

Just Ranting the Blues

Play I:
Writing Out Loud

By:
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A Stage Adaptation of a Screenplay By:
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Characters:

Darren

Doris

Darren's Mother

Sam

A Homeless Man

Jana

A "L" passenger

Harrison

What he likes to be called sometimes.

Moses

A Homeless Man

Toby

A Homeless Man

Shelly

Darren's Ex

Bride

Played by Shelly

Shady Man

A Coping Dealer

SCENE ONE

(Autumn. Chicago, IL.

DARREN sits, glaring out the "L's" window.

JANA sits with a notebook open. She's documenting what occurs on the train, paying special attention to the potential homeless people.

Other people sit and stand waiting for their respected stops.

Unknown to himself, DARREN reads out loud what he writes in his yellow journal. He speaks quietly and under his breath, not a distraction for the people around him.)

DARREN

It's hard to focus. That's because the sickness, my sickness is eating away at my conscious. A constant reminder that my life and existence in general is finite. In my mind that should be enough to have all the people of the world unite under a common banner. Some of us are richer, some smarter, faster. Some even use their exceptionally snappy wit to dominate over others, but unfortunately, at the end of the day, none of us are superior to Death. That evitable thing we've personified as a black robed scavenger that eventually knocks on everyone's door.

(SAM enters from stage right using the emergency exit door.

SAM walks, more like hobbles, to the stage left side of the train car. SAM scans the passengers, analyzing where the most money could be made.

The right side seems to be more profitable. SAM crosses back to stage right. Well rehearsed, he begins.)

SAM

Excuse me ladies and gentlemen, my name is Charlie Sycamore. That's S. Y. C. M. O. R. E. I spell that out for you to reassure you that I am not trying to hustle you. I was recently incarcerated in the Cook County jail. I tell you this so you know that I am a person in dire need of your assistance. It's very hard for decent people like me with a record to find employers willing to extend a hand. I would like to be working, but we all know it is expensive to get the materials I need to be able to go to a job interview. I need new clothes, dress shoes, a haircut and a warm place to stay so I can take a shower. Like I said I'm not trying to hustle you but if you could please help me get some of these things so I can get my start. I don't like this. I want to be a functioning member of society. I don't mean to interrupt you wonderful people. Once again I do not mean to disturb any of you today, but I'm going to have to ask you a favor. I don't have a home to go to like you and I'm hungry. You can go home and eat a dinner and go to bed with a

full stomach, but I go to bed and my stomach is growling. My stomach is growling ya'll. And I wake up and it's still growling. Can anyone please spare a dollar or some change?

(JANA moves over to where DARREN is sitting.)

JANA

A Homo-Constantuslischangeus.

DARREN

Huh?

JANA

Well, I have had the privilege of having to ride this very line, up and down its way, three times today. Going to varies places and stopping at varies stops. And all three times I've been fortunate enough to catch ol' Charlie's show. Each time performing under a different name. Hence, "Hobo-Constantuslischangeus." I think Denny at Sheridan and Sam at Chicago...

DARREN

Right?

JANA

"Constantuslischangeus," meaning, "name-changer," or, "to change name." I gotta say, "Charlie," probably sits the best with me. You know 55th and Halsted? Smoke crack?

DARREN

...Of course.

JANA

Back in the day...

DARREN

...Wait, hm?

JANA

...On the southwest side there use to be this guy named, Toby, Hobo-Fiendus. Hobo-Rileglimpipous, Hobo-Leleglimpipous, just saw a pair of each of them. Oh, Hobo-Entrapacus. Hobo-...Oh I always have trouble with this one...Hobo-Shit-On-Self-us...cus? See? Symbiotic relationships can develop, resulting in frequent evolutions amongst the genus. Hobo-Tweakitous with Hobo-Childhasnteatenindays-us...cus? How am I suppose to know?

DARREN

...

JANA

...Well *I* was the one to name them.

(JANA extends her hand to shake.)

-My name is Jana.

DARREN

Darren.

(He clears his throat.)

My name is Darren.

JANA

Well, Darren, I don't even have to tell you how cool of a name that is, now do I, Darren?

-They're one of the only creatures on Earth that can be found in almost any type of environment, Darren. Why even here, in this comfortingly corrupt lakefront oasis that you and Al Capone have commonly referred to as Chicago, from Cicero and 110th to Hollywood and LSD, Hobos of all varieties can be found, spread out. It's beautiful. And I'm confused as to which one I'm referring to. The city or the Hobo? I mean I once met this Homo-Sapiens who said they didn't go south of Belmont. Anything is possible here, because as long as you do your thing and don't get in the face of anybody doing their thing, you're good to go. And I'm comforted at night, when I lay my head down, that at any moment something could come down from the sky and solve every single problem I have.

(Long pause.)

JANA

If they come over here, I want you to PUNCH 'EM IN THE FACE!

DARREN

Who?

JANA

The Constantuslischangeus.

DARREN

Madame, you have my word as a gentleman. Ha.

JANA

You going to be my god from the machine, Darren?

DARREN

Huh?

JANA

This sucks.

DARREN

What?

JANA

Well you seem good enough.

DARREN

Good enough for what?

JANA

For me to throw myself at. OH! You hear that ladies and gentlemen, that's right I'm here all week.

DARREN

You're funny...

JANA

...Yeah I know, but I'm working a double and will be working doubles for the next couple of days...

(JANA grabs DARREN'S cell phone and begins to program a number in.)

JANA

-Ok you just text me. Covering for a friend, Gabi. She's been taking care of her roommate, he's been going through some shit.

(JANA stands, the train is getting close to the next stop.)

DARREN

Blow it off.

JANA

I would hope you value friendship more than that, Darren? -The doctors says he should be alright. Nothing physically wrong with him. More in the noggin? Who likes rodentia anyway?

DARREN

Huh?

JANA

I like to over complicate things sometimes, keeps you on your toes. -Next week. We'll make a day of it. Exploring things...

DARREN

But, this fuckin' suck...

JANA

I'm in your phone. Jana, with one "n."

(The train stops, doors open.

JANA hesitates. Maybe she'll kiss him, maybe she won't. JANA turns quickly and exits, without kissing DARREN.

Train doors close.

DARREN'S phone rings. He answers it.)

DARREN

Hello? Ok, ok, yeah. Sure. Next week.

(Something comes over DARREN. He's dizzy. He grabs onto a seat or maybe a safety rail to try to stable himself. He's losing breath and consciousness

As he begins to fall to the ground, lights fade down.)

SCENE TWO

(Lights up quickly.

Autumn. Chicago, Illinois. DARREN's room. He is in his bed asleep. He is having a nightmare. He wakes up in a cold sweat, but there's nothing out of the ordinary about that. He always has nightmares.

Darren's mom, DORIS, can be heard from outside of his room.)

DORIS

Who put this...

(DORIS enters, realizes DARREN has just woken up.)

DORIS

Hole in the wall?!? Oh, we're you asleep?

DARREN

No...

DORIS

Who put this hole in that wall?

(DARREN violently rips the covers from around him.)

DORIS

Another nightmare?

DARREN

They're all nightmares.

(Pause)

DARREN

My dreams tell me I don't have long to live.

DORIS

Oh, oh, don't say things like that Boo Boo...

(Pause. DARREN gets out of his bed and heads to his closet to pick something out to wear. He puts on the articles of clothing as he finds them.)

DORIS

And where are you supposed to be going? You know the doctors said...

DARREN

I KNOW...I know what the doc, what she said. Mom, I'm not dead yet. I have life and shit...stuff to do.

DORIS

I'm not nagging...

DARREN

Ha...

DORIS

It's just, just because you're feeling better doesn't mean...

DARREN

WHO SAID I'M FEELING BETTER?

(DARREN begins to cough, lightly. DARREN exits.)

DORIS

(Calling after DARREN.)

At least take a shower, you smell like sick...

SCENE TWO

SCENE THREE

(A street. DARREN sits at a bus stop. He writes in his yellow journal, undisturbed by the commotion around him.)

DARREN speaks out loud what he is writing, as he writes it.)

DARREN

"I am dying. Therefore, any apprehensions one would have when they seemingly seem to be talking to themselves elude me. And thank goodness for that...not the dying part, of course, of course not that. Although one wonders."

(Slight pause.)

DARREN

"Diary of a Dying Man. By Darren Marlow Black. Chapter one, fear. When you're dying, everything you think you know becomes a question. Is there actually a Heaven or Hell? I mean my mama says there is, but what if she's wrong? I only know what I've been told and realizing *that* fact in the face of your own demise, well let's just put it this way...it doesn't help ease my sleep. To be honest, to me, the whole Jesus dying for our sins thing sounds like a fairy tale to me.

(HARRISON rides by on his bike and falls in front of DARREN.)

DARREN

Damn bro, you alright?

HARRISON

Darren?

DARREN

Yeah...

HARRISON

Shit son, small fuckin' world.

(They embrace.)

HARRISON

(Towards the bike.)

Fuck you! You are the devil, you are the devil!

DARREN

Ha...

HARRISON

Even the bitch's bike mocks me.

DARREN

Huh?

HARRISON

My girlfriend...

DARREN

Tiki?

HARRISON

Yeah, well ex-girlfriend, we broke up this morning. So I stole her bike.

DARREN

Explains the girl bike. You know, I've never understood why girls bikes have the middle bar going down like that, when the boy's is higher up. When I'm riding a bike and if I fall off, I'd much rather have that girl bar than split my nut sack between that high ass guy's bar.

HARRISON

See, I'm so happy you're here, waiting for the bus?

(DARREN just sarcastically looks at the bus sign.)

HARRISON

Can I ask you a question?

DARREN

Go ahead.

HARRISON

Does head count as cheating?

DARREN

What?

HARRISON

You know, “brain?”

DARREN

Um, not really? Well I guess it depends.

HARRISON

My girl...

DARREN

Tiki?

HARRISON

Yeah, what?

DARREN

Nah, nothing, I’ve just always thought it’s a funny name...

HARRISON

That bitch is mad cause I got head from her sister. She flipped out?

DARREN

Ha, you did what?

HARRISON

Her sister said I had a small penis and I had to prove her wrong. So I whipped it out and she blushed.

DARREN

You’re an asshole...

HARRISON

One thing led to another and things got out of hand and into her mouth.

DARREN

It’s you girlfriend’s sister...

HARRISON

Exactly!

(Pause)

HARRISON

She acts like it was a stranger or something...

DARREN
Ha...

HARRISON
Where you heading?

DARREN
A friend's.

HARRISON
You mean you actually have friend's other than me?

(HARRISON picks up the bike and begins to it offstage.)

HARRISON
Cool.

(HARRISON lights a cigarette.)

HARRISON
I'll see you around. Hey you want to smoke?

DARREN
Nah man, no time...

HARRISON
...You sure man, I got some Waldo. You smoke this shit...

(HARRISON coughs.)

HARRISON
...You don't know where you at.

DARREN
Nah, thanks...got shit to do before I go...

HARRISON
...No worries, you want a ride

(HARRISON sarcastically glares at DARREN's stolen bike.,

HARRISON
No, my big black truck, it's up the street.

DARREN
No, I'm good. I kinda just want to ride the bus today.

(DARREN begins to cough.)

HARRISON

See ya around, Darren...

(HARRISON exits and soon after we hear a truck starting up and peel off.)

DARREN continues to wait for the bus, checking his cell phone for the time every now and then. Very impatient. MOSES confronts DARREN.)

MOSES

Say young blood, have you accepted GOD in your life?

DARREN

(Trying not to laugh.)

Yeah man...

MOSES

You know Ray 4, verse 13 say, "give on to yo fellow man."?

DARREN

Nah, sorry bro, I don't have...wait, there's no Ray book in the Bible.

MOSES

My brotha, I just need three dollars.

DARREN

Get the hell out my face.

MOSES

Well go SUCK AN EGG THEN!

(DARREN goes back to writing out loud in his journal.)

MOSES exits.)

DARREN

It may just be me, but the population of hobos has increased.

(A swarm of hobos, including MOSES, enter twirling DARREN to stand.)

DARREN

I wouldn't be surprised if these bums were working together.

(The hobos begin to congregate. And DARREN emerges as the HEAD HOBO. This is obviously a manifestation of DARREN's thoughts.)

HEAD HOBO

Order, order. Now, I called this meeting because it's time we expand. Now there's a lot of suckers, uh, I mean "generous people", ha...does anyone have any idea of how we can go corporate?

TOBY

We can buy some crack!

ALL

Yeah!!!

HEAD HOBO

I like your enthusiasm, I like your enthusiasm, but that's kinda why we're here now.

ALL

Oh yeah.../ Oh.../ Yeah, forgot bout that...

HEAD HOBO

Anyone else?

ARMANDO

Um, yeah, this whole corporate idea, uh, sounds like a lot of work to me...I...I don't want to do no work...

ALL

YEAH!!!

HEAD HOBO

You bring up a good point. Well what do you suggest?

ARMANDO

I say we just buy some crack...

ALL

YEAH!!!

HEAD HOBO

Crack it is. Heart attacks for all!

(The HOMELESS PEOPLE begin to exit. DARREN snaps out of his "daydream".)

SCENE FOUR

(SHELLY's Apartment. DARREN enters, writing out loud in his journal. SHELLY is in another room and does not know DARREN is there.)

DARREN

"Chapter two, self-reflection. Death has a way of making you clearly realize those you've hurt. Shelly Matthews was my first love. But you know, one of those first loves that can never measure up to your *true* first love."

(SHELLY hears DARREN's voice. SHELLY enters.)

DARREN

I cheated on her with one of her best friends. When we broke up she hooked up with some horse-faced dike name Theresa.

SHELLY

Darren?

DARREN

Yeah? Yeah, the door was open so I...

SHELLY

No it wasn't...

DARREN

Huh? Oh yeah, I just walked right in...

(SHELLY walks to DARREN with her hand extended.)

SHELLY

Give it to me. The door wasn't opened, I locked it, I just locked it.

(Pause. DARREN reaches in his pocket and retrieves a set of keys, He gives SHELLY her keys)

SHELLY

What are you doing out of bed?

DARREN

Got some stuff to take care of.

SHELLY

What are you doing here?

DARREN

I wanted to come see you.

SHELLY

Well you can't stay long, Theresa is coming over...

DARREN

...Oh Theresa...

SHELLY

Theresa is coming over in a few minutes and you know how jealous she is of you.

DARREN

Is it because of my penis? Because *I have* a penis...

SHELLY

Ha, no. She says you're responsible for the emotional walls I put up.

DARREN

Somebody needs to put a wall up in front of her face.

SHELLY

Looks aren't everything Darren, I went out with you.

DARREN

Oh, it's like that?

SHELLY

It's been that way since I first met you, Darren Black, and you know that.

DARREN

You had your hair in those pigtails and you were wearing those black framed glasses...

SHELLY

What?

DARREN

Whatever happened to those glasses?

SHELLY

What's wrong Darren?

DARREN

Why does anything have to be wrong?

SHELLY

It's not every day someone leaves their deathbed to come visit me.

DARREN

You think it would matter...

SHELLY

I lost them that night...

DARREN

The glasses?

SHELLY

(Nods her head.)

Lost them that night we wine bar hopped.

DARREN

Oh yeah. Very good night.

(Pause. SHELLY bashfully smirks.)

SHELLY

Yeah, good night.

(Pause)

DARREN/SHELLY

You know I wish things went better between us.../ Listen, she's going to be here any minute...

SHELLY

Can I call someone for you? I just really don't feel like hearing her voice.

DARREN

I'm just going to meet up with Harrison here in a little while...

SHELLY

Who?

DARREN

Just let me finish. I'm sorry for hurting you. Before I go, I would just like to make you happy. I love you.

(Pause)

SHELLY

No, no, I'm with Theresa...

DARREN

So...

SHELLY

"So?" What? No, Darren...

DARREN

Is she better in bed?

SHELLY

She's a better listener than you and she thinks about me before herself.

DARREN

Still not convinced, Pippy, got to give me more...

SHELLY

Don't call me that! You know, don't call me that, you know I hate when you call me that.

DARREN

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I was joking, ok, not funny...

SHELLY

Just forgive and forget?

DARREN

It could be that easy. That's all...

SHELLY

You slept with my best friend, Darren...

DARREN

So did you!?!

SHELLY

Get the fuck out.

DARREN

Huh?

SHELLY

This isn't some fuckin' joke, Darren. You're finding this funny, I know you are. You're a selfish man, Darren.

(DARREN takes an engagement ring out of his pocket and gets on one knee without SHELLY noticing. He turns towards her when he's ready.)

SHELLY

Darren?

DARREN

Shelly, my feelings for you won't change and neither will yours. I'm not going to be here long but if you marry me, Shelly, the rest of my life will feel like an eternity, and damn that didn't sound as romantic as I thought it was going to.

SHELLY

Been rehearsing that?

DARREN

I rehearse everything...

SHELLY

...Darren...

DARREN

Will you marry me, Pip...Shelly? Shelly.

SHELLY

God Damnit, Darren! Fuck, fuck, fuck...

DARREN

"Fuck, fuck, fuck..." yes?

(The door bell rings and then a knock.)

SHELLY

Theresa.

DARREN

So?

SHELLY

Remember how I said that's how it's been since I met you?

DARREN

Yeah...

SHELLY

Darren, I think you love me, but it's because you love to hurt me. It's not your fault, or I mean I don't think you do it on purpose. But you do get off on me being sad and I've noticed this for awhile. And this isn't just something I just came up with to get you out, because Theresa's coming.

(HARRISON knocks on the door from outside of the apartment.)

Pause. SHELLY freezes in place as HARRISON enters.)

HARRISON

You know, Shelly, you should really start locking that door. Come on Darren, you know you don't really want to be here.

DARREN

What the hell? Oh, am I hallucinating again?

HARRISON

Yep.

DARREN

Straight trippin'.

HARRISON

Yep. You know, she's right. You do get off on her being sad.

DARREN

Yeah...

HARRISON

You're just horny.

DARREN

Yep... Wait! Can she hear you?

HARRISON

Nope...

DARREN

Oh, good.

(Slight pause.)

DARREN

Wait, so does that mean she can hear me?

HARRISON

Yep. And you're just imagining me being here, so I'll let you guess who's saying what I'm saying.

DARREN

That's going to be awkward...

HARRISON

You don't need to hurt her anymore. She doesn't deserve to feel that way just because you're lonely.

DARREN

Yeah. Ok.

(HARRISON and DARREN make their way to the door.)

DARREN

I wonder why I sent for you...

HARRISON

(Shrugs his shoulders.)

Uh-huh.

(They exit. SHELLY unfreezes and immediately breaks down in a surge of emotions. She runs to her phone to call DARREN's mother.)

SHELLY

Hello? Mrs. Williams...

SCENE FIVE

(DARREN and HARRISON walk down a sidewalk.

A CTA "L" train can be heard in the distance and then fades.)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Doors Closing. Next stop is Western. This is a train to O'Hare...

DARREN

Where are we going?

HARRISON

You tell me...

DARREN

What?

HARRISON

“What?” what?

DARREN

“What, what?”

(Pause.)

DARREN

So do you actually have a destination? Or are we just walking around?

HARRISON

No, we’re driving.

(HARRISON exits. We hear a Hummer start up from off stage.)

DARREN

You know, I applaud Hummer men and women. Hummer Folks, is what I like to call them...

(HARRISON reenters.)

HARRISON

That’s my big black truck, my baby.

DARREN

Hummer Folks can do whatever they want to and it’s because of the very vehicle that gives them their name and power. –One time I saw a Hummer take down ten, shit fifteen people. There’s nothing like a massacre in the morning to get the brain working on a way to justify senseless violence. And when I say “take down” I should say like being splattered on the front window of a car going fast down a freeway. People were turning into mush right in front of my eyes. This is the power Hummer Folks wield. Then when the cops showed up, do you think the Hummer Folk was stopped? No, not by a long shot, the Hummer Folk just climbed over the police car. Please don’t be mistaken. I don’t believe Hummer Folk aren’t susceptible to damage. Oh, hell no...see, every once in awhile the cops would get a good blow in, rip off a piece of the armor off the modern street tank and I would think to myself, “Oh shit. Yeah that’s it, no questions about it. *That* Hummer can’t possibly going any further.” But no, nah that Hummer Folk damn sure just kept on going. It finally blew up, in a blaze of glory with the driver still inside. It *was* a video game, but video games use logic from reality, I would assume. Which leads me to believe that something like this could happen? It’s scary when you think about it, these Hummer Folks. So

committed to their killing machines that they're willing to sacrifice half of their pay checks to filling the fucker up *and* they *completely* ignore the detrimental damage they're causing to the environment every time they're on the road. That's dedication. That's love. I pray I can love like that someday...

(From off stage we hear BRIDE.)

BRIDE

Where could he be...or she, oh yes, I forgot, or she could be?

HARRISON

(To DARREN.)

You're really long winded...

(BRIDE enters. BRIDE is played by the actress playing SHELLY, but she is NOT SHELLY. BRIDE sees DARREN.)

BRIDE

He's perfect.

DARREN

No, I can't certainly, most definitely say I am not...Shelly?

BRIDE

What? No.

(BRIDE points to herself.)

BRIDE

Bride.

(BRIDE grabs DARREN's hand and starts to dragging him around stage trying to find a preacher.)

DARREN

Who would want to be perfect?

(Slight pause.)

BRIDE

Oh. Oh, that's a pretty perfect answer. Oh he's just perfect.

HARRISON

Does someone have their knobs on repeat?

(BRIDE looks at HARRISON with a wide smile.)

BRIDE

Oh, vicious with a speck of wit. You're perfect.

(BRIDE grabs HARRISON's hand, he will preside over the wedding. BRIDE hands HARRISON a bible. BRIDE stands DARREN next to her, he will be the groom. DARREN stands, confused, while BRIDE waits for HARRISON to begin.)

DARREN

I'm not comfortable with this...

BRIDE

Oh, it's not that big of a deal...

DARREN

Getting married?

BRIDE

(To HARRISON.)

You can just kinda say anything...

DARREN

Huh?

BRIDE

Improv.

DARREN

I must still be trippin'

BRIDE

You're not tripping, we're getting married.

(Pause.)

DARREN

Go on Harrison, get your preside on.

(Pause.)

HARRISON

Huh?

BRIDE

(Whispers to HARRISON.)

“We’re gathered here...”

HARRISON

Huh? You alright with this Darren?

DARREN

(Whispers to HARRISON.)

Marriage means constant poozle...

BRIDE

Yeah, once every two weeks should be fine...

DARREN

Excuse me?

BRIDE

It’ll be like a pay check.

(Pause. DARREN starts to truly think about his decision. DARREN concludes he’s alright with it.)

HARRISON

Um, ah...ok, ah...we are gathered here to...be witness, to ah... the union...unioning? The joining as a married people, of Darren and...

(HARRISON doesn’t know BRIDE’s name. He points to her.)

BRIDE

(Points to herself.)

Bride.

HARRISON

...And Bride...Darren and Bride...We’re here to celebrate the joining of this man and this woman in...

BRIDE

I wouldn’t say celebrate...

HARRISON

What?

BRIDE
(*Whispers to HARRISON.*)

He knocked me up

DARREN
Whoa, wait a minute, I certainly did not! Oh, oh wait, yeah I forgot, hallucinations.

(*DARREN begins to sarcastically play along.*)

DARREN
I figure, I put the baby in the oven, might as well wait around and see how the dough rises. See, I'm not like a lot of these chumps out here, get a girl pregnant and leave her to rot as a statistic.

HARRISON
Wait, so do you even love him?

BRIDE
Like, "I do" I love you?

DARREN
She doesn't even know me.

BRIDE
A child shouldn't grow up without its father.

DARREN
I couldn't disagree with you more...

BRIDE
Huh?

DARREN
I guess the tax breaks will be worth it...

HARRISON
Darren, I really don't think this is wise.

DARREN
Marriage?

HARRISON
I think you guys are terrible together, I think this is a bad idea, Darren.

BRIDE
Hey man, fuck you.

HARRISON

Excuse me?

DARREN

No, no you're doing great...this is going to work out...

HARRISON

(To BRIDE.)

I mean the institution of marriage, not you two necessarily...

BRIDE

Just because he wets the bed every time he drinks whiskey, doesn't mean I love him any less...

DARREN

How'd you know that?

BRIDE

I'm going to be your wife. I know everything about you...

DARREN

Oh, I don't know, I doubt that...

BRIDE

I love you.

(DARREN looks down at her cleavage.)

DARREN

She's perfect...

HARRISON

She's not perfect...

BRIDE

(To HARRISON.)

You're not perfect...

DARREN

Lighten up, he's not perfect but he's still a good guy.

(BRIDE looks at DARREN, the HARRISON.)

BRIDE

Yeah, I think I'm going to find someone else...

DARREN

Nah, he can do this...go on Harrison.

BRIDE

No, I mean you...

DARREN

What?

BRIDE

We're just not flowin' real well, not groovin' perfectly.

DARREN

Huh?

(BRIDE takes back the bible and exits. While DARREN screams off stage, HARRISON exits without being noticed.)

DARREN

FINE! I don't mind that you wasted a good twenty minutes of my life...if that's what being in love and getting married is all about, you can keep it.

(DARREN talks to HARRISON as if he were there.)

DARREN

Can you believe that bitch...

(DARREN notices HARRISON has disappeared.)

HARRISON

Harrison? Harrison? Where'd the hell you go?

(DARREN, frustrated, pulls out his journal and begins to write out loud.)

DARREN

Chapter three...um...insert chapter title later. Hm, "later." Chapter three, "Later." The things people push back to the very last minute. And when they find out there last minute will be a lot sooner than a lot later, they do these things on the mere fact that they were on the bottom of the list. So what was on the bottle of my priority list? Did I just write that? Am I just writing what I think now? Is that what I'm doing now? Have I just been saying all of that? Dear God, I'm losing my mind.

(HARRISON enters.)

HARRISON

Out of the ball park.

DARREN

Where the hell'd you go?

(Slight pause.)

HARRISON

Got a hotdog...

DARREN

Here I am, emotionally breaking down and your just disappear. How you going to leave an emotionally broken man alone?

(DARREN puts away his journal and gets out a can of spray paint.)

HARRISON

Where'd you get that?

DARREN

The suburbs.

HARRISON

No, I mean, why do you have a can of spray paint hanging out in your bag?

DARREN

I've been living in Chicago my whole life. I thought that's just something you do? I'm doing some taggin'

HARRISON

Ok, I'll play along.

DARREN

Good, it's the best way to play.

(DARREN begins to climb up to the spot where he's going to tag.)

DARREN

I'm dying but I'll be damned if I'm going to die helplessly in a fuckin' bed. I got too much to live for and EVERYONE WANTS ME IN BED.

HARRISON

If you start feeling bad, just let me know, I'll take you home.

DARREN

Ha, bro, I'm dying...ha...I always feel bad.

HARRISON

Now you do know people get arrested for this sort of thing.

(They get to the spot and DARREN begins to tag.)

DARREN

We good?

HARRISON

Coast is clear...

DARREN

If the cops are more concerned with us, than all the murderers and meth heads, than fuck them, we're screwed no matter what we do. There's no reasoning with distorted priorities like that.

(Pause.)

HARRISON

Can I ask you a question?

DARREN

It going to be an awkward one?

HARRISON

Any other, with me?

DARREN

Ha, no, no guess not.

(Pause.)

HARRISON

You scared?

(HARRISON sneezes.)

DARREN

Someone coming?

HARRISON

No...bless me.

DARREN

What? Oh, bless you...

HARRISON

...Thank you...

(Pause.)

DARREN

I use to be. But, you know, I've had some time to think about it, get comfortable...you know, with the facts. Stop me if you've heard this before...

HARRISON

Stop, I've heard it all...

DARREN

...We start dying the day we're born. The heavy weight of possibilities is something we have to live with every single day. When I found out, that's the way I started to look at things and it made death feel a lot less unfamiliar and that's all we're ever really fearing, unfamiliarity. Thinking like this got me to be alright with the ways things have to go down. Only problem is, I think this realization has detached me from the world.

HARRISON

What do you mean?

DARREN

I mean...I feel like I'm already dead.

(DARREN begins to cough violently. He hurries to finish up.)

HARRISON

Ha, oh Darren, you're so dramatic.

(Police sirens can be heard coming in the direction of the pair.)

HARRISON

OH SHIT! Break! Scatter!

(HARRISON runs away and exits.)

DARREN

My lungs are on fire. I'm alright...

(DARREN completes the tagging and climbs down. He tries to run, but

can't and collapses.)

SCENE SIX

(DARREN is in front of his house. We hear HARRISON's Hummer driving off. DARREN wrestles with his keys. He's forgotten which one opens the door.

SHADY MAN enters and walks up to DARREN.)

SHADY MAN

I got what you lookin' fa...

DARREN

I doubt that.

SHADY MAN

I'll turn a ten to a grand real quick...

DARREN

Huh?

SHADY MAN

I got what you need, son!

DARREN

You going to make my body not as diseased ridden, so I can remember which key goes to this door?

SHADY MAN

A'hight! You pickin' up what I'm puttin' down?

DARREN

I haven't picked a thing up, not one thing you've said.

(SHADY MAN opens his coat.)

SHADY MAN

I got the things you need to cope with life, son.

(SHADY MAN looks in his coat.)

SHADY MAN

You familiar with Christianity?

DARREN

Yeah, but only about twenty years worth...

SHADY MAN

Well then you know the greatness of this religion, great coping mechanism. Skeet, skeet, skeet, sin, sin, sin. Repentance. Forgiveness. Bing, bang, boom. Then you get to spend an eternity hanging out with your old dead hamster or good ol' dead wife, all the substantial individuals that were in your life.

DARREN

I...huh, I don't know? Nah, I've already tried that.

SHADY MAN

So, had yourself a little taste and don't want no mo?

DARREN

Yeah, had a little sample...

SHADY MAN

Oh you had a little sample? Well than feast your eyes on this...

(SHADY MAN looks in his coat again.)

SHADY MAN

I got something in here...where is it, I just saw it...oh here it is. Atheism, you ever think about being an Atheist?

DARREN

Nah...no, not really...

SHADY MAN

Yeah, you're right, that's just as much work as Christianity. You afraid?

DARREN

People have been asking me that, all day they have, no...I'm not afraid...I think...

SHADY MAN

I feelya, I feelya..."not afraid." Drugs? I got uppers and downers, inners and outers. Anything a person needs to cope with life...

DARREN

Oh, so you're a drug dealer?

SHADY MAN

Nah man, I'm a coping dealer... You want to get through the day to day monotony and hustle, bustle. Car won't start, you lose your house, you come to me... YOU COME TO ME!

DARREN

I'll try keeping that in mind.

(SHADY MAN exits. DARREN finally finds the right keep and enters his house. He finds a note from his mom.)

DARREN

"Where are you, been trying to call. Call me A.S.A.P."

(DARREN continues to walk towards his bedroom. He finds his mother half passed out in a lazy boy, drunk.)

DARREN

(Surprised.)

Oh, I thought you were out...

DORIS

There are a few things I would like to tell you before I die.

DARREN

You been drinking, ma?

DORIS

Can't sit down with your mom? Always got to be rippin' and runnin', coming and going all over the place.

DARREN

Where's dad?

DORIS

He took your brother and sister out for pizza, fucker didn't even ask me if I wanted any pizza. I like Gino's Pizza too...

(DARREN begins to make his way to his room again.)

DORIS

You going back out?

DARREN

No, nah, not right now, no... I might go out a little later. I can chill with you for a minute though, I don't have anything to do.

DORIS

Me either, great, great...this is great...

(DARREN sits next to DORIS.)

DORIS

(Mostly to herself.)

America, I've never known a place with so many balding men with beautiful women on their arms. This sticks out to me. – Friends. Friends are probably one of the greatest freebies us humans have while being on this planet. Well I guess they're not so free, friendships. You have to work for them sometimes. We're not born with this, but if you're lucky your friends will become an expansion of your family, the thing you *are* born with. When this happens, if it happens, you keep those friends close to you. Close to your heart, so you have compassion and love for them. Close to your head, so that at any given moment they're on someone's mind. – Go on an adventure and don't plan it out before hand, just go. Experience a new place, completely open to the new encounters you may come across, don't be scared. – Paranoia can be your biggest enemy, not knowing what direction *it* is going to come from. It can be crippling, but don't let it be. Fight through it with all your might all your might and when you think you're done, you can't take no mo, then dig down deep for a little more courage and fight some more. Yep, paranoia will only get in the way of your potential happiness. It's a big waste of time. – Always, always be true to yourself and your convictions. It's so easy to get lost in society's attempt to make everyone the same...and I use to say a lot more here, but just lost...don't get lost. Embrace everyone's differences. Embrace your differences. – Finally, there's absolutely nothing wrong with ranting. In my opinion some of the most honest, truthful words spoken come from ranting, shooting off at the mouth without necessarily thinking about what you gonna say beforehand. – So there you have it, my words. Spread them around and make them known. I would do it but...

(DORIS passes out and DARREN is left alone to absorb everything his mother has just said. After a moment DARREN makes his way to his room. He plops on his bed face down.)

HARRISON enters and leans over DARREN in the bed.)

HARRISON

You look sexy!

DARREN

Harrison? Harrison, what the hell are you doing here?

HARRISON

All sprawled out like that...

(DARREN grabs HARRISON.)

DARREN

Harrison, what the fuck are you doing in my house?

(HARRISON begins to chuckle.)

HARRISON

Calm down champ...

DARREN

I'm getting tired of you popping in and out. All day with you...

HARRISON

Calm down...

(DARREN begins to cough.)

DARREN

Don't tell me to fucking calm down, calm down? You broke into my fuckin' house man...

HARRISON

No I didn't...

(HARRISON looks around.)

HARRISON

House?

(DARREN starts to frantically cough.)

HARRISON folds DARREN's sheets and places them neatly on his bed.)

HARRISON

Look at you...look. You want answers, you can't even breath.

(HARRISON throws DARREN a sweater.)

DARREN slips into the sweater as they begin to walk. The room has disappeared. Where there were once "walls" now there is open space.)

HARRISON

BANG!!!

DARREN

Whoa, wait a minute, man...

HARRISON

Nah, I'm shitting you. It's not real, look?

(HARRISON squirts the water gun.)

See, look you're so tense. -Watch for the car.

DARREN

Huh?

(A car horn honks.)

HARRISON

Let's keep walking. I am here to take you out of your misery.

(HARRISON puts up the gun.)

In the distance we can begin to hear a train coming closer.)

HARRISON

You're dying, right?

DARREN

Yeah...

HARRISON

You been in coma, right?

DARREN

Yeah...no, wait no, no...

HARRISON

Well yeah...

DARREN

What?

TRAIN ANNOUNCER

(Faintly in the distance.)

The train will arrive in three minutes.

HARRISON

You'd been sick for a long time before that day on the train. So when you collapsed that day...

DARREN

Wait, I collapsed?

HARRISON

Stay with me, will you? Yeah that day on the train. Jana, with one “n”.

DARREN

Yeah...sorry.

HARRISON

No worries. Where was I, um...sorry, um...oh yeah I gave it to you. Gave you dying? Well gave you the thing that's killing you. Gave you death? Yeah? It's hard to rap a mind around it...

DARREN

That's not humanly possible...

HARRISON

Yeah?

DARREN

I'm confused...

HARRISON

Nah, no you're not...

DARREN

YES I AM!

HARRISON

It's really not that hard...I've got to tell you, you put up one hell of a fight, though. You turned me down so many different times.

(Slight pause.)

DARREN

You're Death.

HARRISON

People give me a lot of bullshit names, but yeah, yeah we can go with that one.

DARREN

I have to tell you you're nothing like I thought you would look.

HARRISON

Oh well, we try to personalize things for people, you know. I come to you as a close person from

your past.

DARREN

Yeah?

HARRISON

Yeah, I came to you as your best friend since fourth grade, when you got into that fight with a girl and no one had your back. And I was the only one in class who didn't think you were out of line for Superman back-fisting that sneaky bitch. But *THAT BITCH* was out of line.

DARREN

Nah, didn't have a best friend Harrison. I knew a Harrison once. Once went to one of those massage parlors with him, but realize we only had fourteen dollars to our name and we were not going to share a hand-job, so we left.

HARRISON

Oh...

DARREN

...Yeah...

HARRISON

...Oh really?

DARREN

...Yep.

HARRISON

Hope that doesn't mess up any of your paper work.

(We begin to hear the noise of a crowd at a train stop.)

DARREN

So Shelly's, taggin, didn't happen?

HARRISON

(Quickly shrugs his shoulders)

It's all a perception thing really.

DARREN

How can I have a perception if I'm dead?

HARRISON

Oh yeah, sure you can. Conductors and your family have this kinda living perception of this situation and you very much have a detached from this particular physical world type perception...

DARREN

A dead perception...

HARRISON

Not dead yet.

(DARREN calms down. HARRISON checks the time on his cell phone.

The pair are now at the edge of the stage, as if they were on a platform.)

DARREN

Well, let's go...

(DARREN takes a huge step forward and HARRISON stops him by placing his arm across DARREN's chest.)

HARRISON

That's it, that easy?

DARREN

Well I imagine I can't say goodbye to anyone that matters? Can I say goodbye?

(DARREN waits for a response. He does not get one. DARREN takes a huge step forward.

Once again, HARRISON stops him with an arm across the chest.)

DARREN

Figured. It's freakin' cold out here.

(Pause.)

TRAIN ANNOUNCER

The train is approaching.

HARRISON

Well I hate to be anti-climatic but I thought it would take a lot longer to get you to come, so we kinda have a few minutes...why are you coming so easily if you don't mind me asking?

DARREN

Not at all, have you ever tried dying?

HARRISON

Um...well, no, no I guess not.

(Pause. HARRISON pulls out a flask. Offers some to DARREN.)

HARRISON

Whiskey?

DARREN

Nah...

(DARREN remembers his journal. He pulls it out of his back pocket. This time he writes without saying a word.

After DARREN is done writing he closes the journal and throws it on what use to be his bed.)

DARREN

I don't have to worry about being suave or spry, the quote, unquote "normal." There's no more quote, unquote "normal." Shit there's no more quote, unquote. Right? Is God a nice being?

(The once distance train has gotten louder as it's gotten closer.

HARRISON talks over the approaching train. The train is right on top of them now.)

HARRISON

When are you people going to get it through your heads. There is no possible way to fathom the infinite possibilities that embody the eternity that is death.

(HARRISON now lightly pushes DARREN.

Lights out.

DARREN also screams over the noise from the train.)

DARREN

I see the tunnel, but two lights?

(We hear people scream, the train's brakes, a collision and people's reactions.)

THE END