights. I'm ... It's me. In that struggle. Fierce, and unfair. The angel is not human, and it holds nothing back, so how could any human win, what kind of a fight is that? It's not just. Losing means your soul thrown down in the dust, your heart torn out from God's. But you can't not lose.

**Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**ROY:** You know your problem, Henry, is that you are hung up on words, on labels, that you believe they mean what they seem to mean. AIDS. Homosexual. Gay. Lesbian. You think these are names that tell you who someone sleeps with, but they don't tell you that. No. Like all labels they tell you one thing and one thing only: where does an individual so identified fit in the food chain, in the pecking order? Not ideology, or sexual taste, but something much simpler: clout. Not who I fuck or fucks me, but who will pick up the phone when I call, who owes me favors. This is what a label refers to. Now to someone who does not understand this, homosexual is what I am because I have sex with men. But really this is wrong. Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men. Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot get a pissant anti discrimination bill through City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. Does this sound like me, Henry? No. I have clout. A lot. I don't want you to be impressed. I want you to understand. This is not sophistry. And this is not hypocrisy. This is reality. I have sex with men. But unlike nearly every other man of whom this is true, I bring the guy I'm screwing to the White House and President Reagan smiles at us and shakes his hand. Because what I am is defined entirely by who I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man, Henry, who fucks around with guys. AIDS is what homosexuals have. I have liver cancer.

**Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**PRIOR:** Companionship. Oh.

You know just when I think he couldn't possibly say anything to make it worse, he does.

Companionship. How good. I wouldn't want you to be lonely.

There are thousands of gay men in New York City with AIDS and nearly every one of them is being taken care of by ... a friend or by ... a lover who has stuck by them through things worse than my ... So far. Everyone got that, except me. I got you. Why? What's wrong with me? Louis? Are you really bruised inside?

Answer me: Inside: Bruises? Come back to me when they're visible. I want to see black and blue, Louis, I want to see blood. Because I can't believe you even have blood in your veins until you show it to me. So don't come near me again, unless you've got something to show.

**Angels in America** - Tony Kushner

**PRIOR:** I'm ready for my close-up Mr. DeMille.

One wants to move through life with elegance and grace, blossoming infrequently, but

with exquisite taste, and perfect timing. Like a rare bloom, a zebra orchid. ... One wants. ... But one so seldom gets what one wants, does one? No. One does not. One gets fucked. Over. One ... dies at thirty, robbed of ... decades of majesty. Fuck this shit. Fuck this shit. I look like a corpse. a corpse. Oh my queen; you know you've hit rock-bottom when even drag is a drag.

### **A Chorus Line** - James Kirkwood Jr. & Nicholas Dante

**PAUL:** Well, we were doing this oriental number and I looked like Cyd Charisse. Oh, oh, Anna May Wong, Anna May Wong. I had these two great big chrysanthemums on either side my head and a huge headdress with gold balls hanging all over it. I was going on for the finale and going down the stairs and who should I see standing by the stage door ... my parents. They got there too early. I freaked. I didn't know what to do. I thought to myself : "I know, I'll just walk quickly past them like all the others and they'll never recognize me." So I took a deep breath and started down the stairs and just as I passed my mother I heard her say : "Oh, my God." Well... I died. But what could I do? I had to go on for the finale so I just kept going. After the show I went back to my dressing room and after I'd finished dressing and taking my makeup off, I went back down stairs. And there they were, standing in the middle of all these ... And all they said to me was "Please write, make sure you eat and take care of yourself." And just before my parents left, my father turned to the producer and said, "Take care of my son." That was the first time he ever called me that... I... ah... I... ah.... (breaks down)

### **Big Love** - Charles Mee

**GIULIANO:** The wedding presents have come now that everyone knows where to find you. Frankly, I've never seen so many gifts so much silver so many white things so much satin ribbon. Do you think we could save the ribbon? Because I wouldn't mind having the ribbon I haven't taken any yet I was going to ask you if you don't want it because I have a collection of Barbies and Kens and this ribbon would go with the whole ensemble so perfectly this ensemble that I have they are all arrayed together with their hands up in the air because they are doing the firewalking ceremony and Barbie has her pink feather boa and her lime green outfit with the flowers at the waist and the gold bow at the bodice and Ken is doing the Lambada so of course they all have mai tais and they're just having a wonderful time and their convertible is parked nearby so you know they can take off to see the sunset any time they want and when people come over and see my collection they just say wow because they can't believe I've just done it but I think if that's who you are you should just be who you are whatever that is just do who you are because that's why we're here and if it's you it can't be wrong. Some people like to be taken forcibly. If that's what they like, then that's okay. And if not, then not. I myself happen to like it. To have somebody grab me. Hold me down. To know they have to have me no matter what. It's not everyone's cup of tea. Everyone should be free to choose for themselves

### **Big Love**- Charles Mee

#### **GIULIANO:**

I knew a man once so kind and generous. I was a boy I was on a train going to Brindisi and he said, I'm going to marry you. He asked how far I was going. To Rome, I said. No, no, he said, you can't get off so soon, you need to go with me to Bologna. He wouldn't hear of my getting off in Rome or he would get off, too, and meet my family. He gave me a pocket watch and a silk scarf and a little statue of a saint he had picked up in Morocco. He quoted Dante to me and sang bits of Verdi and Puccini. He was trying everything he knew to make me laugh and enjoy myself. But, finally, he seemed so insistent that I grew frightened of him. He never touched me but he made me promise, finally, that I would come to Bologna in two weeks time after I had seen my family. I promised him, because I thought he might not let me get off the train unless I promised. He gave me his address, which of course I threw away, and I gave a false address to him. And when I got off the train, I saw that he was weeping. And I've often thought, oh, well, maybe he really did love me maybe that was my chance and I ran away from it because I didn't know it at the time.

### **Brighton Beach Memoirs** -Neil Simon

**EUGENE:** Let me explain Aunt Blanche's situation . . . You see, her husband, Uncle Dave, died six years ago from . . . (He looks around.) . . . this thing . . . They never say the word. They always whisper it. It was- (He whispers)-Cancer! . . . I think they're afraid if they said it out loud, God would say, "I HEARD THAT! YOU SAID THE DREAD DISEASE! -(He points finger down.) JUST FOR THAT, I SMITE YOU DOWN WITH IT!!" . . . There are some things that grown-ups just won't discuss . . . For example, my grandfather. He died from (He whispers) Diphtheria! . . . Anyway, after Uncle Dave died, he left Aunt Blanche with no money. And she couldn't support herself because she has (He whispers.) Asthma . . . So my big-hearted mother insisted we take her and her kids in to live with us. My father thought it would just be temporary but it's been three and a half years so far and I think because of Aunt Blanche's situation, my father is developing — (He whispers.)— High blood pressure!

### **Death of a Salesman** - Arthur Miller

**BIFF:** Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or

making phone calls, or selling or buying. To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. And still--that's how you build a future. Hap, I've had twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and now in Texas. It's why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it. This farm I work on, it's spring there now, see? And they've got about fifteen new colts. There's nothing more inspiring or-beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And it's cool there now, see? Texas is cool now and it's spring. And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I'm not getting anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty eight dollars a week! I'm thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin my future. That's when I come running home. And now, I get here, and I don't know what to do with myself. (After a pause) I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and everytime I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life.

#### **Death of a Salesman** - Arthur Miller

**BIFF:** Now hear this, Willy, this is me. You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was jailed. I stole myself out of every good job since high school. And I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody! That's whose fault it is! It's goddamn time you heard that! I had to be boss big shot in two weeks, and I'm through with it! Willy! I ran down eleven flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me? And in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I stopped in the middle of that building and I saw - the sky. I saw the things that I love in the world. The work and the food and the time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am! Why can't I say that, Willy? Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you! I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash-can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy! I tried seven states and couldn't raise it! A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it any more. I'm just what I am, that's all. Will you let me go, for Christ's sake? Will you take that phony dream and burn it before something happens?

#### **Death of a Salesman** - Arthur Miller

**WILLY:** Business is definitely business, but just listen for a minute You don't understand this. When I was a boy-eighteen, nineteen---I was already on the road. And there was a question in my mind as to whether selling had a future for me. Because in those days I had a yearning to go

to Alaska. See, there were three gold strikes in one month in Alaska, and I felt like going out. Just for the ride, you might say. Oh, yeah, my father lived many years in Alaska. He was an adventurous man. We've got quite a little streak of self-reliance in our family. I thought I'd go out with my older brother and try to locate him, and maybe settle in the North with the old man. And I was almost decided to go, when I met a salesman in the Parker House. His name was Dave Singleman. And he was eighty-four years old, and he'd drummed merchandise in thirty-one states. And old Dave, he'd go up to his room, y'understand, put on his green velvet slippers---I'll never forget---and pick up his phone and call the buyers, and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. And when I say that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eight-four, into twenty of thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people? Do you know? When he died---and by the way he died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven and Hartford, going into Boston---when he died, Hundreds of salesman and buyers were at his funeral. Things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that. See, in those days there was personality in it, Howard. There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear---or personality. You see what I mean? They don't know me any more!

### **Long Day's Journey Into Night - Eugene O'Neill**

**EDMUND:** You've just told me some high spots in your memories. Want to hear mine? They're all connected with the sea. Here's one. When I was on the Squarehead square rigger, bound for Buenos Aires. Full moon in the trades. The old hooker driving fourteen knots. I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern, with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white in the moonlight, towering high above me. I became drunk with the beauty and the singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself--actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged without, past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! To God if you want to put it that way. Then another time, on the American line, when I was lookout in the crow's nest on the dawn watch. A calm sea, that time. Only a lazy ground swell and a slow drowsy roll of the ship. The passengers asleep and none of the crew in sight. No sound of man. Black smoke pouring from the funnels behind and beneath me. Dreaming, not keeping lookout, feeling alone, and above and apart, watching the dawn creep like a painted dream over the sky and sea which slept together. Then the moment of ecstatic freedom came. The peace, the end of the quest, the last harbor, the joy of belonging to a fulfillment beyond men's lousy, pitiful, greedy fears and hopes and dreams! And several other times in my life, when I was swimming far out, or lying alone on the beach, I have had the same experience. Became the sun, the hot sand, green seaweed anchored to a rock, swaying in the tide. Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Like the veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For a second



you see--and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning! Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason! (He grins wryly) It was a great mistake my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a seagull or a fish. As it is I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!

### **Long Day's Journey Into Night** - Eugene O'Neill

**EDMUND:** God, Papa, ever since I went to sea and was on my own, and found out what hard work for little pay was, and what it felt like to be broke, and starve, and camp on park benches because I had no place to sleep, I've tried to be fair to you because I knew what you'd been up against as a kid. I've tried to make allowances. Christ, you have to make allowances in this damned family or go nuts! I have tried to make allowances for myself when I remember all the rotten stuff I've pulled! I've tried to feel like Mama that you can't help being what you are where money is concerned. But God Almighty, this last stunt of yours is too much! It makes me want to puke! Not because of the rotten way you're treating me. To hell with that! I've treated you rottenly, in my way, more than once. But to think when it's a question of your son having consumption, you can show yourself up before the whole town as such a stinking old tightwad! Don't you know Hardy will talk and the whole damn town will know! Jesus, Papa, haven't you any pride or shame? [Bursting with rage.] And don't think I'll let you get away with it! I won't go to any damned state farm just to save you a few lousy dollars to buy more bum property with! You stinking old miser --!

### **The Glass Menagerie** - Tennessee Williams

**TOM:** What do you think I'm at? Aren't I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of, Mother? You think I'm crazy about the warehouse? You think I'm in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five years down there in that celotex interior? With fluorescent tubes? Look! I'd rather somebody picked up a crowbar and battered out my brains than go back mornings. But I go. For sixty five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self- self's all I ever think of. Why listen, if self is what I thought of Mother, I'd be where he is, GONE I'm going to the movies! I'm going to opium dens, yes, opium dens, Mother. I've joined the Hogan Gang, I'm a hired assassin, I carry a tommy gun in a violin case. I run a string of cat houses in the Valley. They call me Killer, Killer Wingfield. I'm leading a double life: a simple, honest warehouse worker by day, by night, a dynamic czar of the underworld, Mother. On occasion they call me El Diablo. Oh I could tell you many things to make you sleepless. My enemies plan to dynamite this place. They're going to blow us all sky

high some night. I'll be glad, very happy, and so will you! You'll go up, up on a broomstick, over Blue Mountain with seventeen gentleman callers. You ugly, babbling old witch...