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Metastasis
By Gordon Pengilly

characters
multicast if desired
as below

MARTIN DEERBORN, BIKER, BARTENDER
CAROL DEERBORN, HELEN McCOO
HARDBALL, HEALEY, DR DOC HOLIDAY, JOGGER
TAMMY, TIGER, ALICE McCOO
THERAPIST, KEN McCOO, HORATIO THORPE
TRUDY, MARIA, HOOKER
KENNY McCOO, WAITER, SEBASTION DEERBORN
HOWIE McCOO, WADE, SHEP

A female cellist
staging

The play takes place in a ruined domicile of indeterminate size, age and rank in society. Whatever the story it's a woeful one: something has flung the house down: a bomb, a tornado, the Wrath of God...

People from several walks of life share the space, most of who never meet; this "house" holds a multiple of realities woven together.

The style is open and minimal and somewhat unnatural. For instance, the car in the last scene might be a piece of frame, a steering wheel, a front seat, a brake drum or two. It might be strewn where the driveway once was or up in a ravaged tree. Things have been upheaved. There might be an entrance through an earthquake's crack in the stage. Wade's sculpture might be made of debris from the fallen house.

When the actors and actresses aren't performing in their speaking parts they might appear as crowd or passersby or witnesses moving about in the playing space. There are no specific stage directions for this, this would be the director's call.

The cellist is omnipresent and invisible to others except in one scene where she appears as the character EuLaLa. She's sort of angelic, if slightly besmirched, dirty-faced, smudges on her knees, and she wears a tattered white dress. A wobbly halo above her head wouldn't be out of place. She plays cello as a transition device between scenes and to underscore certain passages at the discretion of the director.
(HARDBALL is just a shadow on the wall: baseball cap, long coat, cigarette in his mouth. DEERBORN's shirt is half undone and his suspenders dangle. TAMMY, in a nurse's uniform, has her panties in her hand and her arms around DEERBORN. They are kissing goodnight in a doorway)

HARDBALL (V.O.) You don't know me, Dr. Deerborn. We haven't been introduced to each other yet. But soon enough.

TAMMY (Breathlessly) G'night, Doctor.

DEERBORN Sweet dreams, Nurse.

TAMMY Of you. (She holds her panties up to her face like a veil and slips out the door with a little laugh)

HARDBALL (V.O.) I'm dying to get to know you, Dr. Deerborn.

(DEERBORN closes the door and leans against it)

At first you won't open up to me but gradually the door of your cage will loosen and you will open yourself wider and wider until you have all of me. Then we'll play some hardball. (Whispers) Dr. Deerborn?

DEERBORN Is somebody there? (He opens the door and looks. Nothing)
TWO

CAROL (Her bedside phone rings) Hello?

DEERBORN Did I wake you up?

CAROL I'm reading in bed.

DEERBORN That sounds cozy.

CAROL Where are you?

DEERBORN I'm calling from the car, the traffic is terrible. Don't wait up for me.

CAROL I've barely seen you all week.

DEERBORN It's been one of those weeks.

CAROL Maybe I want to wait up.

DEERBORN Really, Carol, don't. I'm completely done in tonight, and I'm grouchy and I'm...you know. (He smells his hand)

CAROL You missed dinner.

DEERBORN Didn't I tell you I had to stay late?

CAROL No.

DEERBORN I thought I did.

CAROL I made Italian.

DEERBORN Darnit! I'm sorry.

CAROL (Sexy) Guess where my hand is right now. (Pause) Martin, guess where my hand is right now. (Pause) Are you still there, Martin?
DEERBORN: Go back to your book, Carol. I'll talk to you in the morning. G'night.

CAROL: Sure. (They hang up) In the morning. CAROL tosses her book away and turns out the bedside lamp.

(A moment in darkness...)

HARDBALL (V.O.): Gently...gently open. Push!

(...then two loud blasts from a shotgun which ripple for several seconds after. The shots should shake the theatre)

HARDBALL (V.O.): It's begun.

THREE:

DR. DOC HOLIDAY: (In bloodspeckled greens and a cowboy hat. Cheerful) Over here, Mrs. Deerborn!

CAROL: (Approaching quickly) Where's my husband?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY: He's gonna be okay, Mrs. Deerborn, you can take him right on home. He's a very lucky man though.

CAROL: Thank God.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY: I'm Dr. Doc Holiday. We met at the last Christmas party. I was playin' the piano.

CAROL: Can I see him?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY: He's with a policeman - shouldn't be another minute.
CAROL | Why the police? What do you mean?
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DR. DOC HOLIDAY | What've you been told?
CAROL | I was told he drove off the road.
DR. DOC HOLIDAY | Oo. Maybe you better sit down.
CAROL | Out with it!
DR. DOC HOLIDAY | Somebody took a potshot at him on
the freeway, Mrs. Deerborn... commonly known as a drive-by
shooting. He wasn't hit, and that was good, it being a sawed-off
shotgun, Ma'am, but he's got a few bumps and bruises...
CAROL | Get out of my way!
DR. DOC HOLIDAY | Straight through there.

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FOUR

CAROL | Here, darling.

(She gives him a painkiller.
DEERBORN has his arm in a sling and a large bandage in the middle of his forehead)

DEERBORN | Thank you. It's good to be home.
CAROL | Can I get you something else while I'm up?
DEERBORN | No. Come sit by me.
CAROL | (Sitting on the sofa with him) Oh Marty ...why? Why YOU? What's the matter with this world?
DEERBORN | It's the work of the Devil, it's become deranged.
CAROL You could've been...(Bites her knuckle)

DEERBORN Go ahead and say it, Carol. I could've been killed. Shot in the head. My brains all over the—

CAROL Be quiet.

DEERBORN Upholstery.

CAROL Hush.

DEERBORN If I'd just come home for dinner none of this would've...

CAROL Ssshh. No, hush.

DEERBORN I feel terrible. The Mercedes was only two weeks old and now it's full of little holes.

CAROL The Mercedes can be fixed. (She puts her head on his shoulder)

DEERBORN OW!

CAROL Sore shoulder?

DEERBORN Yes!

CAROL I'll have Maria make up the spare room for you, Darling, you'll sleep better alone for a night or two.

DEERBORN I don't like the spare room.

CAROL Then Sebastion's old room.

DEERBORN I don't like that room either, I might not ever sleep again. (She strokes his hair) Carol, I saw the eyes of the one with the shotgun, I saw them aiming down the barrel at me. He looked so young...he was wearing a ski mask.
CAROL: He's an animal.

DEERBORN: I'll never forget those eyes.

CAROL: Oh Marty...

DEERBORN: And it's true what they say: my whole life flashed through my mind. I saw myself at different angles and ages like flipping through a photo album, and I think I saw the face of God. He looked like my old Aunt Izzy.

CAROL: The one who left you her cello.

DEERBORN: The spooky old hag, she's come back to haunt me.

CAROL: You've been traumatized, darling, it's going to take some time.

DEERBORN: I guess so.

CAROL: Sleep now? Somewhere?

DEERBORN: (Sighs deeply) I'll try to.

FIVE

MARIA: (Gently) Good morning, Dr. Deerborn.

DEERBORN: (Downcast) Good morning, Maria.

MARIA: I hope you are feeling much better today. Such an awful thing.

DEERBORN: I feel lousy. My head is banging.

MARIA: You sit there, I will bring you some coffee and the paper is there and I'm making your favorite
omelette, the old Spanish one from my grandmother's book. You like that one.

DEERBORN Where's Mrs. Deerborn this morning?

MARIA She went to see her friend today.

DEERBORN You mean her shrink. *(He sips his coffee)* The coffee tastes funny. What did you do to it, Maria?

MARIA It's the same as I always make it, Doctor.

DEERBORN It tastes funny.

*(The telephone rings)*

MARIA *(Answering)* Deerborn residence. *(Pause) Can I ask who is this calling please? *(Pause) One moment please. *(Then to him)* Dr. Deerborn, a young woman, she says her name is Tammy, don't talk unless you want to I'll say you're still in bed.

DEERBORN *(Beat)* I'll take it.

MARIA You don't have to if you...

DEERBORN Give me the phone and leave me by myself.

MARIA *Si*, Dr. Deerborn.

DEERBORN English, Maria.

MARIA Sorry, Dr. Deerborn...whenever I make that crazy omelette...*(She exits)*

*(Lights up on TAMMY)*

DEERBORN *(Quietly)* I told you never to call me here.
TAMMY (On the edge of tears) I had to!

DEERBORN Don't make a scene, Tammy.

TAMMY My poor, poor baby!

DEERBORN I'm alive, they missed me.

TAMMY WHO did?

DEERBORN What do you mean who? How the hell should I know WHO!

TAMMY (Short) Oh.

DEERBORN Do you think I KNOW who did it? Do you think there's somebody GUNNING for me, somebody's HIT MAN!

TAMMY (Quietly) Well you had that malpractice suit last month...

DEERBORN Thanks for phoning, Tammy, you've really made my day.

TAMMY Martin, I'm just—

DEERBORN Nothing ever happened between us, got that? No more goo-goo eyes, no more footsy tag! If you so much as glance at me again I'll have your stripes!

TAMMY Martin— (He hangs up on her) Wow.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY (Approaches w/ clipboard; more blood on his tunic) You look like your dawg died, Nurse.

TAMMY Don't drawl in my face, Holiday.

DR. DOC HOLIDAYWhatsa matter?

TAMMY Married men are so weird.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY I've got two tickets to a piano and cello concerto tonight. Champagne,
smoked salmon, snooty conversation...

TAMMY
I don't think so.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY
How 'bout some lunch?

TAMMY
I'm busy for lunch.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY
How 'bout some flippy-flop? You name the place.

TAMMY
Yeh yeh.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY
Just get a new dawg.

TAMMY
Sure. Simple.

(He walks away whistling the theme to High Noon. TAMMY smacks herself in the head)

I love smoked salmon!

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SIX

(In a fancy restaurant)

TRUDY
Serves you right.

TAMMY
What do you mean?

TRUDY
Oh, stop pretending.

TAMMY
Be nice to me, Trudy, I'm wounded.

TRUDY
I love you like a sister, Tammy, but you're stupid to think that a man like him could really care for a girl like you. To put it bluntly, you are, to men like him, as common as dirt is.

TAMMY
I've heard this all before.

TRUDY
Under their feet.
TAMMY  You're just jealous.
TRUDY   Here we go.
TAMMY  You've always been jealous of me.
TRUDY   This is going to get ugly.
TAMMY  Ever since highschool, all of my boyfriends, you always drooled over them like some kind of—
TRUDY   Ever since Grade Six you've always gone after the richest guys and then you act so smug about it.
TAMMY  I can't help it if classy men find me attractive.
TRUDY   Does LOVE ever enter the picture?
TAMMY  Sure. I love nice clothes, fancy restaurants, airplane tickets, hot sex...
TRUDY   You're shameless.
TAMMY  Don't preach to me about love! You don't love men you just wanna save them all like some kind of Salvation Army Daughter, just like you're doing with whatshisname that guy you've been bonking that biker with the big forehead.
TRUDY   Healey.
TAMMY  He was in jail once right?
TRUDY   A while ago.
TAMMY  You sure know how to pick them, Trudy, a biker with a record with one eyebrow. Gets me all wet.
TRUDY   He's a motorcycle mechanic.
TAMMY  Oo! And that's why you dropped out of nursing school and became a barmaid so you could hump a greaseball.

TRUDY  So what's so big about being a nurse?

TAMMY  The doctors are.

TRUDY  You mean were.

TAMMY  There's more where that one came from.

TRUDY  Psycho Tart strikes again.

TAMMY  Call me names that's your style - while you and your little family of Grim Reapers are finding homey contentment in the lower middle-class me and this built-for-fun body I'm in will be living in a big house with a swimming pool in Upper Mount Royal.

TRUDY  You and that "built-for-fun" body you're in are both a couple of cheap sluts.

TAMMY  (Quietly folds her napkin) I'm moving out of our apartment together, Trudy. I've been thinking about this for quite a bit longer than you might suspect and I've had it up to HERE with you. You're bitchy and petty and jealous and-

TRUDY  Good luck with your life.

TAMMY  Goodriddance. (She exits)

TRUDY  Tammy...?! (Big sigh)

WAITER  (Approaches) Could I...interest you in something else, Mademoiselle?
TRUDY Yeh. A smaller mouth and a new set of brains.

WAITER We have some beautiful sweetbreads.

TRUDY (Looks at him) What?

WAITER Sweetbreads.

SEVEN

(Two men gazing down at a motorcycle)

BIKER Diaphragm?

HEALEY Something like that.

BIKER Rocker arm.

HEALEY Link arm.

BIKER Maybe it's just a seal or a spring.

HEALEY Gasket?

BIKER Air jet?

HEALEY Acceleration pump.

BIKER Emulsion block.

HEALEY One of those.

BIKER Yup.

HEALEY Y'want me to pull it apart and have a look?

BIKER When could you?

HEALEY (Glances around the shop. Checks his watch) Sometime this afternoon?

BIKER Sounds good, Man. I'd do it myself
eh but ever since I chopped these fingers off I can't get into those littler places anymore.

HEALEY

Wounds make the man don't ever forget.

BIKER

I hear ya. (TRUDY enters) I'll go watch some pool down at my brother's clubhouse - maybe you could give me a call down there after you get it pulled apart. How'd that be?

HEALEY

Perfect. (To Trudy. Tentative) Hi there.

TRUDY

(Same) Hi.

HEALEY

I heard your brother got the crap beat out of him the other night.

BIKER

Yeh. (Laughs) Some guy who looks like Boris Karloff worked him over with a big metal chair. Same guy who pounded him out at the picnic last summer.

HEALEY

Oops.

BIKER

That's what I said.

HEALEY

(To TRUDY) He'll probably hire some guy from Montana to come up and shoot the guy now.

BIKER

That's exactly what I said. (To TRUDY) You can beat up my brother once but if you beat him up twice he'll probably hire some guy from Montana to come up and shoot you.

HEALEY

There's some kind of lesson in this.

BIKER

Violence is a good teacher. (Both laugh) Okay, Healey, just call me
down at my brother's clubhouse and that's where I'll be.

HEALEY
Okay, Stuart, I'll call you there, man.

BIKER
...It's Steven. My brother is Stuart.

HEALEY
Oh! Shit! I always get you two guys mixed up. (To TRUDY) They look so much alike y'know and they both ride the same kind of bikes and they both have body parts missing in action... (BIKER nods; shows missing finger)

BIKER
I'm thinking I should shave my beard off or grow my hair or something - Stuart is earning a lot of enemies lately.

HEALEY
Maybe you should buy a horse and get out of Dodge. (He laughs but BIKER doesn't)

BIKER
What do you mean?

HEALEY
It's a joke.

BIKER
(Beat) OH! (They both laugh hard) Okay, man. (Snaps his fingers) Later.

HEALEY
Talk to ya later, man.

BIKER
Nice meeting you.

HEALEY
That's Trudy. You met her at the picnic.

BIKER
Did I? Oh yeh! How's it goin'?

TRUDY
It's fine.

BIKER
(Laughing) ...get out of Dodge. (Exits)
TRUDY He's pretty funny.

HEALEY His brother's even funnier. *(He goes to work on the bike)*

TRUDY Healey...I came by to say I'm sorry for last night how I flew off the handle at you. I feel really bad about it.

HEALEY I called you at noontime but nobody answered.

TRUDY Did you leave me a message?

HEALEY It wasn't very big.

TRUDY I was having lunch with Tammy.

HEALEY How's Tammy?

TRUDY That's sort of the other reason why I'm here.

HEALEY Why's that?

TRUDY First tell me what the message was you left me.

HEALEY *(Stops working)* I said I didn't mean to say everything I said last night either. I said I was being a jerk. And I said I'm sorry about that hole in your wall and I'll patch it up after shop today.

TRUDY Those were nice things to say, Healey.

HEALEY I hate answering machines.

TRUDY I'd pretty much decided we'd broken up.

HEALEY Yeh. So did I.
TRUDY I thought that was it for us.

HEALEY Me too.

TRUDY Kaputski!

HEALEY So if you didn't get my message what made you come over here then?

TRUDY I dunno, the whole dumb day, stuff with Tammy...

HEALEY So what's this stuff about Tammy? (He starts working again)

TRUDY We had a big fight in the restaurant.

HEALEY Food fight?

TRUDY Pretty close to one.

HEALEY What about?

TRUDY The doctor dumped her.

HEALEY Big news.

TRUDY That's what I said.

HEALEY She's crazy to think that guys like him really care for girls like her.

TRUDY That's exactly what I said, and when I wouldn't let her cry on my shoulder about it we started arguing like a couple of lunatics. She said she was moving out of our apartment together and then she sashayed out of there.

HEALEY Doing the rumbabumba.

TRUDY It's been coming for a long time.

HEALEY No big surprise.
Damnit, Healey, we'd been attached at the hip since Grade Six. We had the same clothes and the same hair until we were seventeen, we both left town to go to nursing school together, we both lost our virginity to the same quarterback...

(Stops working) At the same time?

No. Same weekend though. And it's taken me the whole next decade to realize we're just plain sick of each other.

When's she moving out?

As we speak.

Adios.

Which brings me to the question of what I'm going to do for a roommate since I can't afford to live there alone and all the quarterbacks are already taken.

(Beat) Ohh nooo...!

Honey, listen to me, and don't get your shirt in a knot, you've been living like a hermit for far too long.

There's things about me you don't want to dwell under the same roof with, Trudy.

Healey...awwww...(Cuddling up to him)

No! And that's final.
Hi, Kenny.

(Smoking, leaning against a wall)

Hi, Tiger.

I haven't seen you around for a while, how's the summer going?

It's going.

Bum a smoke? (He gives her one from his pack) Are you joining up for track-and-field again?

I don’t know. Are you? (Lights her smoke)

No. My interests are changing. I guess I should tell you this, Kenny, I met this other guy. His name is Shep, short for Shepard. I think you'd like him though, he's really cool. He quit school and he owns his own car.

Kurt Cobain died.

Really? When?

Just now. Today. He shot himself.

Wow. (Pause) Wouldya like to go out with Shep and me somewhere? Just drive around, I don’t know. I mean can't we all be friends for a while, I mean none of us have had sex with each other yet.

(Shrugs) I'll think about it.

His father's in the Peace Keeping Forces somewhere.
KENNY: Oh yeh?

TIGER: Just call me sometime.

KENNY: I might.

NINE

THERAPIST: I haven't seen you for a month, Carol. What's going on?

CAROL: (Wiping tears away) I don't know where to start. (Yanks out a kleenex and blows her nose)

THERAPIST: We've known each other for a long time, you know you can tell me anything. Start at the top. Be brave.

CAROL: Well...after the drive-by shooting ...Martin began acting so strange.

THERAPIST: How?

CAROL: Strangely...I don't know...not himself, not the man I married - the kind man, the man contented with his life...the loving man.

THERAPIST: What did he become?

CAROL: Unkind. Discontented. Mean-spirited and suspicious and...

THERAPIST: Unloving?

CAROL: Yes.

THERAPIST: You feel unloved.

CAROL: Yes. And he fired the maid for no
good reason and he locked up his cello in the basement. He's gotten so paranoid.

THERAPIST Has he gone back to work?
CAROL He tried to.
THERAPIST What happened?
CAROL Oh brother...

(A beeping noise from some kind of monitor or machine fades up and into the next scene)

TEN

DEERBORN What does that look like to you, Holiday?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY (Happily covered in blood) Diaphragm?

DEERBORN Nurse...?

TAMMY (Cold) Yes, Doctor?
DEERBORN Swab that.

TAMMY Where?

DEERBORN All over in there, I can't see a damn thing for the blood. On the double!

TAMMY (Clicks her heels) Yes, SIR!

DEERBORN And keep your attitude to yourself.

TAMMY What attitude, Sir?

DEERBORN Swab! (She does) What the hell am I supposed to be looking for in here anyway?
DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Some kind of lump, a tumor.

DEERBORN  Where?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  What's that?

DEERBORN  Poke it with something.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Nurse...?

TAMMY  (Sweetly) Yes, Doctor?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Give me something to poke that with.

TAMMY  (More sweetly) Certainly, Doctor. How's this little thingy? (They play a little game of tug 'n war with the implement)

DEERBORN  Poke it!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Right. (He does) Hmm.

DEERBORN  Is it hard or soft?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Compared to what?

DEERBORN  Is it harder than a boiled egg or softer than a boiled egg?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  Would that be a hard boiled egg or a soft boiled egg?

DEERBORN  Give me that thing!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY  'tsall yours.

TAMMY  (Smartassed) Should I swab it, Doctor?

DEERBORN  Get your paws...! (He slaps her hand)

TAMMY  I was just...

DEERBORN  Shut up! (Beat) Are you bouncing her, Holiday?
DR. DOC HOLIDAY    Am I what?

DEERBORN    You heard me are you bouncing that nurse?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    I don't think that's any of your damn business, Doctor.

DEERBORN    You ARE bouncing her!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    Just because you did doesn't mean nobody else can.

TAMMY    Please don't fight over me!

DEERBORN    Do you like your residency at this here establishment, you little sonofabitch?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    No, Sir, I hate it.

TAMMY    Don't let him bully you, Doc-Doc.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    Don't worry, Tam-Tam.

DEERBORN    NO FIRST NAMES!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    He's losing it.

DEERBORN    THERE'LL BE NO FIRST NAMES IN THIS MAN'S SURGERY!

TAMMY    He's going to poke somebody with that.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    Give me that thing, Doctor.

DEERBORN    (Breathing heavily) Why? What's the matter? Why is everybody staring at me? I'm...I'm okay. I'm fine, I'm okay.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY    Dr. Deerborn...

DEERBORN    I SAID I'M FINE!
DR. DOC HOLIDAY      I'll finish up here, Sir - you go relax. Have a coffee. Unwind. Go home. Go to Arizona. (HOLIDAY holds out his hand and DEERBORN surrenders the implement) Thank you, Sir.

DEERBORN            (Beat) Carry on, Troopers. (He exits)

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Guess who's been working overtime in the old banana factory.

TAMMY                The gall of that man!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Give me a kiss. (They kiss) Gimme a little feel.

TAMMY                Not over an open body, Doc.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Who is this anyway? What's it say there?

TAMMY                (Reads from her ankle bracelet) Um... McCoo, Helen, Mrs.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Well McCoo Helen Mrs...what can we do for you today? (Rubs his hands together)

TAMMY                (Points) What's that?

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      That doesn't look good. Does it?

TAMMY                It doesn't look good to me.

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Let's take it out of'er then.

TAMMY                Do it, Doctor!

DR. DOC HOLIDAY      Make my day! (Pumps his fist. TAMMY squeals)

(The beeping noise fades)
ELEVEN

CAROL  After that episode in surgery administration stepped in and put him on rest leave. He's a very proud man and an excellent surgeon...

THERAPIST  How did he handle it?

CAROL  Oddly.

THERAPIST  What do you mean?

CAROL  Like a little kid home from school with a sore throat. He played with his train set. He colored. He built a big fort in the livingroom with some blankets between the sofa and the kitchen chairs.

THERAPIST  A form of denial, I've seen it before.

CAROL  The big fort?

THERAPIST  Everything, the whole condition. A retreat into the sanctuary of one's childhood-past as a way of avoiding one's adulthood, the demanding and terrible present. Isn't uncommon. (He writes something down in his pad) Then what happened?

CAROL  Our son Sebastion phoned from Morocco.

THERAPIST  Mm-hm?

CAROL  He's been abroad on an Arts Grant this past little while...he was having such a wonderful time over there I couldn't find the words, I didn't know how to break the news to him...
THERAPIST Nature's way. Shelter the offspring.

CAROL Not that he'd come rushing home anyway.

THERAPIST He wouldn't have?

CAROL He and his father...they have a few knots to undo.

THERAPIST And you and your son are still very close, are you not?

CAROL He's very...attached to me, yes.

THERAPIST (Leans forward) Mm-hm?

CAROL (Averts this) Well! Then Martin he, he started to fade away inside himself, slowly by degrees. He moped around the house in his boxer shorts, he slept curled up on the front room floor like the family dog, he whined at night. I didn't know what he needed. I felt something was going to cave in very soon.

THERAPIST And did it cave in?

CAROL Oh baby!

THERAPIST Get it all out.

TWELVE

(DEERBORN whines softly and paws at her leg)

CAROL (Lowers her book) What is it, Marty? Speak, Darling. Say something. Would you like to go outside?
DEERBORN  I have to come to grips with some things.

CAROL  I'm listening, Dear.

DEERBORN  I have to come clean, I...I can't live with myself any longer.

CAROL  Is this some kind of confession?

DEERBORN  (Nods) I guess so.

CAROL  Sit up. (He does) Well...? I'm ready.

(He takes a deep breath)

DEERBORN  I've come to believe in my just deserts. I don't know, maybe there is a God, and maybe this God dishes out retribution by manipulating certain events...

CAROL  Get to the point, Martin.

DEERBORN  Yes. (Clears his throat) I believe I was shot at that night because of my wanton behaviour.

CAROL  That malpractice suit?

DEERBORN  No, Carol, not that malpractice suit. That malpractice suit pales compared to this, this is important, momentous, tragic, kinda sticky...(Unconsciously smells his hand)

CAROL  (Grabs his ear) I want to know WHO and I want to know NOW.

DEERBORN  Ow! Ow! Ow!

CAROL  Tell me or I'll rip it off.

DEERBORN  A nurse! A nurse! Tammy!
CAROL (Twists harder) Which one is that?

DEERBORN At the Christmas party...the one who was singing...!

CAROL You mean the one who was trying to stick the big piano up her little dress.

DEERBORN YES! (She lets go - he rubs his ear)

CAROL Why, Martin? In God's name Why?

DEERBORN (Shrugs) Stress, release, excitement, danger, detachment... fear of impotency, fear of death. How do I know why.

CAROL How many others?

DEERBORN Nurses?

CAROL Oh Jesus...(She cups her hands between her legs and caves in around herself)

DEERBORN Yeh I know. I'm a dirty rotten scumbag. But I'm a dirty rotten scumbag who wants another chance. I'm fifty-five years old and I want the rest of my life to be different: clean and chaste and with you. I want to be forgiven.

CAROL I forgive you.

DEERBORN Do you?

CAROL Yes. In an abstract sort of way. Now go pack your bags and get the hell out of my life.
At one point, while he was packing up, I had a fit of conscience and I tried to take my anger back. He hadn't been well, perhaps I was being selfish, too hasty, I mean how would I feel if he jumped off a bridge or layed down in front of a train or blew his brains all out or something. I told him we could talk, I said don't go tonight, perhaps in the light of day...

And with what did he respond?

With nothing. He went right out the door and into the dark and was gone. Laughing. It chilled me to the bone; it didn't sound like the way he laughs, it sounded like somebody else's laughter inside of him.

Trauma, Carol, is extremely complex.

He's staying in a hotel by the tracks. Not a nice hotel either, a real seedy one, The Sandman. He LOVES nice hotels. And he took his GUN when he left.

This doesn't bode well.

No.

But you're still in touch.

No, not really, I...I hired a private detective to find him, watch over him - Oh God...this whole thing has gotten so out of control, I think I'm losing my
mind. So much has happened in such a short time, I...

THERAPIST I know you too well, my friend, you're leading me somewhere.

CAROL Am I?

THERAPIST Ladybug...

CAROL Yes. Yes there is something else. I've started seeing someone else already. This embarrasses me a little. Should it?

THERAPIST Let it all hang out.

CAROL Well he's twenty-four years younger than me: that makes him twenty-five but who the hell's counting. He's a sculptor, a metal sculptor, I think he's even quite talented. Short of conversation but coachable in bed. Am I blushing?

THERAPIST Do you love him?

CAROL (Laughs) I sure as hell hope not.

THERAPIST You seem quite pleased with yourself.

CAROL I'm hysterical! My husband is playing with his gun in a squalid hotel room on the wrong side of the tracks and I'm having a sexual reawakening with someone half my age, a bender of metal no less!

THERAPIST I couldn't have said it better myself.

CAROL There's more.

THERAPIST You know you can tell me anything.

CAROL My sculptor, his name is Wade, he
went to art college with Sebastion. They've been sharing a flat together. They're best buddies.

**THERAPIST**

You're a bad little catfish.

**CAROL**

I ran out of Prozac.

**THERAPIST**

Talk dirty to me.

*(They both break up)*

---

**FOURTEEN**

**HEALEY**

*(To a BARTENDER who wears a big head of some kind - a wolf, a bear)*

Everybody called him Szabo but I just called him The Weasel. When I was kid he treated me like scum so why I ever figured it'd be any different as a grown-up is just my own stupidity. You know what he got me to do with him? Hold up a gas station. With real guns. It was just as you get into Dinosaur Country right on the highway surrounded by hoodoos and cactus and sagebrush, this Esso. And just before we did it I saw this herd of antelopes, and there was something so beautiful about them the way they all flowed together in one easy pattern like a pure single thought like all of God's natural goodness moving me to The Clear and I heard myself say to myself *Don't do this you dumb piece of shit.* But did I heed? I didn't. And we got caught. And we went to prison The Weasel and me. And he treated me like scum in there too, always trying to get me to do things for him. Do this, do that. And every friend I ever tried to make in there he somehow put a wedge between us and wedged us apart. He
needed a sucker all to himself that he could tell his stupid stories to and to demoralize and to spread his insanity to. And that poor sucker was me. Well. Szabo is dead now and I'm a hotshot motorcycle mechanic. The Weasel is DEAD...and I'm a hotshot motorcycle mechanic.

(Pause)

BARTENDER How do you like my head?

HEALEY (Pumps his fist) It's perfect!

---

(KEN McCOO wears the uniform of a security guard. Enters and announces himself:)

McCOO I'm Ken McCoo and I'm home from the bloody wars! (Silence. He moves cautiously toward a bed in a darkened corner of the room) Hiya, Treasure. Are you napping? Do you want to come out for a while? Watch some TV...?

HELEN (Very weak) No. I'm fine in here.

McCOO It's stuffy in here. And dark. What do you say we open the curtains up, let some sunshine in, some air... (Opens the curtains)

HELEN No!

McCOO Helen look, it's a beautiful...

HELEN SHUT THEM!

McCOO Okay okay... (Does. Sits on the edge of the bed) Oh, Helen...we have to have a talk about this.
HELEN I wish I were dead.

McCoo No you don't.

HELEN Yes I do.

McCoo The operation was successful, Honey. Everything went okay, there's nothing physically wrong with you anymore, Dr. Deerborn said...

HELEN THE DOCTOR ABANDONED ME!

McCoo Helen...

HELEN He saw something inside of me! He saw something inside of me and Lo! it disgusted him and he runneth from the surgery and it broke up his marriage and it made him go into the desert!

McCoo Ssshhh. Ssshhh.

HELEN I'M EVIL AS HELL INSIDE!

McCoo No you're not.

HELEN I'm filthy inside, my body is not my friend anymore -

McCoo You just...

HELEN My body is against me!

McCoo ...you just settle down. Do your deep breathing.

HELEN I'm tired of breathing.

McCoo Do your deep ones.

HELEN I'm tired.

McCoo I'll come back in a little while. You lie there and do your deep
breathing and think good thoughts about yourself and I'll make us some dinner.

HELEN My body isn't hungry.

McCOO It will be.

HELEN Do we have any icecream?

McCOO That's my girl.

HELEN Close the door!

McCOO I will. (Leaves bed) Jesus loving God...

(Lights up on KENNY eating Cheerios straight from the box)

McCOO I didn't know you were home.

KENNY I just got here.

McCOO (Opens fridge) What've you been doing all day?

KENNY Boring myself to death.

McCOO When does track-and-field start up?

KENNY I'm not gonna do it this year.

McCOO Why not?

KENNY Because I'm not as good as Howie was.

McCOO Sure you are. Will you help me with dinner tonight?

KENNY I'm going out.

McCOO You said you just got here.

KENNY I just dropped in.
Once in a while it'd be nice for you to have dinner with us, Son.

Sure, Dad. Me and you and the macaroni. Why don't we invite Alice over once in awhile?

Because she wouldn't come anyway.

That's because we never invite her.

Don't we have any icecream?

I ate it.

(Closes fridge) Why don't you go in there and see her, Kenny, she's your mother. She gave you birth and she gave you your love for animals and she—

She's looney tunes, Dad.

Don't get smart.

I have to go. (Walks away)

(Follows him) Where do you always have to go to, Kenny? You're only fifteen years old, you need to be at HOME sometimes. Come back here! (KENNY runs) YEH, SURE, YOU LITTLE BRAT, EAT ALL THE ICECREAM THEN RUN FOR THE HILLS!

Silence) Somebody help me.

SIXTEEN

(Wearing spaceage goggles and riding an exercise bike. His cell phone rings) Hello?

Hi, Howie. It's dad.
HOWIE              Hi, dad.
McCOO              Why're you breathing so hard?
HOWIE              Because I'm going uphill.
McCOO              You're what?
HOWIE              I'm riding my new exercise bike, dad. It's amazing. It's linked to a Virtual Reality System that simulates different terrain and degrees of difficulty. Right now I'm biking across this stupendous tropical island. It's beautiful here, there's exotic birds and monkeys, little bridges and streams, a long gorgeous coastline and a bewildering assortment of women in tight and provocative jogging attire. There's one right in front of me with hipbones from heaven. How are you doing?
McCOO              Crummy.
HOWIE              How's mom?
McCOO              We have to have a family meeting.
HOWIE              Oh. When do we have to have it I'm pretty busy at the club these days.
McCOO              Soon. And I want Alice to be there too.
HOWIE              That could be difficult, dad.
McCOO              Help me, Sport.

SEVENTEEN

(Phone rings and a message machine kicks in. ALICE McCOO is half-naked)
"Hi! This is the home of Alice and Brian and The Bull. (A dog woofs) That's pit-bull. (The dog growls) Nobody's here to take your call right now but it's very important to us that you leave your tedious message, let us stand here and scoff at it, erase it, and then go back to the time-consuming business of being snooty and reclusive. Here comes the beep: this better be good." (BEEP)

Alice, you're incorrigible. This is Howie. Dad wants us to meet him for drinks tomorrow and have, quote, a family meeting, unquote. Sounds like Mom-Talk to me. I guess we'd better do it, huh? Give me a call back when you--(She picks it up)

I don't want to, you go and represent both of us.

I shouldn't have to do this by myself.

This is what I have to say - send mom to a big, white hospital on a little green island in the middle of the deep blue sea and let her make daisy chains for the rest of her natural life.

You're stoned again aren't you.

Mr. Detective.

You HAVE to come, Alice.

No.

Yes.

No!
EIGHTEEN

TRUDY

Here's to our new and improved life together!

HEALEY

Here's to my clipped wings.

TRUDY

Greaseball. (They clink glasses)
And here's to the guy who took a shot at the doctor who then dumped Tammy who then picked a fight with little ol' me who now has a hunk for a roommate! Isn't life strange how it all bumps along - b'doop b'doop - Yes!

HEALEY

This apartment feels weird.

TRUDY

I know what! Let's go to The Brick tomorrow and buy something brandnew to celebrate our start together. They have those desert patterns for sofas now that would go really good with my Indian rug and your cactus collection.

HEALEY

This ceiling feels low or something.

TRUDY

What's eating you, Healey? Talk.

HEALEY

Trudy, I'm thirty-six years old and I've never lived with a woman before. I'm not too sure how good I'm going to be at this.

TRUDY

Let's buy a new bed!

HEALEY

Is sex all you ever think about?

TRUDY

Is that a wrench in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?

HEALEY

What's wrong with the old bed?
NINETEEN

(In the dark)

HEALEY  ...No, don't...Szabo, c'mon, don't DON'T...

TRUDY  Healey...?

HEALEY  No, Szabo, no...

TRUDY  Baby...?

HEALEY  NO! ...

(We hear a magpie yapping which takes us into the next scene)

TWENTY

TRUDY  Morning.

HEALEY  (Yawns) Somebody go out there and shoot that bloody magpie.

TRUDY  How'd you sleep last night?

HEALEY  Good. Great. Nothin' wrong with this bed.

TRUDY  Who's Szabo?

HEALEY  What?

TRUDY  Who is Szabo? You were talking in your sleep last night, you woke me up. You sounded very distressed. Talk to me, Babe. No secrets. No secrets or it's trouble between us, I won't abide.

HEALEY  I haven't even had a coffee yet,
Trudy, could ya lay off my ass just a little.

TRUDY
I will not abide by secrets.

HEALEY
I have a hangover.

TRUDY
Secrets will kill us.

HEALEY
OKAY! (Pause) Szabo's my father... WAS... he's dead now. He picked on me all the time. There I talked.

TRUDY
Did he used to beat you up?

HEALEY
Yeh. He used to beat me up. Go make some coffee.

TRUDY
Tell me everything, Healey.

HEALEY
That's everything.

TRUDY
Don't ever forget I'm on your side.

HEALEY
Good! Get coffee!

TRUDY
Be nice to me! (TRUDY exits. That magpie won't stop yapping)

HEALEY
SHUT UP! (He punches a hole in the wall)

TWENTY-ONE

KEN McCOO
(At work. He checks the lock on a door. Good. (Checks his pocket watch) Good. (Checks another door) Good.

(Now he hears a sound. Can't quite figure out what it is or where it's coming from. It gets louder. It's a scratching noise on the other side of one of the doors he just finished checking. He finds a key on the big ring of keys he has and opens the door.

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It's very dark in there, wherever that is. He flicks on his flashlight and shines it in. Nothing. Now we hear the low, ominous growl of some kind of beast coming from inside that room)

(Laughs) Very funny, guys! (Looks round) ...Guys?

Intermission

TWENTY-TWO

(A squalid hotel room. DEERBORN paces the floor in his boxer shorts like a caged animal. He looks ravaged. There's a vicious argument going on in the next room over)

DEERBORN  What am I doing here?

(There's a knock at his door. He goes to the door and leans his ear against it)

DEERBORN  (Carefully) Who is it?

HARDBALL  (We can't see him) Dr. Deerborn?

DEERBORN  Who is this?

HARDBALL  You don't know me, Doctor. My name is George Hardball. I'm a private detective. Your wife hired me to come and find you.

DEERBORN  She did?

HARDBALL  To see how you're doing. (Beat) Can I come in, Doctor? I promised your wife I'd get a good look at you. It's in my contract. You know. For the record. I get a good look at
you, I see how you're doing, I go back and tell her. (Beat) How're you doing, Doctor? (Beat) Do you need anything? (Beat) I'll tell you what. Here's my card. You need anything you give a call on my cell phone. (He slides his card under the door) I'll come back in a little while...see how you're doing. Okay?

(Long pause)

DEERBORN Hello?

(He picks up Hardball's card. Then he slowly opens the door - and there stands HARDBALL, a tough-looking little guy in a long dark coat, no shirt underneath, baseball cap, bluejeans and sneakers. And a camera. He snaps a picture of Deerborn)

HARDBALL I'll be honest with you, Doc, my contract with your wife, she's paying me by the day to keep an eye on you while she figures out the rest of her life. She thinks you might be suicidal. (Grins) Can I come in and be your buddy?

DEERBORN Go away.

(HARDBALL punches him in the jaw. Lights out)

TWENTY-THREE

McCOO Thanks for doing this, kids.

McCOO Really nice.

HOWIE Twenty-eight screens and a satellite dish.

McCOO Really nice. (Beat) I'm really glad you came, honey. I really really am...honestly.

ALICE Let's cut to the chase, I have a hair appointment...or something. (Howie gives her a dirty look. She gives one back)

McCOO Okay. Um. Listen, kids...

ALICE Where's Kenny? How come Kenny's not here?

McCOO (Glances at HOWIE) Before you got here, Alice, I was telling this to Howie, that um...I haven't seen Kenny for a couple of days...and that it's another good reason for having this meeting this family is...

ALICE What do you mean you haven't seen him for a couple of days?

HOWIE He took off.

ALICE Where is he, dad?

McCOO I don't know. He never tells me anything. All we ever do is fight and then he flies out the door.

ALICE Gee - sounds vaguely familiar.

HOWIE Control yourself, Alice.

ALICE If you're gonna sit there and bitch at me all night...

McCOO Kids...
HOWIE

Sorry, Dad.

ALICE

Ouch!

McCOO

What's the matter, Alice?

ALICE

Howie kicked me under the table!

McCOO

Howie...

HOWIE

Get on with it, dad.

McCOO

Yeh. Um. As you know...Mom's been having some difficulty, after her surgery last month, getting her feet back on the ground. (Alice rolls her eyes)

HOWIE

She needs more exercise. How is she eating?

McCOO

Not very good.

HOWIE

What does her doctor say?

McCOO

Her doctor...is, um...on some kind of leave of absence. He can't be reached for a while.

HOWIE

So go get another one then.

McCOO

Soon, next week. One of his underlings, Dr. Holiday, seems like a—

ALICE

Oh come on! Mom needs serious professional help - in the head! Right? This is why we're gathered here - RIGHT?

HOWIE

Alice...

ALICE

Well for Godsakes!

HOWIE

We're listening to you, dad.
McCOO

Your mother...yes...she's very troubled. Confused about things. And I...um, I...don't know how to...what to...don't know where to... (He breaks down)

HOWIE

(Sincerely) Oh daddy...

ALICE

There goes the reunion.

HOWIE

SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

ALICE

That does it, I'm gone.

HOWIE

You're so GONE it isn't even funny! Go look in the mirror you've got some coke around your nose - I can see it, you little drug addict!

ALICE

Watch it, Sport - and you're vice-free.

HOWIE

I don't even drink anymore.

ALICE

Word gets around, maitre de. Story goes you sleep with a different waitress every night. I'd say that falls in the realm of iniquity. Nay?

HOWIE

Well at least I don't marry them all to support my bad habits.

ALICE

I hear this place is laundering money and you're taking whiffs off the rim to cover your gambling problem.

HOWIE

FOUR times, little sister, you've been married FOUR times since you were seventeen.

ALICE

How're the horses running?

HOWIE

You're only twenty-six!

ALICE

Oh look there's a vacant VLT!
HOWIE    Have you ever been on your own?
          Have you EVER had a job?

ALICE    Not with the mob!

HOWIE    Said the Snow Queen!

McCOO    STOP IT! (Silence) I came here to
          ask for your help. Well I don't
          want it. Don't need it. I'll take
          care of things myself. As usual.
          (Throws down a bill and leaves)

HOWIE    Dad...?! (Pause) We should both be
          shot and pitched into the same
          grave. He even bought the nachos.

ALICE    (Shouts) I want my little brother!

HOWIE    Alice...(Reaches for her)

ALICE    (Pushes him away) Stop Alicing me!

(TRUDY approaches with a tray. She
wears a referee's outfit that is
barely there at all. She looks
tired and depressed)

TRUDY    Excuse me - you're wanted on the
          phone, Howie.

HOWIE    Who is it?

TRUDY    I don't know.

HOWIE    (Rises) What's the matter with you,
          Trudy, you look like shit these
days. Go put some make-up on or
          something.

          (He leaves)

TRUDY    (To ALICE) My boyfriend and I - we
          had another big fight last night...
          and this time I threw him out. And
          I think he might be dangerous.
(ALICE gives her a droll look)

ALICE Then go and get another one. They work in teams. One to beat you up and one to protect you. And then they switch. Go get me a drink.

TWENTY-FOUR

(In the dark)

WADE Well? Whaddya think so far?

CAROL It's...awesome, Wade. What is it?

WADE What does it look like to you?

(Lights up on Wade's sculpture)

CAROL It looks like...chaos.

WADE Uh-huh. Sure. Calamity. The Shambles. I'm calling it Nervous Wreck. And like I was saying, Carol, I've nearly run out of materials and that's a real drag because I'm going great guns on it right now and I don't have any more money to put into it and that big competition is coming up...

CAROL How much more do you need?

WADE Well...including scrapmetal, nuts and bolts, acetylene, paint, the rent on my studio, beer...um... couple of thousand? Two weeks, ten days, she's done.

CAROL She?

(Both look up at Wade's weird metal sculpture again)
WADE ...It? (She opens her purse) What're you doing?

CAROL I'm going to write you cheque for two thousand dollars.

WADE You're kidding. (She writes it out)

CAROL Gift. My donation to the Arts this year. The ballet, the theatre, the symphony...all of those great little jazz clubs back in the old days...Martin and I...(He reaches for the cheque)...have always been patrons.

WADE Gosh, Carol - (reaches for it again) - you don't know how much this means to me, I'm flabberghasted, I'm-

CAROL Take your shirt off.

WADE (Peeling his shirt off) You're a wonderful woman, Carol, you're my whole inspiration, before I met you I was floundering, I was-

CAROL Shut up. (She walks around him with the cheque) Sebastian is coming home. He's flying in on Thursday. What're we going to say about ourselves?

WADE Why do we have to say anything?

CAROL I don't think I can keep this a secret, Wade, it'll show right through. I think we have to come clean. Do you want to do it or should I?

WADE I can keep it a secret.

CAROL Take off your jeans.

WADE (Unbuckling, unzipping) Carol...me
and you...we're not exactly...
pinning our whole lives together...
we're just...having a truly great
summer, right? And I mean...
Sebastion is a pretty fragile guy
and way more conservative than you
might think and what with
everything else that's happened...

CAROL Underwear. (He does)

WADE ...the drive-by shooting, your
break-up...me and you...well it all
might, um, you know, be just a
little too...too much to... (He
laughs. She stares him down)

CAROL What the hell are you trying to
say?

WADE What do you wanna hear? (Pause)

CAROL That very first night after we made
love you said something to me, it's
been stuck in my head ever since,
you said that I screamed. I was
drunk I don't remember, I need some
clarification. What do you mean I
screamed?

WADE You were having a good time, Carol.

CAROL No, listen, I'm serious, pay
attention - Did I scream any words?

WADE (Coy) Maybe.

CAROL What words?

WADE Well - (Fondles her) - you said,
um, Hammer me, torch me. Bend me
and bolt me. And I said, Whatever
you want, Baby, and you screamed...

CAROL What?

WADE Hallelujah.
CAROL: Liar.

WADE: Why is this so important?

CAROL: Because I've been waking myself up at night screaming and my therapist thinks I'm trying to expel something from deep in me that's poisoning me and he thinks I picked you as a kind of conduit for drawing that, whatever it is, poison, out. You're a bright boy, what do you think?

WADE: (Beat. Laughs) Man, I think you analyze things WAY too much. It's sex! Sex is noisy sometimes. Why don't we quit talking about it and go and lie down.

(He reaches for her - she lets out a long scream. Then silence)

WADE: You want to know what you screamed that night? (He holds out his hand and she puts the cheque in it) You screamed your husband's name.

(Pause)

CAROL: Make love to me one more time and don't leave anything out.

---

TWENTY-FIVE

HOOKER: Want some company?

McCOO: What? (He's carrying a Safeways bag)

HOOKER: Are you looking for some company?

McCOO: (Beat) Oh! Um. No, I was...I'm on
my way home. I have to make some dinner...for the family.

HOOKER You look sort of lonely.

McCoo Do I?

HOOKER Yeh.

McCoo Well. Um. I work by myself most of the time, at night, on weekends. It can be sorta...whatstheword...

HOOKER Lonely.

McCoo I guess I've never really thought about it that way before.

HOOKER Y'wanna go upstairs with me for a little while?

McCoo What? No! I mean...thanks but - but I don't think I could do that.

HOOKER Could or should?

McCoo Both. Both.

HOOKER You've earned it, Ken McCoo. You deserve some treats in your life. You work damn hard just to keep things going and it's all uphill: sickly wife, dissolute offspring...even the family doctor has turned his back on you.

McCoo Who are you? Do you know me from somewhere?

HOOKER Come here for a second. Just let me put my hand down your...

McCoo I have to get going!
WHO'S THERE? WHO IS THAT? KEN, IS THAT YOU?

Kenny?

Yeh.

Are you home from school already?

We're still in August, mom.

Are we?

Yeh.

Has track-and-field started up yet?

I dunno. Mom...mom, how come...how come you won't get up? Dad said the operation worked, he says you can get up anytime you want to now.

No. No, Kenny, your dad...your dad is a mighty fine man but he doesn't really understand what's going on inside of me.

What is though?

You just worry about your own life, Sweety. There's mountains to climb and races to run and girls to meet...

GET UP! (Silence)

Kenny...listen...the thing is this. My body isn't exactly me anymore. We're having a kind of split from each other.
KENNY: What're you talking about?

HELEN: Well, it's like what they always used to say in Sunday School: there's the Flesh and then there's the Soul. They live with each other for as long as they possibly can and when the relationship finally runs its course, for whatever reason, they parteth company. In my case now...the Flesh is full of Messages...and the Soul is tip-toeing away. To join the Beautiful Army. Let Nature run it's course.

KENNY: How did you get this way?

HELEN: Well that's the million dollar question isn't it. I think...well I used to think it was just the luck of the draw: some people get leukemia - I get The Thingy. But the more I think about it...the more I believe I was chosen for it.

KENNY: What do you mean?

HELEN: I believe these messages were put in my body for a purpose.

KENNY: What kind of purpose?

HELEN: Don't tell daddy. (Whispers) To give Dr. Deerborn a Clue from another Dimension.

KENNY: What?

HELEN: I was up on the ceiling in the operating room looking down at myself, I was having one of those out-of-the-body experiences, and the Doctor was fiddling around inside of me and he saw some kind of instructions in my entrails and he had to get after it quick.
That's why he ran away from the surgery, I'm not mad at him anymore, it had to have been important. He delivered you, Kenny - need I say more? We are all bound up together in this like One Big Family. Dr. Deerborn has some kind of huge fight on his hands and he needs all the help he can get.
Cancer rhymes with Answer. Wink, wink.

KENNY  
(Beat) I have to go now, mom.

HELEN  
Are you making dinner with daddy tonight?

KENNY  
No. I think I'm going out with some friends.

HELEN  
Are you going to a movie?

KENNY  
(Shrugs) I don’t know.

HELEN  
Go to a nice one, Sweety. There's too much crap on shows these days it'll rot your brain. And thanks for hopping by, Kenny-boy. No matter what happens you'll always be my little bunny-wabbit.

KENNY  
Sure, mom. (He starts to leave. Turns back) ...Mom?

HELEN  
Yes, dear?

KENNY  
If Alice calls...if Alice ever calls...would you tell her that I...I don’t know, never mind. Bye, mom.

HELEN  
Smooth sailing.
TWENTY-SEVEN

TRUDY There've been times in the last little while when I needed you a lot but I didn't know how to find you. When they told me you'd up and quit your job I didn't know where to turn to. It was just lucky I saw you on the street today so I followed you, trying to get my courage up, trying to find the right words... (Beat) Damnit, Tammy, please talk to me. (Pause)

TAMMY I'm living with an East Indian Prince in a castle in Upper Mount Royal.

TRUDY (Laughs) Goof-ball.

TAMMY It's the truth.

TRUDY You're kidding.

TAMMY His family made zillions in computers and he's a regular playboy. This is the first weekend I've been in town since I met him. We travel everywhere. Last week we were in Egypt, the week before that Brazil. We have a swimming pool. (Shows her ring) And he wants me to marry him.

TRUDY Holy shit.

TAMMY He's nice to me, impossibly generous, intelligent, sexy, worldly...

TRUDY But...?

TAMMY He has other women. It's a cultural thing.
TRUDY Are you sure you can handle this?

TAMMY (Little snort) You forget who you're talking to, kid.

TRUDY Right.

TAMMY And what have you been doing for excitement?

TRUDY Well mostly like before I guess... except that I'm living with Healey now.

TAMMY In our old apartment?

TRUDY Yeh. For now.

TAMMY And so how is it going with Healey?

TRUDY (Lies) Good! Great! His work is going well and mine is going well. We're going camping on his bike for the long week-end. Up around Nelson, those hot springs. Do some hiking, some caving...

TAMMY It's good to have things to look forward to.

TRUDY Yeh. It is.

TAMMY Get it before it gets you: that's my motto.

TRUDY (Nods) Yeh.

(They don't have anything else to say to each other)

TWENTY-EIGHT

SEBASTION It's good to be home. You look
great. So what's all this stuff you said we needed to talk about?  
(Pause)  
Mom?  
(Another pause)  
Hey! When did you start painting your toenails?

TWENTY-NINE

(WADE cuts off his acetylene torch and lifts up his faceshield. The CELLIST is actually here in this scene, playing throughout)

WADE

Sebastion.

SEBASTION

Wade.

WADE

When did you get home?

SEBASTION

Couple of hours ago.

WADE

How was Europe?

SEBASTION

Groovy.

WADE

Did you paint lots of pictures?

SEBASTION

A few. (Looks up at Wade's sculpture) That's quite the piece of...workmanship you have going there.

WADE

Thanks.

SEBASTION

I didn't say I liked it.

WADE

Don't you?

SEBASTION

Is it supposed to be portentous of something...a tangle of things to come?

WADE

Yeh. Sort of.
(They listen to CELLIST for a moment)

WADE She calls herself EuLaLa. She's a street musician. She's broke, she doesn't have anywhere to go, so I said she could hang out here until she gets her bearings.

SEBASTION She plays well.

WADE Yeh.

SEBASTION Are you sleeping with her?

WADE No. (Beat) She doesn't ever go to bed. Honestly, I haven't seen her in bed yet, she either sleeps sitting up or doesn't sleep at all, I don't know. (Beat)

SEBASTION My father, the Country Doctor, loves cello. He even owns one. Inherited it. Can't play it. Won't. Poor bastard: he's gone off his rocker you know. He took his gun and he's living in a hotel room down by the tracks. Before I came over here I looked for it...the gun I mean...and when I asked my mother where it was she burst into tears. My father, the Country Doctor, isn't worthy of her tears. Poor sad thing. (Beat) How much have you taken her for...you pernicious whore?

WADE She's a grown up woman, Sebastion.

SEBASTION She's under your spell.

WADE (Little laugh) Oh I wouldn't say that.

SEBASTION Wade, my mother is the only woman I've ever really loved and you're
the only man. I'm so jealous and mad I could scream. I don't trust myself, I might do anything.

WADE (Beat) Did you tell her we were lovers?

SEBASTION Yes.

WADE I bet that went over big. So what were you going to do with your father's gun if it HAD been there?

SEBASTION I don't know.

WADE Shoot me?

SEBASTION Either you or mom. Or both of you. Or my father. Or all of you. Or all of you and then myself. Or just myself.

WADE That's a lot of bloodshed.

SEBASTION Yes.

WADE So now what?

SEBASTION I don't know. Cry?

WADE (Offers his hand) Come up here. Don't be afraid. I'll show you what I'm doing.

THIRTY

(Deerborn sits on the bed handcuffed to the bedpost. He looks terrible. Hardball sits in a chair watching television. It's an action movie. Explosions, gunfire, loud music)

(Long pause)
DEERBORN How much is my wife paying you to keep an eye on me?

(Hardball turns the TV down)

HARDBALL What?

DEERBORN How much is my wife paying you to keep an eye on me?

HARDBALL The starting rate. Two hundred and fifty dollars a day plus expenses. It goes up every ten days. (He turns the TV back up. Beat)

DEERBORN What kind of expenses?

HARDBALL (Turns it down again) What?

DEERBORN What kind of expenses?

HARDBALL Mileage, accommodation. In case you skip town, you know. She said to follow you.

DEERBORN How did you find me?

HARDBALL Tricks of the trade. (He snaps a picture of Deerborn)

DEERBORN Did she find you in the Yellow Pages or something?

HARDBALL No, I sort of found her. In a bar. She was alone. Looking downsy-wownsy. You know, so I asked if I could buy her a drink, normal thing. And she said no. So I bought her one anyway and we started to talk. She was wearing a purple dress cut way down the back between her shoulder-blades. You know that one?

DEERBORN Yes.

HARDBALL She said you had a gun.
DEERBORN It's in a safe place.

HARDBALL Where? (Pause) I don't know what happened between you two but it can't be worth killing yourself over. What was it? An infidelity?

DEERBORN Yes.

HARDBALL Why?

DEERBORN I don't know. That's what I've been doing up here. I've been trying to give it a name.

HARDBALL Pussy.

DEERBORN I don't think it's that simple.

HARDBALL Your wife she must've been a real knockout once. Don't get me wrong she's pretty nice now - but twenty years ago, eh? Eh? Good in bed? Nice ass? Come like a choo-choo?

DEERBORN Do you enjoy your work, Hardball?

HARDBALL Lookit, Doc - I'll tell you something about me - I don't give a flying fart about your miserable marriage or your screwed up life. (Takes a picture of him) I'm in it for the money. (Takes another picture) Guys like you give birth to guys like me.

DEERBORN Two hundred and fifty dollars a day. How often do you work?

HARDBALL Not often enough. It's a lousy job. I used to play in a rock band. Should’ve stuck with it. (Pause)

DEERBORN I was a real beatnik back in the early sixties. Those were great days, Hardball. That's when I met
my wife. I'm sitting in a smoky basement cafe with a bottle of red wine in one arm and Carol in the other. Everybody's singing, we're drunk and we're happy, we're full of passion and nonsense and possibilities. Everyone we know is falling in love or living in Paris or making low budget movies. We couldn't think of anything worse than becoming lukewarm members of society. Clang goes the trolley, spits electric, and the jazz rolls round and round. (Beat) We went home together that night. We read Leonard Cohen in bed. We got married in Mexico.

(Pause)

I'll give you a thousand dollars if you take the cuffs off and get out of here, Hardball. That's four days work. I mean how long do you think you can stand it up here with me?

HARDBALL What're you talking about, we're just getting to know each other. We live fascinating lives me and you. I got shot at once. You want hear about it?

DEERBORN Two thousand. Cash. It's in my pocket.

HARDBALL If you kill yourself I feel bad.

DEERBORN Five thousand. We'll go to a bank machine.

HARDBALL Your wife is screwing someone. I went and watched them once. I even took some pictures, you want to see them? Hell, if I were you I’d go and kill her.

DEERBORN You bastard! Who are you?! (He
jerks on the cuffs violently)

HARDBALL  
Rattle your cage, Dr. Deerborn.  
Rattle your miserable cage.

DEERBORN  
What do you WANT? Name it!

HARDBALL  
I want your miserable soul.

DEERBORN  
You got it.

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THIRTY-ONE

(TRUDY is on the phone at the sportsbar)

TRUDY  
Hi, Howie. This is Trudy. Um. I'm phoning from the club. I just found out from Sue you were cutting my hours in half. Um. Look I'm...I mean I know I've been kind of messed up lately but I really need this job and I'll make it all up to you, the way I've been acting. Um. So I was thinking, since I'm free tonight, and if you were going to be at home...that maybe I'd drop over there and apologize to you in person...anda...see what happens. Okay?

---

THIRTY-TWO

(KENNY McCOO is at a payphone outside of a pool hall)

KENNY  
Hello is Alice there? Do you know when she might get back? This is her brother. What do you mean? Oh. Where is she then? If you did anything bad to her I'll come over there and kill you. (He hangs up)

(A moment - looking lost - then he picks up the phone again)
DEEBORN sits staring at the TV that is turned down. He has a gun in his hand. The cuffs are gone and so is HARDBALL. A long moment like this then he puts the gun in his mouth. Another long moment. There's a knock at the door. He takes the gun from his mouth and stares at it. Another knock. He panics and throws the gun out the window, then immediately regrets it.

DEEBORN

Damn!

(Another knock. He goes to the door and swings it open to reveal KEN McCoo)

McCOO
Hello, Dr. Deerborn.

DEEBORN
You think you're a real hero now don't you.

McCOO
I beg your pardon?

DEEBORN
Do I know you?

McCOO

(Pause. They stare at each other)

Could I come in for a few minutes and talk to you, Doctor...about my wife? She's isn't doing very well and I could really use some advice.

DEEBORN
Are you some kind of lawman or soldier or something?
McCOO

Oh! *(Looks down at his uniform, laughs)* Well kind of. I'm a security guard for Caterpillar Incorporated, I just came from work. Twenty-five years last fall. They gave me a real nice pocket watch. Look I'm really sorry for bothering you like this, Doctor. I phoned your house. Um. Your wife... she told me where you were, she... seemed to think it would be okay if I came up to see you...here.

DEERBORN

Who did you say you were?

McCOO

Ken McCoo. *(He takes out his pocket watch and opens it to the inscription)*

*(DEERBORN steps aside. McCOO enters)*

DEERBORN

What do you want?

McCOO

Dr. Deerborn...my wife, Helen, who you operated on...is kind of mixed up about things. Um. She seems to think...that...her whole body... because she had to have surgery on it...has...somehow turned against her. She says it's dirty, gone bad. Her mind has...well...I'm afraid... I'm really afraid she's trying to hurt herself over this...this trauma...of...having to have had surgery...and it keeps getting worse and worse everyday, I...

DEERBORN

Metastasis.

McCOO

Metas...

DEERBORN

Metastasis.

McCOO

*(Swallows hard) What's that?*

DEERBORN

It's the transfer of a health-
impairing agency to a new site in
the system, a secondary growth,
a...conveyance of some...bad thing.
Like a real cold draft in the house
moving from room to room.

McCOO

Is it treatable? Can you break it?

DEERBORN

I can barely even say it.

McCOO

Jeez!

DEERBORN

Things are pretty scary aren't they.

McCOO

(Sits on the bed) My whole darn
family scares me. This thing with
my wife is really tearing us apart.
Mind you...we've...sort of always
been...prone to disturbances. I
mean just like you said...like a
draft, like a conveyor belt...
dominoes...once something bad
starts to happen in our family it
just seems to want to keep rolling.

DEERBORN

(Nods) Yes. (Pause)

McCOO

Anyway...this metasta-thing you
were talking about...I guess we'll
just have to wait for a while and
see where it takes us, eh? And
maybe, God-willing, it'll go right
through my house and run it's
course elsewhere and in the process
make us stronger. That's something
to hope for. Right, Doc? Isn't it?
(Beat)

DEERBORN

Sure thing, Mr. Caterpillar. You
and your whole darn family are
going to be just fine.

McCOO

(Sighs deeply) Thank you.

(A train goes by outside. The whole
room shakes like crazy. A picture
falls off the wall. Then the train fades away)

McCoo

Well! *(Smacks his knees and stands up)* I guess I'd better be going now and let you get back to what you were doing. *(Walks to door)* I can't thank you enough for taking the time to talk to me, Doc. It's meant a lot to me. *(Opens door)* ...Um. But if you don't mind me asking you, Doctor...? What...what kind of leave of absence are you on. I mean, what're you actually...*doing up in here?*

Deerborn

*(Beat)* I'm learning to play the cello. *(McCoo glances around the room)* In my head.

McCoo

Oh. Well. Good luck at it, Doc.

*(McCoo exits. Deerborn remembers the gun and goes to the window. He looks around but can’t see it)*

**THIRTY-FOUR**

Howie

I'm sorry for every fight we've ever had and I'm sorry for being such a lousy brother and I'm sorry your marriage didn't work out again. You're my sister and I love you, you can stay here for as long as you want to and I'll help you however I can. We'll look out for each other, Sis, we'll be our own family, just me and you and to hell with the rest. Okay?

Alice

*(Laughs)* Well there's a teeny bit more to it than even that... brother-dearest.
HOWIE: What do you mean?

ALICE: I'm pregnant.

HOWIE: Oh.

ALICE: I've been careless - 'bout everything.

HOWIE: Does whathisname Brian know?

ALICE: No.

HOWIE: Is it his?

ALICE: Maybe.

HOWIE: Are you going to keep it?

ALICE: I don't know yet. Does it WANT to be kept?

HOWIE: Maybe you'd be a good mother.

ALICE: Yeh. Motherhood. Glorious frigging motherhood. (Cries out) I HATE MYSELF!

(HOWIE holds her as she sobs)

HOWIE: No you don't, no you don't.

(His intercom buzzes)

Who the hell...?

(He goes to his security box and pushes a button)

HOWIE: ...Yes?

TRUDY'S VOICE: It's Trudy. (HOWIE smacks his forehead)

HOWIE: Just a second, Trudy. (To ALICE) She works at the club - we've had a little falling out...
ALICE: I'll walk around the block - how long does this usually take?

HOWIE: I'll tell her to go away, you're more important than any of my...

ALICE: In-between snacks?

HOWIE: Alice...

ALICE: Who am I to cramp your style. I'll grab a hotel somewhere. Not to worry.

TRUDY'S VOICE: Howie?

HOWIE: (Into intercom) Just a second!
(Back to ALICE) Are you sure?

ALICE: (Getting her coat) Look, Howie, the reason I came over here wasn't to crash on your sofa or even to get your sympathy. The break-up was coming, I'm not in a panic about it. I came over to see if you wanted to go and look for Kenny with me. I found out he's been sleeping in an all-night pool hall way up in Little Italy somewhere.

HOWIE: This family drives me crazy. I'll go with you tomorrow.

ALICE: I can't wait for tomorrow. That's okay.

HOWIE: You should learn to drive, Alice.

ALICE: I've always had boyfriends.

HOWIE: Do you want me to call you a cab?

ALICE: That's okay, I'll flag one.

HOWIE: If you find him...tell him...tell him from me not to quit track-and-
field. I love you, sis. If you ever need to talk about anything...

ALICE

(Kisses him) Yeh yeh. (She goes to the door)

HOWIE

Are you really going to be okay?

ALICE

Life rambles on.

(She opens the door to reveal TRUDY standing there looking a bit sheepish)

TRUDY

A guy came out of the building so I...

HOWIE

Hi Trudy.

TRUDY

(To ALICE) We're having a little trouble at work so I...

ALICE

Bye Trudy. (She exits. HOWIE stands away from the door and TRUDY enters slowly)

THIRTY-FIVE

HEALEY

Trudy...?! I know you're in there, Trudy. Please, Trudy...please open the door and let me back in. ...Listen to me, Babe...I'm talking to you – like a man – who really knows he has problems. I DON'T WANT TO THOUGH! ...Trudy...? I promise I won't ever strike you again. We have to start things over again – Please, Trudy! YOU PROMISED TO BE ON MY SIDE! ...PLEASE! THOSE ANTELOPES HAVE GONE BESERK AND THEY'RE RUNNING ALL OVER THE PLACE!
THIRTY-SIX

(CAROL and SEBASTION are driving quickly through the city in a police car that flashes its lights and sounds its siren as it goes through an intersection. Long pause)

SEBASTION You hate me don't you.

CAROL No, Sebastion, I don't hate you. I don't have any space left to hate you, I'm consumed with hating myself.

SEBASTION Well I hate dad - and so should you.

CAROL (Glances at him. Shakes her head) What the hell happened to us? I'm a terrible homemaker that's what. You grew up soft and selfish and petulant and malevolent and it's all my fault.

SEBASTION I'm also a lousy artist don't forget that.

CAROL I pushed you into the Arts trying to fill up a hole in myself. And what I did with Wade was out of fear and rancor for my lost youth, my stale marriage, and yes some revenge. And no your father is not a choirboy. But the man's human too. He's fifty-five years old and he's troubled about his life - his vocation, his sexuality, mortality - and he's full of ghosts which go way back into his childhood and he's tormented by things less speakable and knowable...like we all are.
SEBASTION  He wishes I'd never been born.

CAROL  Oh Sebastion...

SEBASTION  If it hadn't been for you getting banged up with me he'd probably be a concert cellist by now. Not a doctor. Which he loathes, pretends he doesn't and takes it out on me.

CAROL  (Looks at him) That's an odd bit of math.

SEBASTION  You think I'm clueless but I'm not.

CAROL  We would've gotten married anyway, Sebastion. We loved each other deeply. You were a bonus - honest. Don't you believe that?

(Pause)

SEBASTION  When I was just a little boy - you won't remember this - we were living in that blueish-green apartment. I was lying in my bed. You were doing something in the kitchen and he was out in the livingroom by himself, he was studying for some exam. He closed a book, he walked across the room, he rubbed the bow across his cello and it startled me, made me cry, it sounded like a monster - and you yelled at him to stop it. And ever since then he's resented me.

(Pause. SEBASTION sulks. Carol puts her hand in his hair)

CAROL  No, Sebastion, I don't remember that. But wonder of wonders - the tangled up web of us.

(He cuddles close to her)
SEBASTION Oh mom. (Beat) Me and you, and Wade...I mean we're nearing a brand-new millennium right? Where survivors explore new territory and survivors hunger for new truths and survivors invent new rules...I mean, I mean mom, mom I believe you knew, on some level, when you took Wade as your lover...well...I honestly believe, that you knew, unconsciously maybe, that he and I...

CAROL Get your hand off my breast, Sebastion.

SEBASTION (Suddenly) Look! There he is! (Hoots) My father, the Country Doctor, thinks he's Spiderman!

THIRTY-SEVEN

(DEERBORN is standing on a ledge beside a window high above the hotel parking lot. We can hear pigeons and distant traffic. There's a man in uniform and sunglasses leaning out the window trying to talk to him)

THORPE Dr. Deerborn? Dr. Deerborn, I’m Staff Sergeant Captain Horatio Thorpe. You took a bullet out of me once and I've always been very grateful for that. Let's have a little chin wag you and me, us two old warriors from the same planet earth. Would that be okay, Dr. Deerborn? Your wife and your son are on their way, they are very concerned for your total well-being and they told me to tell you you have their loving support. Talk to me, Doctor. Say something. (Beat)
DEERBORN  
Give me back my house / Give me back my young wife / Give me back my scalpel / Give me back my mountain view / Give me back my name / Give me back my childhood list...Now sing Now sing

(Beat)
Leonard Cohen.

THORPE  
Can't say I recognize it.

(A police car pulls into the parking lot below them with its lights flashing. THORPE looks down)

THORPE  
(Speaks into two-way) Thorpe. Yeh. Bring them right up here...quick...this guy's doing birdy calls. Out.

(He looks at Deerborn again)
Hang in there, Doc, we'll get this thing figured out. You're a valuable member of society, buster, don't go anywhere. (He ducks back inside the hotel room)

DEERBORN  
I whispered to the dust when the path gave out / Now sing Now sing

THIRTY-EIGHT

(The city moves round and past SHEP's car like a fluid of light and color and contour to give the sense of motion, surreal motion. They are passing a mickey of vodka between them)

TIGER  
Show it to him.

KENNY  
You guys are driving me crazy.
TIGER        Show him it.
SHEP         Should I?
KENNY        There isn't anything you're just teasing me.
SHEP         Should I show it to him?
TIGER        Show it.
KENNY        Jeez you guys...
TIGER        Show him, Shep.
SHEP         I don't know. He might freak out.
TIGER        No he won't.
KENNY        Why would I freak out? What is it? Show me. Liars.
SHEP         Should I?
TIGER        He says to.
SHEP         Should I show him it.
TIGER        He's dying for it.
SHEP         Well if he's absolutely dying for it I guess I better then. I sure wouldn't want anybody dying if they didn't have to.
TIGER        Show it!
SHEP         Don't freak out.
KENNY        Why would I freak out?
SHEP         Just don't. I'm being serious now.

(SHEP reaches between his legs beneath the seat and brings out a gun)
KENNY  (Gawks at it) Holy shit.

TIGER    Told you. (Giggles)

KENNY    Where the hell did you get that?

SHEP     I found it.

KENNY    Is it loaded?

TIGER    Yes!

KENNY    Where did you find it?

TIGER    Tell him. This is so crazy, Kenny. Tell him!

SHEP     At the Sandman Hotel. I got this weird little guy to go into the liquor store there for me and I was just waiting for him to come back out again and I saw this black thing lying there in the middle of the parking lot. Ten feet away. And it looked like a gun. So I got out and went over to it. And there it was and it was a gun.

TIGER    Somebody must have thrown it away after killing somebody that's what I think.

KENNY    And it's loaded?

SHEP     (Cracks it open) Those are bullets, Kenny.

TIGER    Let him hold it.

KENNY    I don't want to hold it.

TIGER    I did.

SHEP     Let's go shoot it off somewhere.

TIGER    Let's go!
THIRTY-NINE

THORPE  How're you doing, Doc? Do you need anything? I'm a team player.

DEERBORN  Have I come so far for this / Tell me master / do my lips move / or where does it come from / this soft total chant that drives my soul like a spear of salt into the rock

THORPE  Don't look down.

DEERBORN  Now sing Now sing!

(He begins playing "air-cello" - hard and passionately, as if for his very life)

FORTY

(High up on a hill)

SHEP  What's there to shoot at? I can't even see anything from up here. Who's idea was this?

TIGER  Just shoot it.

SHEP  I want to hit something.

TIGER  Shoot a tree.

SHEP  What's that over there?

TIGER  Where?

SHEP  Over there.

TIGER  I don't know where you're looking.

KENNY  Garbage can.

SHEP  That's too easy.
KENNY You couldn't even see it a second ago.

SHEP I thought it was something else.

KENNY Have you ever even shot a gun before?

SHEP Yes, my dad's.

KENNY Liar.

SHEP You're starting to get on my nerves, Kenny.

TIGER Shoot it!

SHEP I will!

(He aims - and fires. TIGER jumps up and down with glee. KENNY rubs his ears)

SHEP Let's go somewhere else.

---

FORTY-ONE

ALICE What's going on?

JOGGER (In a red track suit) I dunno, I was just jogging by, there's somebody on that ledge up there.

ALICE Wow.

JOGGER Other people's lives, eh?

ALICE Yeh. No kidding. (Looks around) I thought the Sandman was supposed to be a nice place. This is a dump.

JOGGER You've got the wrong one - there's a newer down on the strip.
ALICE  
(Sighs deeply) I don't even know my own city anymore. I live in rooms. Cab drivers take advantage of me. I haven't had a suntan for years. I've got to get out more.

JOGGER  
(Looks at her) Would you like to go have a beer somewhere?

(She looks at him. Then laughs)

Is that a funny question?

ALICE  
Sort of. I mean I've been saying yes to that particular one since I was sixteen. I'm starting to think it's something about me that needs to be fixed. Or at least toned down.

JOGGER  
Tone it down tomorrow.

ALICE  
(Reconsiders, then:) Thanks but no thanks.

JOGGER  
No harm in trying, huh?

ALICE  
No harm.

JOGGER  
Maybe we'll meet again sometime. Under different circumstances. 
(They both look up)

ALICE  
Right. Really romantic. (He jogs off)

FORTY–TWO

(CAROL leans out of the window)

CAROL  
(Carefully) Martin? (Beat) Martin, it's Carol. Everything is going to be alright now. Please come home.
(Beat) I never stopped loving you, Marty. Let's go home and pick up the pieces. Yes or no?

(Pause)

DEERBORN

Come my darlings / the movies are true / I am the lost sweet singer whose death in the fog your new high-heeled boots / have ground into cigarette butts

CAROL

From our first night together.

DEERBORN

You restless bullets / lost in swarms / from undecided wars: / fasten on / these nude throats / that need some decoration

CAROL

And you over there / my little acrobat: / swing fast / After me / there is no care / and the air / is heavily armed...

TOGETHER

And has the wildest aim

(Long pause)

CAROL

I know how tortured you must be.

DEERBORN

I can see our neighborhood from here.

CAROL

Come home, Marty.

DEERBORN

I've been feeling my soul, like an oyster, moving around in its shell. There must be some kind of delicate hinge in there that connects the soft parts of my being to the bony parts, I mean it's a very...uneasy feeling. Have you ever had that feeling, Carol?

CAROL

(Nods) Most of my adult life, my love.
(A moment, then she climbs out onto the ledge with him. She takes his hand and they gaze across the city together)

CAROL This city's getting so big.

FORTY-THREE

TRUDY What's going on up there, Mister?

KEN McCoo I dunno, there's two people on that ledge, I was just walking by...on my way home.

(TRUDY starts to cry)

KEN McCoo Are you okay?

TRUDY Yeh. No. (He holds her in his arms)

KEN McCoo I know. Sometimes nothing ever seems to go right...boy do I know.

(DR. DOC HOLIDAY walks by. He's very drunk)

DOC HOLIDAY (Sings) Oh give me a home, where the buffalo roam, and the deer and the antelope...

FORTY-FOUR

(In the car)

SHEP Let's make up a game.

TIGER Okay.

SHEP We all pick a color. Then we drive around until we see a color which is one of those colors and the person who picked it has to shoot at it.
TIGER  No matter what it is?

SHEP  Yeh. It's like Russian Roulette but different.

(Long pause)

TIGER  Blue.

SHEP  Green.

(They both look at KENNY)

SHEP  Pick one, Kenny.

TIGER  He'll pick one.

SHEP  He doesn't have to pick one if he doesn't want to though. Don't let any-body push you around, Kenny, you have your own mind.

TIGER  He'll pick one.

KENNY  I have my own mind, Tiger.

SHEP  You may have your own mind, Kenny, but it's my car and my gas and my game. And those three things put together are very much bigger than your mind is. So. If you don't pick a color in about thirty seconds I'm going to drive you home to your whacko house and you will never be invited out with us again.

TIGER  Kennnyyy...

KENNY  Don't push me!

SHEP  ...twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty.

KENNY  Let me see it first, Shep...just let me hold it first.
SHEP  
(Smiles) Sure, Kenny. I understand. 
(He hands the gun to TIGER who hands it to KENNY who hesitates, then takes it. Holds it in both hands, not like a gun)

SHEP  
Like something warm and alive...right? Right, Kenny?

KENNY  
Lighter though...lighter than what I thought it'd be.

SHEP  
Hold it how you're supposed to.

(KENNY holds the gun properly)

That's it. That's right. That's what it really feels like. And there's nothing else in the whole wide world that feels quite like it. Exactly like a gun. The perfect thing for your hand. It actually snuggles back. Can you feel that, Kenny? Can you feel it snuggling back?

KENNY  
(Nods) Yeh.

TIGER  
Way ta go, Kenny. (She starts rubbing his inner thigh)...Pick a color. Pick a color now, Kenny.

KENNY  
Okay.

TIGER  
Say one then.

KENNY  
Um. Red.

TIGER  
That's what I was going to pick and then at the very last moment I changed my mind.

SHEP  
So did I.

TIGER  
Isn't that weird.

SHEP  
Ok. Here we go. We're looking for red.

(We can hear KENNY'S heart pounding...)
(...and pounding, getting louder and louder, as the lights rivering around the car become ecstatic. He's holding the gun in two hands, looking looking)

(We see the JOGGER in red from Sc. 41 stretching out his muscles beside the road)

(KENNY'S heart is pounding wildly now...)

KENNY

My dad never gave me a nickname.

(And the CELLIST plays)

_________________________End

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