

THE TANK



BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS
DAVID QUANG PHAM

DIRECTOR FANG TSENG

MUSIC DIRECTOR CARLA MONGADO

STAGE MANAGER DENIZ DEMIRKURT

PRODUCER CAITLIN MAYERNIK

DRAMATURG ALIYAH CURRY



312 W 36TH ST, MANHATTAN, NEW YORK 10018

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2024

@ScienceTheatre

Turnover: A New Leaf

A Plant-Based Musical

By David Quang Pham

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THANK YOU

Queer Theatre Kalamazoo 2022-2025

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 Lori Hatfield Music Director ♀ C Heaps QTK Managing Director
 ♀ Karen Libman QTK Board President ♀ Molly Lewis, Nathan Moore, Adam Ostrander, Michael Vasicek QTK Board VP

The Tank 2024

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 Shiana Mainarich Photographer ♀ Max Boone Parsley ♀ Veronica Dang Rau
 Kimi Handa Brown Pyrus ♀ John Gallop III Malus
 Erick Carter Mayor Canna Blomquist & DJ Cauliflower ♀ Ethan Lucas Percussion
 Joshua Erickson Piano ♀ Tommy Ong Guitar ♀ Emerson Cyrus Olson Violin

Theatre on the Verge 2023-2024

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 Maya Nguyen-Haberneski Stage Manager ♀ Kimi Handa Brown Parsley
 Veronica Dang Rau ♀ Gina Prince Pyrus ♀ Drew Russell DuBoff Malus
 Joshua Erickson Piano ♀ Mark Rascati, Frank L Turner Jr. Guitars

Awards: Best Book, Best Direction, Best Dramaturgy, Best Conducting, Best Chemistry - Parsley & Pyrus, + 3 Other Awards

Nominations: Best Musical, Best Performance in Lead Comedy Role, Best Orchestrations, Best Duet - "Photosynthesis", 7 Other Noms.

Undiscovered Countries 2023

Alton Alburo, Barbara Begley, Leigh Douglas, Kaela Mei-Shing Garvin, Adin Lenahan Board of Directors ♀ Tuânminh Albert Đỗ Parsley
 Maria Noriko Cabral Pyrus ♀ Xiaoxiao Sun Malus ♀ Erick Carter Narrator

Working Title Playwrights 2023-2024

Amber Bradshaw Managing Artistic Director ♀ Adrian Baynard, Robin Bloodworth, Terry Burrell, Alexandra Ficken, Quinn Xavier Hernandez, Brian Kurlander, Maya Lawrence, Crystal Le, Antonia LeChé, Matt Mercurio, Sofia Palmero, Michelle Pokopac, Olivia Schaperjohn, Avery Sharpe, Imani Vaughn-Jones, Ryan Vo WTP Monday
 Night Development Workshops Readers

DAVID QUANG PHAM (he★they)

David Quang Pham is a musical theater science communicator authoring regionally and Off-Broadway-produced science musicals. As a Vietnamese American scientist, Eastern fables and modern science inform his stories. His notable musicals that personify astrophysics, quantum mechanics, climatology, chemistry, entomology, and botany are respectively: *Ellipses* (2024 Syracuse NWNV semifinalist, 2023 Theatre About Science Intl. Conference, 2023 Musical Theatre Factory at Signature Theatre, 2023 Milky Way Theatre Company at Theatre 71, 2022 Colorado New Musical Festival, 2022 O'Neill Theater Center semifinalist, 2021 Working Title Playwrights), *Tour* (2020 Downtown Urban Arts Festival finalist), *The Seasoned Veteran*, *Chemicals in the Water*, *The Bookworms*, and *Turnover: A New Leaf*. He wrote *Life After* (2023 NYPL Performing Arts at Bruno Walter Auditorium) with Stephanie L. Carlin and Marie Incontrera. He is writing *Parallel University; The Control Freaks; and The Poster Child*, a TYA fantasy. His musicals have been produced in Atlanta, Boulder, Kalamazoo, Manhattan, Philadelphia, and Coimbra, Portugal.

After finishing an astrophysics and theatre education at Michigan State University, he studied playwriting as the 2020-21 New Play and Dramaturgy Apprentice of *Working Title Playwrights*, Atlanta. He was the 2021-22 Literary Fellow of *Playwrights Foundation*, San Francisco. Composer *Janelle Lawrence* mentors him, helping to forge his broad range of musical styles including pop, punk, tango, and Cai Luong. *Harriet Tubman Effect Institute* commissioned his music. His interviews with composers for Kennedy Center's *BIPOC Critics Lab* are published in The Public and *TheaterMania*. Alexis Hauk interviewed him in the American Theatre Magazine's Winter 2024 issue. He also consults on stories that explore STEM. His recent dramaturgical credit is *Millennials are Killing Musicals* by *Nico Juber* (2022 29-hour reading, Open Jar Studios). His recent stage management credit is BAS by *Janelle Lawrence* and *Sugar Vendil* (2023 JACK). He is a moderator at *LMDA*; a screenwriter for the We Forgot the Title sketch group; founding member of *CreateTheater* and the International Dramaturgy Lab; member of *ΣΠΣ*, *ASCAP*, and the *Dramatists Guild*. He plays trombone in the *Queer Big Apple Corps*, *MUSE*'s Broadway Sitzprobe Experience, and professionally in *Marching Band Casting*.

His moonbase is in Washington Heights. His earth is Wyoming, MI. Be up to lightspeed at sciencetheatre.us and @sciencetheatre.

PLOT SUMMARY

Turnover: A New Leaf is a plant-based musical about how two business-owning families, who are rooted in prejudice, overturn their views when their queer kids start rooting for each other.

In Dirty City, a Cilantro arrives. Rau Răm is an Asian immigrant and expectant mother hoping to start a salon business. When no one can spare a plot of land, Malus Crabapple welcomes her with a neighboring open plot. Rau is a bit hesitant due to Malus's gay nightclub, FigLeaf. But FigLeaf patrons have a liking for Rau's body oil that spices up their skins. Rau happily takes their money yet cannot support their "lifestyles." But the major turnover would be Rau's son: Parsley ("Move the Plot Forward").

This teen operates Salontro's day-to-day business and spends the nights with his mom ("A Natural"). As summer starts, Malus introduces Parsley to their teenage nibbling Pyrus ("Amount to Anything"). Parsley helps Pyrus with issues they have with the other flowers ("Grow a Pair"). Pyrus invites him to hang out and pays him with a beverage called Miracle ("Test the Water").

Parsley asks Rau to go with Pyrus to the movies. She reluctantly lets him go. At Cantaloupe Outlets, Parsley and Pyrus pose in a photo booth ("Photosynthesis"). Pyrus then takes him clothes shopping. He discovers a liking for different floral styles, especially crop tops ("Crop Top"). Nearby, Rau picks a fight with Malus over finances. They soon bump into Parsley and Pyrus. Rau's world turns upside down when she sees Parsley's crop top. Malus explains Rau's prejudice to Pyrus ("Soiled").

Parsley is grounded ("Fertile"). Soon, Pyrus helps Parsley sneak out. With their guest DJ Cauliflower, they have the time of their lives ("Dirt on You"). However, herbs are not accustomed to the nightlife and this one is especially underaged. Parsley blacks out and ends up in the hospital, getting his stoma pumped.

Malus revisits FigLeaf's founding. FigLeaf closes down due to underage drinking laws violations ("Fig Leaf"). Rau and Malus introspects. Rau feels that Malus's "lifestyle" is as natural as the greens around, whereas Malus sees Rau less as invasive and more invested in the community as Rau agrees to help Pyrus ("Green Card"). Pyrus visits Parsley to part ways before they return to school. Rau offers Pyrus a job if they are ever around again. After all, it is a family business ("Turnover").

Turnover plants coming-of-age themes of family dynamics, immigrant assimilation, performative activism, body image, and the duality between nature versus nurture.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PARSLEY RĀM* (ramen), herbal preteen Asian American boy, Rau's son
 Intelligent, Naive, Zealous

RAU (rah-ow) RĀM (ramen), herbal Asian woman, Parsley's mother
 and the owner of Salontro
 Invasive, Calculative, Zealous

PYRUS (π-rus) CRABAPPLE*, pear-like teen, Malus's nibling
 Self-loathing, Indulgent, Mischievous

MALUS (malice) CRABAPPLE*, apple-like adult, Pyrus's aunty/uncle
 and the owner of FigLeaf
 Grandiose, Wise, Dubious

Supporting Characters

MAYOR CANNA BLOMQUIST* (ka-nuh bloom-qwist), the flowering mayor
 of Dirty City who may show up just for the preshow announcement
 and/or also narrate stage directions during concert readings
 Superficial, Rotten, Unserious

DJ CAULIFLOWER*, the hip-hop and coolest Cruciferous on tour
 Funny, Observant, Pernicious

- ✿ Androgyny Botany: Each character resembles the androgynous nature, with open-ended vocal requirements
- ✿ Queer People of the Global Majority most represent the experiences of these flowers and herbs; cast accordingly
- ✿ The character has green palms* or wear green ribbons* around their wrists. It means that they hold a Green Card.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. "Move the Plot Forward" Malus, Rau, Parsley
2. "A Natural" Rau
3. "Amount to Anything" Pyrus
4. "Grow a Pair" Pyrus, Parsley
5. "Test the Water" Parsley
6. "Photosynthesis" Parsley, Pyrus
7. "Crop Top" Pyrus, Parsley
8. "Soiled (The Family Name)" Rau, Malus, Parsley
9. "Fertile" Parsley, Pyrus
10. "Dirt on You" DJ Cauliflower, Pyrus, Parsley
11. "Fig Leaf" Malus
12. "Green Card" Rau, Malus
13. "Turnover (A New Leaf)" Parsley, Rau, Pyrus, Malus
14. "Bow - Photosynthesis" Company

Notes

Turnover: A New Leaf Reference Guide: turnovershow.com/guide

"Bullshit" ♦ American currency represented by manure-laced bills or coffee beans as coin-like currency

"Crap" or "Poop" ♦ Obscenities

"Photos" on display or taken in a photo booth ♦ Potted plants and literal fruits or vegetables

Audience Engagement

Optional: Many audience members are to wear a green ribbon or other green objects, indicating that they now hold a Green Card. Others who do not are addressed as transplants.

Each seat has bullshit placed on them for the audience to use. This is for such actions like on page 7: "Parsley tosses moisturizers"; page 21: "The CILANTROS trade their body oils"; page 28: PARSLEY trade sweets/water with the audience"; page 40: "They hand party gears to the audience".

Fundraising idea: The show could also sell audience interactions by trading dollar bills for bullshit. The production could trade moisturizers for anyone who have bullshit left after the show.

Before the doors open, the production team would have each audience member address the prompt and write on the prop leaves:

♦ In a sentence, describe how you truly feel about Cilantros.¹

The production team collects all the leaves. The team would curate the best answers for Rau Rām to read in Scene 1 and 11. As a (trans)plant, Rau will read what the audience thinks of her kind much like what the public thinks of immigrants or refugees.

¹ Director Fang Tseng originated the question in a phone call on June 3, 2024.

Preshow Announcement²

MAYOR CANNA BLOMQUIST enters,
perhaps reading a leafy script.

MAYOR
(to the audience)

Wildflowers and manures. This is your dirty Mayor Canna Blomquist speaking. We'd like to thank theatre for planting our garden titled *Turnover: A New Leaf*. Before we plot along, I must give you tourists some pointers. You need to trade in your bills...

The MAYOR holds a dollar bill,
then switches to a brown bill.

MAYOR

For our currency called *bullshit*. Which you all have done a fruitful job at the box office. Keep your bullshit safe—

The MAYOR drops the bills.

MAYOR

Crap! Poop! Pardon my foul fucking language. We don't say the C or P words here. That unenforced law is fucking shitty. I know. Oh, and X- Exits are located there in case of a forest fire.

The MAYOR points to the exits.

MAYOR

Speaking of fired... Who here has a green card?

Optional: The MAYOR singles out audience members who wear no green ribbon.

MAYOR

Some of you did not raise your appendages... Hmm. You must be transplants. Your roots have no place in our soil. No porosity or permeability will ever help you earn a green card here. Oh, you poor tourists need to learn science words like *porosity*! In our program are reference guides to translate our plant language. The tour is a bit over an hour. Welcome to Dirty City!

The MAYOR exits.

² Fang Tseng originated the preshow during her interview to be the director on May 11, 2024.

SCENE 1

DIRTY CITY

Dirty City is a city-wide garden.
The city is scaled down so that a
single block takes a single step.
Empty plots of land scatter about.
It is between seasons. Any season.

RAU, a Cilantro, enters. Her earthy hair and tan gleam. She is expecting a new seed. She tries to plant herself in an empty plot of dirt. A picket that reads "Curb the Herbs" projects upon that plot. RAU moves to another empty plot of land. The same message projects. RAU repeats. The message repeats. The sun sets as RAU collapses.

RAU

Sun... A leaf must not turn away this light.

MALUS, a Crabapple, enters, opposite the sunset. They have green marks on their palms. Their attire is fabulously angelic.

MALUS

Turn over to the night.

RAU turns away from the sunset.

RAU

Chào. Aren't you an angel?

MALUS

Hello. Aren't all Figs?

RAU

Hell! Any Fig is a malice!

MALUS extends their hand to RAU.

MALUS

Dat's my name: Malus Crabapple. I am a Fig-

RAU tries slapping away MALUS's hand, but MALUS nabs her hand.

RAU

Figment of my imagination. Get your appendages off me!

MALUS

Reality... I got to hand it to you. You are no angel. You ain't owed a safe haven. You do not belong on our soil.

RAU knocks down MALUS.

RAU

Heavens. Your kind soiled safety.

MALUS

Your kind of soil is mud.

RAU

Mud is where you're most safe... *Stranger*.

MALUS stands, showing green hands.

MALUS

I ain't the one with no Green Card.

RAU

Where I came from, I had the greenest of cards.

MALUS

The other side of the ocean had the right conditions for you. However, ain't no unconditional love in our Dirty City. Is that what you imagined for the American dream?

RAU

This Cilantro dreams! Bleeds! I believe this city needs its garnishes. Imagine Dirty City's first-ever salon. I know of a better life for my family here...

MALUS

You immigrants got wild dreams. *But imaginations*. You cannot imagine my people living in peace with your family, wherever yours come from.

RAU

You don't know where I come from.

MALUS

Like a leaf, Figs are always floating around the world. Your tone ain't a brussels sprout's.

RAU

Well, your attitude is crap!

MALUS

Watch your language!

RAU

Caca! Pardon my French. I do not have a tone!

MALUS

Okay, well you look like you took a leave from Southeast Asia? All your last names are like... Weed (re: *Nguyen*)?

RAU

Răm. Rau Răm. Lots more last names in Vietnam. And no. You know nothing about life out there.

MALUS

Rau, I ain't judge ya days. Don't judge my nigh-

RAU

I know not of where your nightlife comes from.

MALUS

It stems from birth.

RAU

You chose this light. This lifestyle you have, you are not born with it. You are not natural. I cannot imagine a life without light.

MALUS

You keep this up and your salon stays an imagination. Your story will end here.

RAU

I cannot keep my stems up. No plot of land in Dirty City will ever let me plant myself. I moved this far for what? My story will... What?

1. "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

MALUS

MOVE THE PLOT... MOVE THE PLOT... FORWARD...

MALUS steps onto a colorful plot. They push aside an adjacent block of concrete to unveil fresh soil.

MALUS (CONT'D)

MAKE YOUR ROOTS AT HOME.

RAU

THIS IS YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD?

MALUS

ROOT FOR ME...

RAU

IM LANG (Vietnamese: "Shut up").

MALUS

(Puzzledly)

MAKE YOUR BED.

A tanning bed rolls out. Over time, a seedling grows nearby.

RAU

SHUT UP.

MALUS

I WASN'T BORN WITH LIGHTHEARTEDNESS.
I HAVE CHOSEN IT!

NOW YOU CHOOSE:
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU

OR...?

MALUS

LEAVE THE PLOT HOLE...
(Repeating)
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...
LEAVE THE PLOT HOLE...

RAU reluctantly plants herself.

RAU

WHOLE...

RAU & MALUS

MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU

FORWARD!

MALUS

YOU'RE WHOLE!

SCENE 2

SALON TRO, DAY

The plot thickens. The salon takes over Dirty City. An Open/Closed sign hangs. It faces "Closed."

RAU

Im lang. Im lang. Im lang! Im lang!

MALUS touches the tanning bed.

MALUS

Imagine a better plot device.

RAU

Im lang. The sun is more than anything, but a tanning bed will do.

MALUS

Shut up. I cannot take anymore of your deep gratitude, foreigner.

RAU

We bleed the same eukaryotic cells...

MALUS

Indeed, then treat me like I do.

RAU

But... how much does your wallet weigh?

MALUS

Greedy... You've got morals that need cleansing.

RAU

Greens! It's not greed for us Cilantros to have good taste! Do you have bullshit on you?

MALUS

My business adheres to the capital and makes profits. So yes. What's your worth?

RAU

That'd be ten bullshits, please...

MALUS

Dat's the start of a plot.

MALUS hands a manure-laced bill to RAU. They hide in the tanning bed.

RAU

IT'S THE TURN OF AN ERA!
I WAS DEALT A BAD HAND.
THIS AREA HAS NO REGARD.
THEY TREAT ME AS AN ALIEN.
I HAVE GROWN THESE LEAVES THAT COULDN'T EVER HOLD THIS WATER.
I WAS GONNA COME APART.
BUT I GUESS YOU DO HAVE A HEART.
I HAVE A NEW START.

MALUS gets out of the tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)

TURN AROUND. NICE TAN.

MALUS

NOT A FAN.

RAU

NOTHING FANCY.

MALUS

YOU WILL SEE DAT FANCY GETS THE FANS.

RAU goes out and gets a potted herb. She puts it on a shelf then turns the "Closed" sign to "Open."

MALUS (CONT'D)

I'LL TRY TO GET MY PALS EN ROOT. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN IN THIS SOIL. IT'S ALL YOUR TURN FROM HERE.

MALUS exits. The MAYOR, dressed as a tumbleweed, dances in and out.

RAU

I CAN'T EARN MY GREEN CARD
IF I DON'T STAY ON MY GUARD.
MY LEAVES HAVE COME SO FAR.
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LEAVE!
ALL THAT REMAINS ARE MY ROOTS, FAMILY...

I MISS YOU, BROTHER.

RAU hugs the pot. She sits on the tanning bed. She pulls out body oil and rubs her belly with it.

Audience Engagement: The leaves that the audiences wrote on blow in. RAU reads the leaves aloud.

RAU (CONT'D)

Seems the most proper maternity gift is reality.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

(Echoing from the great beyond)

TURN AROUND!

Positive whispers are audible. The colorful light show demonstrates FigLeaf patrons coming in and out. With the rising and setting sun, financial quarters roll by.

RAU

My body oil? You like this foreign stuff...?
Well, it's no fertilizer! This oil is not found in Dirty City. It's from my dirty ol' village!

YOU HAVE MADE IT.

TURN AWAY FROM YOUR OLD LIFE.

YOUR BED IS MADE.

TURN AWAY FROM THEIR WILD NIGHT.

THIS DIRTY CITY IS OUR HOME.

THE NEIGHBORS, THEY'LL KNOW

TO STAY IN THEIR ZONE UNLESS THEIR TONES...

TURN OVER AND CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

Business is booming. More tanning beds roll out. Bullshit rains down.

MALUS steps in, unimpressed with RAU's success.

RAU (CONT'D) (Deceptively) THIS IS THE START OF... A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP. A "FRIENDSHIP" WHERE I CAN'T KEEP MY GUARD DOWN.	MALUS (Doubtfully) THIS IS THE START OF... A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP. A "FRIENDSHIP" THAT SOWS MAD SEEDS IN OUR GARDEN.
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MALUS gathers bullshit and leaves the rest to RAU. They exit.

RAU turns the sign to "Closed." She places the seedling in a lit tanning bed and closes its lid, then hides in another tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D) BUT THE BEST TURNOVER I'VE EVER HAD...	
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RAU gets out. Her belly is no more.

Direct sunlight lands on a distinct tanning bed, leading to PARSLEY leaping out of it.

RAU (CONT'D) IS MY SUN!	PARSLEY MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD!
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End of "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

RAU (CONT'D) Turn around... You missed a spot. But son, do you shine...	
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PARSLEY turns around.

PARSLEY <i>Me</i> (Vietnamese: "Mom")... Don't embarrass me in front of the sneezeworts! (to the audience) Don't worry, loyal customers. We'll open up the salon on the first light of dawn. Now, try not to fight over our complimentary moisturizers!	
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Audience Engagement: PARSLEY tosses moisturizers or squirts them into the audiences' hands. He gets to work sterilizing the place.

RAU Us Cilantros are all about presentation. Parsley Răm is a natural. Organic. American.	
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RAU holds PARSLEY's green hands.

SCENE 3

SALON TRO, NIGHT

RAU has PARSLEY sit on a tanning bed. She clips PARSLEY's hair.

RAU
But your trichomes getting unnaturally long.
(Repeating and interspersing)
I love you. I love you lots.

PARSLEY
(Repeating and interspersing)
I love you. I love you more.

RAU
How many trims are needed for all the love?

PARSLEY
Odd... Mom... For once, please no math-

RAU
What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen dandelion seed?

PARSLEY
Thirty centimeters per second. Last math prob-

RAU
Thirty seconds. Square root of a boxwood tree?

PARSLEY
I'll learn square roots when I start middle school in the fall.

RAU has PARSLEY face a mirror.

RAU
Is this worthy of a Flores Elementary graduate?

PARSLEY
Gym class would have a good laugh.

RAU
With this cut, they'd actually pick you before the Cherries.

PARSLEY
Dodgeball is an Apple's sport anyways.

RAU
You need your root canals checked. Speaking of Apples, how was class before the ceremony?

PARSLEY

Fruitful! Ms. Red's partner stopped by.

RAU

That's delightful. Who is he?

PARSLEY

Her name is Golden Delicious. She is an archaeologist.

RAU

Oh, she is... She...

PARSLEY

Ms. Red's final lesson was that Fig weddings are more fabulous than any other kind.

RAU

Schools should not be teaching minors that!
Schools should be teaching kids major subjects,
like if Florida schools teach math and science.

PARSLEY

History!

RAU

Here's a story: seedlings exist only because stamens and pistils love one another.

PARSLEY

A kid at recess once told me that love is like the legendary tale of the bird and the bee.

RAU

Kids fall for so many rumors these days. Plus, those don't add up. Birds and bees don't go together. It's bird plus bird. Bee plus bee.

Dance music distantly echoes, so
PARSLEY perches by the window.

PARSLEY

Ugh, math. Something's buzzing at FigLeaf.

RAU

The Figs are hosting another party. You can always count on that.

RAU uses a tanning bed as a desk to do taxes and count bullshit.

PARSLEY

Mom... Who goes out at night?

RAU

A light with no sense of direction, son.

PARSLEY

But the sound sure likes going our way.

RAU

Sounds don't feed us.

PARSLEY

A light with no sense of direction... So, there is light. They are just lost.

RAU

Their light is artificial. They chose not to follow what is natural.

PARSLEY

But our tanning beds... Its light don't come from the sun?

RAU

They paint skins with UV. It is like if you split the spectrums of sunlight onto a palette.

PARSLEY

What is a spectrum?

RAU

I don't know... But don't ask Malus. Malus...

PARSLEY & RAU

Has malice intent.

RAU

Figs are the root cause of identity and social norms' instability.

PARSLEY

I know... But they have society's money. And money is the root of all evil-

RAU

Sure, he and his customers paid our rent for a while. But we paid off our plot of land. Salontro is independent of FigLeaf.

PARSLEY

Yet, Salontro still depends on FigLeaf.

RAU

Depends on the years to come.

PARSLEY

We would go under without them.

RAU

We will never overturn our views for them.

PARSLEY

You see new business models everyday.

RAU

Well, their bullshits are unnatural.

PARSLEY

Yeah, the money's unreal. What's natural to you?

RAU

Biodiversity like your class of plants. It makes for a healthy garden.

PARSLEY

What makes more diversity?

RAU

Less homogeneity.

PARSLEY

Homo-

RAU

Figs need more sun on their skins. Sons in their lives. My parents had a son once. He once set things straight. Until he no longer isn't and so couldn't.

PARSLEY

Malus is like the American aunty/uncle we need.

RAU

Don't say such nonsense. Back to my point: the sun's what grooms all things...

2. "A NATURAL"

RAU

NATURE...

NURTURED FROM THE LIGHT OF OUR SUN.

IT'S NATURAL.

PLANTING THEIR HOT FEET ON OUR GROUND.

THEY'RE NATURAL.

BUT IT'S NOT AS WARM AS A MOM'S HUG.

RAU hugs PARSLEY.

RAU (CONT'D)

COMES NATURAL.

WHAT'S NOT? THAT WOULD BE THE TICKLES!

RAU tickles PARSLEY.

RAU (CONT'D)
(Repeating)

A NATURAL... IS TRUE TO THEMSELVES.

SON. YOU ARE A... NATURAL!

End of "A NATURAL"

PARSLEY

Will the sun always be around?

RAU

The sun will never turn over to the dark side.

PARSLEY

What about during an eclipse?

RAU

What? You're talking like those Venus flytraps.

PARSLEY

Ms. Red taught us that the moon can sometimes
get in the sun's way.

RAU

The moon sounds unnatural... Anywho like you,
even the sun has a bedtime.

PARSLEY

Ugh.

RAU opens a tanning bed and plants
a blanket in it.

RAU

Your planter is made. Now go lie in it.

PARSLEY points at the outlet.

RAU plugs in a nightlight.

PARSLEY lies in bed.

PARSLEY

I am a natural at lying.

RAU

You speak the truth, my son.

PARSLEY

Mom. I wonder who'll be my moon...

RAU

Ngu ngon (Vietnamese: "Sleep well"), my son.

RAU exits.

SCENE 4

SALONTRO, DAY

MALUS steps into the sunrise.

PARSLEY leaps out of bed. He turns
the "Closed" sign to "Open."

MALUS

Where's your mom?

PARSLEY

Morning! Our latest shipment was delivered to
the wrong address. So, she's out getting it.

MALUS

Strange. She's usually out to get me. I kid,
you Cilantro. Nevertheless... Cow, Parsley.

PARSLEY

Chào. You Crabapples are always sweet, but you
can never sweeten your pronunciations?

MALUS

I'm bisexual, not bilingual.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

No, Malus. / No malice.

MALUS (CONT'D)

Yes, Pyrus!

PARSLEY

Pyrus?

MALUS (CONT'D)

Another Crabapple?

My nibling.

The pear's in town.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

And I wanna get outta this Dirty City.

PARSLEY

Doing our city dirty? You'll fit in real well.

MALUS

Tanning beds come in all shapes and sizes. And
there gotta be one dat matches your body, Pear.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

I don't want nobody to see me around ya, crazy
aunty/uncle Apple. Let's go back to FigLeaf!

PARSLEY

I always wanna visit FigLeaf.

MALUS

Now, you may have the spirit of a Fig. But only
adult plants are allowed at nightclubs. And,
your mother would lose her freakin' aldehyde.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Ya said ya'd take me to Cantaloupe Outlets, not
make this salon my outlet...

MALUS

You will never find me among those hipsters.
How about a trip to Celery Mall?

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

But ya said we could go where I wanted! You're
more of an Apple Blossom than a Crabapple.
Celery Mall only sells to old houseplants.

MALUS

Take dat back!

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Per FigLeaf's policy: No returns. No, Malus.

MALUS

Nothing's returnable in a nightclub, Pyrus...
You're digging a deeper hole for yourself.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Ain't dat what we're supposed to do as plants?!

MALUS

Even plants can get overheated.

PARSLEY

You're all making a mountain out of a molehill.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Shadeee. Ya can burn us. But, ain't nothing can
top a sunburn.

3. "AMOUNT TO ANYTHING"

PYRUS walks in with sunburns and
green palms. Their entrance is
like a teenage rocker with acne.
They knock over the potted herb.

PYRUS

MOUNTAINS OUTTA MOLE HILLS.
NO REST. DISTRESSED. A MESS. CARELESS.

I DELIVERED BRUISES AND I GOT INTO TROUBLE AT SCHOOL.
SO, I'LL SPEND THIS SEASON WITH MY ONE WEIRD AUNTY/UNCLE.
I WON'T KNOW MALUS...

ALL BECAUSE REALLY
I WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
I WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
I WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
ANYTHING!

PYRUS (CONT'D)
SUNBURNS. PIMPLES. ACNE. BIG DEAL.

I AIN'T ALWAYS THIN-SKINNED, BUT MY THICK SKIN HAS NOT LOOKED REAL COOL.

SO, I'LL WASTE MY SUMMER NEXT TO A CILANTRO.
I CAN'T GIVE A MORSAL...

ALL BECAUSE IN LIFE,
I CARE NOT TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
I CARE NOT TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
I CARE NOT TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
I DON'T CARE!

ANYTHING!

End of "AMOUNT TO ANYTHING"

PYRUS (CONT'D)
I just wanted a good tan...

MALUS PYRUS (CONT'D)
And you can get it here. A *natural* tan!

MALUS (CONT'D)
We're not the only families susceptible to sunburns. The Cherries and Maples are, too.

PARSLEY
Our tanning beds can be set at any level most comfortable with you.

MALUS
See, Pyrus. Parsley's always level-headed.

PYRUS
I'm gonna level with ya Cilantros: ya can spice up my skin, but it ain't ever spice up my life.
(to MALUS)
Don't look at me. I'll meet ya back at FigLeaf.

MALUS
Ya seedlings enjoy yourselves!

MALUS exits.

PYRUS
I ain't no seedling anymore, Malus! Do ya thing, little herb.

PARSLEY leads PYRUS around the tanning beds in Salontro.

PARSLEY
High pressure tanning beds?

PYRUS

I ain't letting no middle schooler pressure me.

PARSLEY

No pressure at all. Where do you go to school?

PYRUS

Tetra High Conservatory.

PARSLEY

THC, in the U P? That school's rich enough to
not have a resource officer.

PYRUS

Eat poop with ya *lower peninsula mindset*...
Trolls under the bridge. Right, it ain't stop
other flowers from being fashion polices.

PARSLEY

What did these upper peninsula Yoopers do?

PYRUS

They get under my membrane. They overreacted.

PARSLEY

To...?

PYRUS

Me shutting down the school's power grid... So
they ain't look at me no more.

PARSLEY

My classmates would think you're loads of fun!

PYRUS

What do middle schoolers even do for fun?

PARSLEY

Mudwrestling and singing in the rain!

PYRUS

I'm not sure what to make of it. Fun or not, in
the end, I'm the one who shuts the party down.

PARSLEY

A rose and thorn for you.

PYRUS

Don't get me started on the roses. They are
mean and the brighter fashion police.

PARSLEY

How?

PYRUS

They go beyond outer body shaming. Their thorns
reach my core. My nucleus.

PARSLEY

Your nucleus needs to toughen up.

PYRUS

My nucleus needs to grow thorns, like them.

PARSLEY

You pears need to stop comparing yourself to
others.

PYRUS

Easy for you to say. You haven't gone through
puberty yet, little herb.

PARSLEY

You'll grow out of anything. It's all dandy.

PYRUS

Wow, rich coming from a middle school poop head.

4. "GROW A PAIR"

PYRUS

YA NEED TO GROW UP.

PARSLEY

TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME!

PYRUS

YA AIN'T SHIT.

PARSLEY

I AM THE SHIT.

PYRUS

YA ARE

PARSLEY & PYRUS

A NUMBER TWO.

PYRUS

GROW UP, HERB.

PARSLEY

GROW UP, PEAR!

PYRUS

I NEED TO GROW ONE?

PARSLEY

YOU GOT SKIN IN THEIR GAMES.

PYRUS

I AIN'T THICK.

PARSLEY

HIGH SCHOOL AIN'T SHIT.

PYRUS

I NEED

PARSLEY & PYRUS

TO FACE THE HEAT.

PYRUS

STOP COMPARING...

PARSLEY

GROW A PAIR.

PYRUS gets into a tanning bed.
After the magic, they get out.

PYRUS

HERB... THIS AIN'T NATURAL.

DUDE... I FEEL POWERFUL.

PARSLEY

YOU PEARS.

PYRUS

I AM STILL GROWING.

PARSLEY

WE BOTH NEED TO GROW UP.

PYRUS

CILANTROS.

PARSLEY

AND CRABAPPLES.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

WE DO MAKE A GREAT

PARSLEY

TEAM.

PYRUS

SMOOTHIE.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

NOT SO SMOOTH...

PARSLEY

LET'S GET SOME FOOD!

PARSLEY shares fertilizer
popsicles with PYRUS.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)
HERE'S TO GROWING UP!

PYRUS
FERTILIZER NEVER...?

PARSLEY
GETS TOO OLD!

PYRUS
DEFINITELY!

PARSLEY
YOU KNOW WHAT IS COOL IS THAT

PARSLEY & PYRUS
WE'D MAKE A GREAT PAIR.

End of "GROW A PAIR"

PYRUS pulls out a glass bottle.

PYRUS
Let's test our water.
(Scaring PARSLEY)
Alcohol's only fifteen percent...

PARSLEY
I can't drink that.

PYRUS
Why not?

PARSLEY
I'm not old enough.

PYRUS
I ain't either. But I'm fine. I feel old
enough. And I'm like only a few years older
than you. Besides, this is worth 72 bullshits.
You're old enough to count dat high?

PARSLEY
You don't need to spew much. Look, it's on me.
If you feel bad about it, I'll take a few bull.

PYRUS
Nah, I need to save every bullshit I can, so I
can finally cut off my carbon-dated parents.
You heard my life with the flowers at school.
Now imagine dat but 72 times dat at home.
Just a sip. You'll feel right at home.

PYRUS opens the bottle.

PARSLEY takes a sip. He spits some of it out.

PARSLEY

It's a *miracle* I got any taste of barley piss.

PYRUS

Dat's the name of the liqueur!

PARSLEY

Barley piss?

PYRUS

Ewwwww, no. Miracle! Well, looks like our friendship is gonna go against the grain.

PARSLEY

Friends?

PYRUS

Miracle and I, silly herb! And now dat we're friends, friends go shoppin' together!

PARSLEY

Can Miracle tag along?

PYRUS

Miracle needa stay a no-show or we'll be tagged as criminals by the po-po. Don't start poop!

PARSLEY

Wash your mouth out with soap!

PYRUS

Wash yours with Miracle! I'm rooting for ya, Parsley.

PYRUS takes the bottle. They exit.

5. "TEST THE WATER"

PARSLEY enters this newfound state of tasting alcohol for the very first time. The lake forms. The tides rise. PARSLEY wobbles. He stays put and yet also journeys to far-off lands. He breaks in his sea legs. He slowly passes out.

PARSLEY

(Repeating)

Glucose is clear... Glucose is clear...

End of "TEST THE WATER"

SCENE 5

SALONTRO, LATE NOON

RAU enters with a box of body oils. She goes to help PARSLEY up.

RAU

Have you got any pride, son?! Get up, it's "pride" month! Today is our pride special!

PARSLEY

(Dizzily)

Did you get the goods, mom?

RAU

Good grief, son...?

PARSLEY

(Dishonestly)

I may have caught a fungal infection.

RAU

I dab anti-fungi ointment on you everyday...
Now's not the day to sell yourself short.
Speaking of infection...

RAU dons some rainbow gear. She stops PARSLEY from wearing them.

There is an influx of multicolor lights, representing the patrons.

PARSLEY

Fun guys all around! Happy Pride!

Audience Engagement: The CILANTROS trade their body oils with the audience for bullshit.

RAU

Happy Pride! Get thirty-one percent off your order when you wear Salontro merch at checkout! Buy our rainbow gear! Parsley... Upsell these by sixty-nine percent. Sell sell sell!

PARSLEY

Made from the bees' knees, these body oil will do more for you this Pride Month. At just several bullshits more than our plain oils, your knees will be buzzing in no time.

(Leveling with a lower light)

Kids and short knees like me get a discount!

RAU

You're indoctrinating the kids?!

The multicolor lights stop moving.

RAU (CONT'D)

Don't count your blessings, Parsley... Um...
(to the Patrons)
In trade, kids need to be treated as adults.
Discounts are handouts. And we're unlike other
businesses who refuse to serve you and take
your bullshit. Although, *it is allowed under
national law*. Here at Salontro, we'll always
support your unnatural lifestyles.

The lights flicker in disapproval.

PARSLEY

You were born this way!

The multicolor lights move about.

RAU

That quote always work. Happy Pride! Love your
fit. Happy Pride! So floral. Happy Pride! Tis
the season for a gay apparel. Happy Pride!
Thank you for supporting small business owners.
Happy Pride! *Immigrant family-owned business.*
Happy Pride! That looks so natural on you!

As the products run out, PARSLEY
turns the "Open" sign to "Closed."

RAU (CONT'D)

Son, at the center of every rainbow is green.
These Figs and their bullshit are unnatural!
Happy Pride... Hahahaha!

RAU trashes her rainbow gear. She
counts bullshit.

PARSLEY

Geez, mom. Get a room! You're more tender to
legal tender than your own son! It's unnatural.

RAU

Unlike you, I don't pocket it! I donate all this
bullshit to non-profits, like Moms for Canopy.

PARSLEY

They got nothing better to do than to bully my
classmates and ban our books... *Poop heads!*

RAU

Where did you learn to say those foul words?!

PARSLEY

You need to lower the volume whenever you watch
your boring tv show at night.

RAU

Don't you dare say that about *Green Lotus*. By the way, why were you sleeping on the job? I'm going to garnish your wages.

PARSLEY

You're gonna make my allowance fabulous?

RAU

No... Though, *your joke is a garnish in itself.*

RAU sees the knocked over herb.

RAU (CONT'D)

Is this some kind of joke?! No no no... Why is my brother knocked over?

PARSLEY

That is not a person...

RAU

Yes, he was!

PARSLEY (CONT'D)

That is a model.

RAU (CONT'D)

Yes, he was a modelled plant, until he hung out with the Figs.

PARSLEY

My uncle?

RAU

Anh (Vietnamese: "Brother"). He would have laid off the booze...

PARSLEY

Booze?

RAU

His addiction to Figs led to the booze which laid him off from work and society. He was the light of our lives that went dark too soon.

PARSLEY

Did my grandparents do anything to stop it?

RAU

They did their darnest to protect him from the unnatural. He was a person 'til he became a Fig.

PARSLEY

There's nothing your parents could have done.

RAU (CONT'D)

I'm already a better parent than they ever were.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)

A better parent would let me get some rest.

RAU

Okay. You've been laid off.

PARSLEY

I need a vacation.

RAU

Where would you like to go?

PARSLEY

Cantaloupe Outlets.

RAU

That trashy American shopping center? Well, we can stop by and grab some ingredients at their intimate Vietnamese supermarket.

PARSLEY

You like the butcher?

RAU

Someone's got to split water into oxygen.
Besides, he and I are just old friends.

PARSLEY

I made a new friend...

RAU

Is it a classmate from Ivy League Junior High?
Son, you're finally making friends! Name?

PARSLEY

Pyrus.

RAU

Where are *they* from?

PARSLEY

The town of Woodwork in the Upper Peninsula.

RAU

Pyrus is coming out of the Woodwork...

PARSLEY

And they made Salontro their first visit!

RAU

Did *they* try out a tanning bed? Ooh, which one?

PARSLEY

All of them.

RAU

Wow. In town for a day and already our number one customer.

PARSLEY

Yes. And I wanna get to know our number one customer at the business of all businesses: Cantaloupe Outlets.

RAU

Why can't you be friends with the Cruciferous?

PARSLEY

Ew... Those family of Broccolis are lame.

RAU

What is your two's plan at Cantaloupe Outlets?

PARSLEY

We're gonna go see *Popcorn*.

RAU

Oh no. That movie is for adults. And besides, I don't need you to have nightmares about what heat does to corn. It's not a pretty sight...

PARSLEY

There's no kernel of truth in what you said.

RAU hands bullshit to PARSLEY.

RAU

Here's twenty bullshits for *VeggieTales*.

PARSLEY

Shucks. You are so corny-

RAU

Their fanbase is hard to tolerate. That reality show is a religion to them. But, they know what's natural and not.

(Quoting a VeggieTales song)

"GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION."

PARSLEY

God, you don't even believe in a higher farmer-

RAU

Well, the gospel music...

"IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME."

Gravity created the Universe. The food court is pricy, so I packed carbon and a watering can.

Godspeed. Now, go get yourself ready as a plum.

RAU hands a food container and a watering can to PARSLEY.

PARSLEY hides in a tanning bed. The other tanning beds disappear.

SCENE 6

CANTALOUPE OUTLETS, DAY

A tanning bed tilts up and transforms into a photo booth. Clothing racks scatter about.

PARSLEY sits inside a photo booth as PYRUS enters.

6. "PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

PARSLEY

GET YOUR BUTT IN THE PHOTO BOOTH.
WE'RE GONNA TAKE A LITTLE BREATHER.

PYRUS

BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT.

PYRUS sits alongside PARSLEY. They drink water from a watering can.

PARSLEY

MAKE SURE THAT YOU STAY HYDRATED.
WE'RE GONNA DRINK LOTS OF WATER.

PYRUS

H 2 O.

PARSLEY

NOW GET YOURSELF SITUATED.
WE'RE GONNA MAKE TONS OF SUGAR.

PYRUS

SWEET MEMORIES.

PARSLEY

SIX CARBON DIOXIDE!

PYRUS

AND PLUS...

SIX WATER MOLECULES.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

PUT IT UNDER LIGHT.

PARSLEY

C 6
H 12 (TWELVE)
O 6...
PLUS 6 O 2.

PYRUS

SUGAR,
SUGAR,
SUGAR,
AND STARCH.

PYRUS downs the water while PARSLEY pulls many ingredients.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
 6 CARBON
 12 HYDROGEN
 6 OXYGEN...
 PLUS 6 OXYGEN MOLECULES.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)
 GLUCOSE,
 GLUCOSE,
 GLUCOSE,
 AND STARCH.

CARBOHYDRATE!
 THIS IS PHOTOSYNTHESIS.
 PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
 YOU'RE OVERREACTING.

PARSLEY
 I WANNA GOOD PRODUCT.

PYRUS
 YOU'LL GET BYPRODUCTS.

PARSLEY
 BI...?
 PYRUS (CONT'D)
 SUGAR RUSH!

PARSLEY and PYRUS dance the
 sweetest of dances.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)
 SUGAR,
 SUGAR,
 SUGAR,
 AND STARCH.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
 C 6
 H 12 (TWELVE)
 O 6...
 PLUS 6 O 2.

6 CARBON
 12 HYDROGEN
 6 OXYGEN...
 PLUS 6 OXYGEN MOLECULES.

YOUR CELLULOSE.
 YOUR CELLULOSE.

CARBOHYDRATE!
 WE WRITE: PHOTOSYNTHESIS.
 PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

The space displays the equation:
 $6CO_2 + 6H_2O \rightarrow C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6O_2$.

Audience Engagement: PARSLEY and
 PYRUS hand juices to the audience.

PARSLEY & PYRUS
 C 6
 H 12 (TWELVE)
 O 6...
 PLUS 6 O 2.

6 CARBON
 12 HYDROGEN
 6 OXYGEN
 PLUS 6 OXYGEN MOLECULES.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS.
 PHOTOSYNTHESIS.
 PHOTO!

The photo booth flashes and prints
a photo of a cilantro and pear.

PARSLEY and PYRUS exit the booth.

End of "PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

The MAYOR briefly strolls in,
drinking the juice.

MAYOR

Sugar and water are a privilege, not a right
for Green Card holders!

PARSLEY and PYRUS get film merch
from the booth.

PYRUS

We needed dat breather. Redoing the photo scene
in that movie was so much fun! Good thing it
was rated PG-12, little herb.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

Rotten Tomatoes is the all-time greatest movie!

PYRUS

It deserves to win the
Raspberries.

PARSLEY

I'd certify that it was
freshhhh.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

Well, I hate the scene where despite the kids'
fruits of labor, they ended up diced tomatoes.

PARSLEY

Can I have another sip of Miracle...?

PYRUS tucks away a hidden bottle.

PARSLEY stays put with a sour face.

PYRUS

It was hard enough hiding it in a dark theatre.
Don't expect me to pass it in broad daylight.
Quit the sour face, sour grapes. No whining
about wine either.

PARSLEY

You're as square as diced tomatoes...

PYRUS bumps into a clothing rack.

A crop top catches Parsley's eyes.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)

Huh?

PYRUS

Looks like you're the square.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)
I'm no square...

PYRUS
Just checking. Boobs come in all shapes and sizes. Go ahead. Milk this moment, little herb.

PARSLEY
Aren't these for...?

PYRUS
They're not just for flowers like me. But these would be perfect for our summer solstice rave!

PARSLEY
What's a rave?

PYRUS
A party where everyone smells like Asparaguses.

PARSLEY
I wanna go! But Malus is gonna be there...

PYRUS
It'll be the summer solstice. Malus will be going on their annual camping trip.

PARSLEY
Who's in charge?

PYRUS
Mari, our security guard.

PARSLEY
Oh Juana, haha. They always sleep on the job.

PYRUS
They know better than anyone else how to get through the day. I 'dress them as ya "highness."

PARSLEY
In that case, your highness: Raves are for me!

PYRUS
I'm gonna lay down some *ground rules*.

PARSLEY
"Ground rules" sounds like another song!

PYRUS
No time. Rule number one: no kids allowed.

PARSLEY points to himself.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
Ya bedtime's at dusk. No kid can handle all
nighters.

PARSLEY
The night is short during a summer solstice!

PYRUS
I still don't think ya can, little herb.

PARSLEY
You're not so big either.

PYRUS
Well, the music is gonna be for little big
flowers like me. We have a famous guest DJing.

PARSLEY
What's their name?

PYRUS
It's a secret. But the DJ certainly loves
shouting their name at the top of their stomata
to start a song. Such a weird vegetable.

PARSLEY
Pyrus, is this half-shirt the key to adulthood?!

PYRUS
Only if ya can top mine!

7. "CROP TOP"

PYRUS wears a crop top.

PYRUS
(Repeating)
NOW, IT'S YA TURN.
PICK A PATTERN.

PARSLEY soon picks a t-shirt.

PYRUS snatches the shirt from
PARSLEY. They toss the shirt away.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
NO NO. RETURN!

THE CREAM OF THE CROP DAT IS FASHION.
NO SHIRT CAN EVER TOP THIS!

PARSLEY
A CROP TOP...?

PYRUS tries on various crop tops.

PYRUS
WHERE TO FIND ONE DAT FITS?
WEAR ONE DAT SUITS YA PERSONALITY.

PYRUS's belly flops out.

PARSLEY
THERE GOES YOUR BELLY.

PYRUS puts a crop top on PARSLEY.

PYRUS
YA CANNOT BE STOPPED WHEN YA PUT YOURSELF IN THIS CROP TOP!

PYRUS puts on a crop top. They nab another crop top.

PARSLEY
(Adapting)
IT FEELS SO WARM YET SO COOL...

PYRUS
IT CUTS TO YA HEART'S BOTTOM.
IT HAS YA FEELING ON TOP!

PARSLEY dances a crop circle. He is rocking the crop top.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
YA CANNOT BE STOPPED WHEN YOU'RE DANCING IN ROCKING CROP TOPS!

PARSLEY steals PYRUS's crop top.

PARSLEY
I TOP YOURS!

PYRUS
YA BOTTOM FEEDER!

PARSLEY
I'M ON TOP!

PYRUS
I'LL CROP YOU!

PYRUS chases PARSLEY around. They nab the crop top and do a tug-of-war before they lose it.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
YOU'RE THE TOP OF THE CROP TO TOP IT ALL OFF!

PARSLEY
(Blushingly)
NO ONE PULLS THEM OFF LIKE ME...

PARSLEY & PYRUS

CROP TOPS!

PARSLEY and PYRUS suit up in their crop tops.

End of “CROP TOP”

SCENE 7

CANTALOUP OUTLETS, DAY

MALUS runs in from the other side while RAU tails MALUS. She holds a popcorn bucket filled with water.

RAU

You cropped my profits!

MALUS

See a prophet about your problems. Quit stalkin-

RAU

Salontro has lost stock of 72 bullshits' worth of UVA lamps due to short-term excessive use.

MALUS

Apply for seed funding from grassroots orgs!

RAU

Immigrant-owned businesses are less likely to be approved for seed funding than others.

MALUS

You pick data like a Cherry.

RAU

I am not cheery about these maintenance costs!

MALUS

Why don't you appreciate what's afforded to you, you transplant!

RAU

I'm no trans, Fig.

MALUS

Let's transition away from the topic. It ain't the end of the world like dat disaster movie, Soil and Green. What we just watched: Popcorn. Ah, such cinema! Nothing can change my mind about that foxy eggplant cameo, oh honey.

RAU

Don't honey me, honeycrisp critic.

MALUS

You're no film critic. Why are you here?

RAU

Well not to talk business. I dropped my son off.

MALUS

And you stayed to get into Parsley's business?

RAU

You have no business going to the movies alone.

MALUS

I was dropping my nibling off. Then, I needed a half-baked blockbuster to clear my mind about watching over a teenager this entire summer.

RAU

Someone's got to pop the thought of what it is like raising children into your aldehyde-

RAU finds and picks up the potted photo by the photo booth.

PARSLEY

I'm down to go... But I'm not up for that rave.

PYRUS

Nothing can top this. You'll be ready for it.

MALUS

Love dat reminder dat I've done everything?

RAU & MALUS

We've been neighbors for years in...

RAU

Business.

MALUS

Home.

RAU & MALUS

(Disingenuously)

I trust you.

RAU

(re: the photo of PARSLEY and PYRUS)

Looks like my brother when he was younger...

MALUS

Don't bring up dat tragic story again.

RAU

I cared for him as your sister cares for you.

MALUS

Aww... A photosynthesis of my nib and your kid-

RAU

Parsley told me that a seedling stopped by and
use all our tanning beds. *It was your species.*

MALUS

Horseshit!

RAU

They tanned and dashed.

MALUS

I loaned- I mean gave them enough to cover
seven appointments... You sure your Parsley
didn't stash the bullshit?

RAU

How could you frame my son?

MALUS

Picture this: they're about a teenager now,
growing into adulthood, and their top priority
is bullshit. Like all teenagers!

RAU approaches PARSLEY and PYRUS.

RAU

Im lang. I'm gonna crop your top off!

PARSLEY

Me (Vietnamese: "Mom")?!

RAU

The plants around this outlet are watching a
Cilantro make a scene. Pull it off now!

MALUS

You're the Cilantro always making a scene, Rau.
(Complimentary)
You're pulling off dat crop top, Parsley.

PYRUS

This little herb is on top of the world. His
plot is going places.

RAU

Im lang, *đó vô học* (Vietnamese: "Shut up, you
uneducated person")!

MALUS

Parsley, whatcha mom say? I ain't heard this
insult before.

PYRUS nods to PARSLEY.

PARSLEY

Me... (Vietnamese: "Mom") You're the ignorant one. Con đĩ (Vietnamese: "Bitch")!

MALUS

(to RAU)

Look at you foaming at your stomata mouth!

PYRUS

(Laughing)

Whatever ya said. I can't believe ya said it. Ya son of a bitch...

RAU slaps PARSLEY across the face.
She drags away PARSLEY.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

You bitch...

RAU

(Heartbroken)

Thang chó đẽ (Vietnamese: "Son of a bitch")... Uh, Malus is the bitch whose family tree is shaped like a circle. End this scenery at once!

PYRUS

I'm rooting for ya, Parsley!

PARSLEY

Mom. As you've said: "A natural is true to themselves."

RAU

(Nearly singing "A Natural")

A natural?! You're not true to yourself. What you and Pyrus are doing... It is unnatural!

8. "SOILED (THE FAMILY NAME)"

RAU

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR ALDEHYDE?
WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE THE PUBLIC'S EYE?
WILL YOU LEARN YOU'RE NEVER RIGHT?
DON'T YOU EVER EVER LIE!

PARSLEY

CAN I LIVE WITHOUT HAVING TO HIDE?
MAY I MAKE MY BED WHERE I DECIDE?
DO I HAVE ANY SORT OF RIGHTS?
TIL THEN, I WILL ALWAYS LIE!

RAU

(Mad as a Vietnamese mom)

I won't let you lie six inches under like your uncle!

RAU (CONT'D)
YOU ARE GROUNDED FOR LIFE!

TOY WITH ME
AND I WILL FEED YOU TO PESTS.
YOU BURY OUR KIN IN SHAME,
AND YOU WILL MEET OUR ANCESTORS
IN DEATH!

SOIL OUR NAME
AND I WILL RAIN HELLFIRE!
YOU HAVE NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME.

ARE YOU LISTENING, PARSLEY RĀM?
I'M SO TIRED...

MALUS hugs PYRUS.

MALUS
I AM SO PROUD!

NO RESPECT.
SHE HAS NONE AS SHE IS FAKE.
SHE'S THE ONE WHO SOILED HER NAME,
MAKING OTHER IMMIGRANTS LOOK LIKE SNAKE PLANTS!

PARSLEY
How did "Parsley" slither into your mind?

If you did not want me to conform to the ecosystem, why did you give me an American name like "Parsley?!"

Me, soil the family name... Who was it that didn't give me a foreign name like you, Rau?!

RAU
Anh thanh niên (Vietnamese: "Young man"), "gay."

PARSLEY
Young men cannot stay grounded! Thanks for the validation. I am no longer a seedling. Gay. Happy. I don't want it any other way.

RAU
YOU ARE A CRIME.
DON'T MAKE ME CRY.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)
I'M AT MY PRIME.
I FEEL LIKE DY-

RAU (CONT'D)
(Repeating)
YOU SOILED...

MALUS
(Repeating)
IN THE NAME...

PARSLEY
(to RAU)
IN THE NAME OF FAMILY, I GAVE
YOUR LIFE SOIL!

MALUS (CONT'D)
(to PYRUS)
IN THE NAME OF FAMILY, YOU
GAVE OUR LIVES SOIL!

PARSLEY hides in the photo booth.
MALUS buys the crop top and exits.

End of "SOILED (THE FAMILY NAME)"

RAU
We're soiled inside...

The photobooth transforms into a bed and the outlet into Salontro.

PYRUS
Get outta his personal space, invasive species-

RAU
You've got some xylems calling me that! Who told you to address me this way?

PYRUS
Malus says ya are who ya are.

PYRUS exits.

RAU stares into her plain hands.

RAU
(Soliloquizing)
This Dirty City needs to know: I love my seed. I know the future can stem more from new opportunities than anything my past roots have offered me. That's why I wither witnessing my son be a daisy rather than staying sturdy.

Parsley sees freedom with each passing dawn. Cori, my brother, had the same sights. Free will quenched his insatiable thirst, then drowned him in his final dusk. His so-called "brothers in branches" encouraged this. If only the biochemicals, the conversion therapy had shocked him out of his truth!

This time, I am taking care of it as a sister-turned-mother. I don't got to worry about how my life will play out because I'll play games night and day. But my son, playing with these creatures of the night, will soon find himself never again seeing the light of day. Unlike his uncle, I will save him from the Fig life style full of pain and heartache. I'm sick to my stoma, thinking about a life so unnatural.

This Dirty City wishes for me to stop being invasive. Only if your Figs would stop invading my nerves and my son's heart. Now pay no mind.

RAU exits.

SCENE 8

SALONTRO, NIGHT

9. "FERTILE"

The tanning bed holds a soiled
blanket, where PARSLEY pops out.

PARSLEY

THE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND MORE THAN YOUR SON.
WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?
AN HERB WHO NEEDS THEIR PLANT FRIENDS.
PLANET, TOPPED OFF WITH CROPS AND VEGETABLES.
YOU DON'T SEE MY PRODUCE-
IT IS TRULY FUTILE.

IN THIS "SOILED" FAMILY,
I AM MEANT TO GET DIRTY, REAL DIRTY.
HOW ELSE WILL I EVER BEAR FRUIT?
I AM FERTILE.
VOLATILE!

FIGLEAF WOULD NEVER DEFER MY SMILE.
A CLEAR COMMUNITY WHO WOULD ACCEPT ME AND ALL...
THE WHILE MOM KILLS ME TO PUT IT MILDLY.
THIS WILL BE MY TRIAL.
I'M WILDER THAN A CHILD.

AM I TO SNEAK OUT?
MY MAMA...
THIS WILL NOT HELP ME COME CLEAN, WITHOUT MEANS.
MY DROP WILL NOT BE SO FRUITFUL.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

IT AIN'T FUTILE!

PARSLEY looks out the window.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE) (CONT'D) PARSLEY
LET'S GET WILD! RECONCILE!

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE) (CONT'D)
YOU BELONG IN AN OPEN FIELD.

PARSLEY

I LONG FOR WHAT'S QUEER AND ANYWHERE SO SURREAL.

PYRUS tosses a crop top to PARSLEY.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)
WEAR THIS BEFORE IT GOES OUT OF STYLE.
YOU HAVE MADE ME REALIZE: IN LIFE, IT IS NEVER FUTILE...

PARSLEY trashes his nightlight. He
climbs out of the window.

PARSLEY

I AM FERTILE!

End of "FERTILE"

SCENE 9

FIGLEAF NIGHTCLUB

PARSLEY lands by PYRUS on the dirt.

DJ CAULIFLOWER

We got a Cilantro in da yard!

PARSLEY

And we got a Cauliflower... on guard?

DJ CAULIFLOWER

Not just a Cauliflower. The. DJ...

DJ CAULIFLOWER holds a microphone
towards the audience.

PARSLEY

Holy sneezeworts. It's DJ...

DJ CAULIFLOWER

What are you all, houseplants?! You know who I
am, Dirty City! We gotta act like weeds all up
in dis cement. Me, I'm a godsend...

10. "DIRT ON YOU"

DJ CAULIFLOWER

WE DA BEST...

PYRUS

WE ARE BEST...

DJ CAULIFLOWER

WE DA BEST...

PARSLEY & PYRUS
WE ARE BEST FRIENDS!

DJ CAULIFLOWER (CONT'D)
WE DA BEST HOUSEPLANTS!

PARSLEY

IT'S DJ...?

PARSLEY & PYRUS

IT'S DJ...

DJ CAULIFLOWER

DJ CAULIFLOWERRRR!

PYRUS

I love this song!

PARSLEY

Which one? DJ Cauliflower starts every song like-

PYRUS

Don't make me squash you into pesto, Cilantro.

LET'S GET DIRTY!

LET'S GET DIRTY, PARSLEY?

PARSLEY

YOU GET DIRTY, PYRUS.

PYRUS

PLEASE GET DIRTY WITH ME.

PYRUS drags PARSLEY to the dance floor. **Audience Engagement:** They hand party gears to the audience.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

LET'S GET DIRTY!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

YOU: I GOT, I GOT DIRT
ON YOU, ON YOU.

YOU GOTTA LOTTA NERVES COMING HERE.

PYRUS hands liqueur to PARSLEY,
which he incrementally drinks.

PARSLEY

WITH YOUR BULLSHIT!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

YOU: I GOT, I GOT DIRT
ON YOU, ON YOU.
YOU... I'M KEEPING MY EYES ON YOUR

DJ CAULIFLOWER (CONT'D)
DIRTY BULLSHIT!

PARSLEY & PYRUS
FILTHY/FUCKING BULLSHIT!

PARSLEY

LET'S GET DIRTY!

PYRUS

YA SO DIRTY TO ME!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

Y'ALL GET DIRTY!

PARSLEY & PYRUS

YOU: I GOT, I GOT DIRT
ON YOU, ON YOU.
YOU... I'M KEEPING MY EYES ON YOUR DIRTY BULLSHIT!

The lake forms. The tides rise.

DJ CAULIFLOWER

DO NOT FUCK AROUND BECAUSE MY ROOTS ARE IN DA UNDERGROUND.
IF YOU STUCK AROUND, WE'LL HAVE YOUR STEMS MAKING MUDDY WET
SOUNDS.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

ROOT FOR ME
AND WATER ME!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

SOIL ME!

Give me dat motherfucking bullshit!

PYRUS makes bullshit rain.

PARSLEY

Bullshit fucked over my mom!

PYRUS

We're fucking every adult in Dirty City!

PARSLEY

What's dirty?

PYRUS

Dirty City... Where ya live? Are ya drunk...?

PARSLEY

I never felt so aliveeee!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

Dat little herb is on their own little island!

Rainstorms brew. The stormy ocean
descends and washes PYRUS away. A
lighthouse appears. PARSLEY's sea
legs break. His fears swallow him.

PARSLEY

CAN A, CAN A PLANT DROWN?

DJ CAULIFLOWER

IF WATER REACHES OUR STEMS, WE IN TROUBLE.
WHEN DA BAR AIN'T YOURS, TIME BEHIND BARS IS DOUBLED!

PARSLEY

DOUBLED?!

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

I NEED YOU...
YOU NEED TO...
I NEED TO...
I NEED TWO BARS OF REST!

DJ CAULIFLOWER stops the music as
PYRUS searches in blinding light.

PYRUS (CONT'D)
Parsley! Parsley!

PARSLEY

Py- Pesto-

PARSLEY pukes.

DJ CAULIFLOWER resumes the music.

DJ CAULIFLOWER
Dat's real dirt, did someone get dat on tape?

The lighthouse turns into cameras.

PYRUS

Malus is my aunty/uncle! Ugh. You're good as
dirt, hanging out with all the grapes.

DJ CAULIFLOWER
Excuse me. All my hype men are homemade! Now,
someone compost dat on all social medias!

DO NOT FUCK AROUND BECAUSE MY ROOTS ARE IN DA UNDERGROUND.
NOW YOU'VE STUCK AROUND, WE'LL HAVE YOUR STEMS IMPOUND,
IMPOUND, IMPOUND!

PYRUS reaches PARSLEY.

The cameras morph into ambulances.

PYRUS

DIRT'S ON YA...

PARSLEY

AND DIRT'S ON YOU...

DJ CAULIFLOWER
CALL DA COPS!

PARSLEY & PYRUS
COPS?!

DJ CAULIFLOWER
YOU: WE GOT, WE GOT DIRT
ON BOTH OF YOU.
YOU GOTTA LOTTA NERVES DRINKING HERE.

PYRUS
THIS IS BULLSHIT!

PYRUS throws money all about. They
drag away PARSLEY.

The ambulance lights morph into
police lights and sirens.

DJ CAULIFLOWER

YOU: WE GOT, WE GOT DIRT
ON YOU, YOU, YOU...
TWO... ARE NOT ABLE TO BULLSHIT

DJ CAULIFLOWER (CONT'D) PARSLEY & PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)
YOUR WAY OUTTA DIS! THERE'S DIRT ON US!

Handcuffs are audible.

End of "DIRT ON YOU"

SCENE 10

FIGLEAF NIGHTCLUB, PAST

11. "FIG LEAF"

Shadows and puppetry are present,
reminiscent of the Vietnam War era.

MALUS (OFFSTAGE)

A tree's lifetime ago, in the suburb of Dirty City by the banks of Lily River, there birthed an Apple named Malus. Their birthday was on the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year known as the founding of FigLeaf.

Dat was an extraordinary day. My parents kicked me out. I laid naked on the concrete, freezing to death. An Orange found me. They sheltered me here in this nightclub. Figs flocked from all over the world to meet this miracle.

But something stark happened: a Cilantro walked into the bar. A post-traumatic memory revisited the Orange. The Orange was an agent who fought in the war on the Cilantro's home turf. Orange faced endless horrors as swarms of herbs stood their ground despite the chemical fires. Orange gave me their deed and left into the moonlight.

I used to eclipse my light. I once hid my life. FigLeaf gave me the might to show my light. I require the cross pollinations of the bees and bees... They bequeath me queer peace.

I live for the science of FigLeaf. With sugar and water, I took over its forces of nature. I, however, did not teach Pyrus to respect it.

As was the winter solstice the birth of FigLeaf, the summer solstice is the end of FigLeaf.

End of "FIG LEAF"

SCENE 11

FIGLEAF NIGHTCLUB, DAY

RAU drags in MALUS and slaps them.
She cannot find the words.

MALUS

You've lost the plot. *Thang chó đe* (*taun cha deh*; Vietnamese: "Son of a bitch"). Dat's me.

RAU

Face the consequences of not looking after Pyru-

MALUS

You face it. It's in your chlorophyll. Your kind spilled red blood. Your family is invasive.

RAU

Invasive?! You deranged- Annoying orange-

MALUS

Don't compare Crabapples to Oranges! Pyrus said Parsley was as yellow as the sun. The hospital's at least making sure he ain't end up in the sky.

RAU hands some bullshit to MALUS.

MALUS (CONT'D)

This ain't fixing the blues.

RAU

This will at least fix the bill for all the indigo cocktails my Parsley didn't pay for.

MALUS

This is some bullshit, you shrinking violet.

RAU (CONT'D)

The greens. Doesn't that solve everything?

MALUS (CONT'D)

Don't put it on me to answer to you anymore.

RAU

Then put it on the house-

MALUS

There won't be a house.

RAU

It's you who lost the plot...? Not FigLeaf...

MALUS

Dirty City is shutting us down. They got proof.

RAU

In the liqueur pumping out my son's stoma...

MALUS

Underage drinking... Perpetrated- Encouraged by
my blood. Why didn't my nibling card your kid?

RAU

That pear hasn't earned their adult card, yet.

MALUS

And you ain't ever earned any of yours!

RAU

I get it: my earnings are zero-

MALUS

Get it to your aldehyde: look beyond the green
bullshits and bullshit cards.

RAU

Parsley will wither as my brother and I have.

MALUS

You bring him up every time you want to pretend
to relate to Figs cause you had a gay brother.
There ain't a thing you can do for the dead.

RAU

Hmm. What do you have to say for your sister?

MALUS

FigLeaf was the chance to get her child out of
trouble and make their plot feel whole.

RAU

FigLeaf is now a plot hole... But, I do recall
a Fig who once sang: "*move the plot forward.*"

MALUS

Move the plot forward, not move my plots out.
You took my job away. Invasive species-

RAU

What's left to say, *houseplant?*

MALUS

Dirty City's verdict was right. Immigrants come
here to take away our jobs, homes, and lives.

RAU

They got dirt on both of us!

MALUS

Being queer or foreign ain't the same struggle.
Do not plant us in the same patch of soil.

RAU

You Crabapples did it first for us.

MALUS
Spare me the details.

RAU
It is on me to pass on to you the card up my sleeve. We're more in common than you can ever imagine. It comes with revoking our greens...

12. "GREEN CARD"

MALUS
YOU WERE LAYING ON MY YARD...
THEY HAD LEFT YOU STARVING.
I SHOULD'VE KEPT MY GUARD
BEFORE YOU KILLED MY GREEN CARD!

RAU
I hold a real green car-

MALUS
IM LANG ("eem laung")!
YOUR WORDS WILL NOT GO SO FAR...
THEY SHOULD HAVE JUST BARRED YOU.
I USED TO STOP SPARS.
NOW, THEY WENT AND CLOSED MY BAR!

RAU
SORRY.
I DESERVE NO GREEN CARD.
I HAVE SERVED YOU ENDLESS
SCARS.
WHICH IS BY FAR NATURALLY
QUEER AS YOU ARE.

MALUS (CONT'D)
YOUR HAND DESERVES A BAD CARD.
THEY SAW YOU AS JARRING.
YOU ARE UNNATURAL.
YOU'LL NEVER CHANGE WHO YOU
ARE!

MALUS (CONT'D)
'SCUSE ME?

RAU feels the potted herb.

RAU
BROTHER...

Audience Engagement: The leaves that the audiences wrote on blow in. RAU reads the leaves aloud.

RAU (CONT'D)
The new leaves- The next generation will turn this world upside down for the better.

RAU (CONT'D)
YOU AND PYRUS CAME SO FAR...
THEY CAN STILL GET STARTED.
I NEED TO GROW SMART.
MY TURN TO HAVE A HEART.

MALUS
YOU ARE GOING TOO FAR.
MY PYRUS IS A REAL STAR.
IMMIGRANTS NEVER SETTLE
FOR LOW MARKS.

RAU (CONT'D)
REPORT CARDS, BUSINESS CARDS,
DON'T GET ME STARTED ON CREDIT CARDS.
TAKE THEM ALL!
THE TAKEAWAY IS THAT GREEN CARDS ARE EARNED...
I MUST WATER OUR COMMUNITY.
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO.

End of "GREEN CARD"

MALUS
You took away my rights.

RAU
They almost took my son's life.

MALUS
Pyrus gave your son life.

MALUS hands the photo of the pear
and cilantro to RAU.

RAU
Malus, you gave me life.

MALUS
You took away my livelihood.

RAU
You can start over.

MALUS
The queer community I built?!

RAU
You can always hide it under your soil. And wait
to reveal yourself when the light is right.

MALUS
So hide in the soil again is what you saying?

RAU
Many plants want the chance to start over. To
turn back into the seeds.

MALUS
Save your false wisdom in the closet.

RAU
I have every politician in my closet.

MALUS
More like skeletons- Wait, what?

RAU

Same thing. Representatives from across the nation come to Salontro. When they get comfortable, they'll tell me anything.

MALUS

Elaborate...?

RAU

Remember that "Morning Wood" scandal on WoodTV8?

MALUS

From Loyal Oak, the city over?

RAU

Their mayor shorted me. So, I was the anonymous tip who revealed their adultery on the news station's live Q&A with Mayor Pumpkin Eater.

MALUS

And *cheater Pumpkin Eater* resigned. So for you, politics be nasty. You Cilantros are indoctrina-

RAU

I also built relationships with the investor and management community, grooming returns based on the size of their emotional transactions.

MALUS

Sick. You've got dirt on everyone. What about the council in our hometown?

RAU

Dirty City did me dirty. They lined my pockets with tax cuts. But, they won't do more. *Though, I got neighboring cities in my pockets for you!*

MALUS

I don't matter. Pyrus does. Pyrus is going to be in bigger trouble without me in the plot.

RAU

I'm moving Pyrus's plot forward.

MALUS

There's the usual backwards reasoning you do.

RAU

I'm giving back to a lost soul what you've gave this lost immigrant. I've held everyone back. I'm a houseplant...

MALUS

You're a transplant.

RAU
I'm a transplant...

MALUS
A plant who transforms...

RAU
A plant who transforms...

MALUS
The environment around them...

RAU
The environment around me...

MALUS
You do not belong on this soil. But your blood altered the chemistry of it, so that Pyrus can feel even more welcomed. Your son changed them.

RAU
Parsley got a new friend, too... My parents tried to stop my brother Cori from changing with his circle. Cori Anh Der crawled through the mud, so that Parsley can trail ahead.

MALUS
A young Cilantro once said: "mud is where you're most safe."

MALUS unveils mud underneath. An olive branch hangs above. RAU hugs MALUS.

RAU
A real friend's here when bullshit hits the fan.

MALUS
Hey... Where did this olive branch come from?
You hug like a tree hugger. Dat is so gay.

RAU humorously detaches.

RAU
Have I earned my Green Card?

MALUS
Dat's not for us geezers to decide.

RAU
That's for the...

RAU & MALUS
Second generation of seedlings.

RAU

Malus, go out there and save another Cilantro!

MALUS floats off into the sunrise.

RAU (CONT'D)

I knew it, I knew it: Figs are angels.

RAU finally plants herself. She buries her hands in the mud. She transforms, pulling out her palms now drenched in green. RAU has earned her Green Card.

RAU (CONT'D)

YOU ARE... A NATURAL.

SCENE 12

SALONTRO, DAY

Business is dead. The place is an allegory for a dead houseplant.

RAU looks inside the cash register and pulls out a single bill.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

Can I turn the sign to "open?"

RAU

I'm open for business. You are not. Stay in bed.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

At least I'm in a bed, not a coffin. Like that joke, mom? *Me* (Vietnamese: "Mom")...

RAU

Me (Vietnamese: "Mom") as in "meh" or "me?"

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

Vietnamese words are funny.

RAU

Especially Vietnamese plants.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

Mostly the Cilantros's musical taste.

RAU

Hey. Wash your mouth out with soap.

PARSLEY pops out of a tanning bed, holding soap.

PARSLEY

(to the audience)

Raise your appendages if we, Cilantros, taste
like soap!

Audience Engagement: PARSLEY hands soaps to audience members who raise their hands.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)

This is your next meal. Let me know if we really taste like that.

RAU

You talking to nobody and wasting our soap does not make a good case for you being "well."

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

And I have a bad case ahead of me.

PYRUS enters. Their skin holds minor burns.

RAU

Pyrus... In the flesh.

PYRUS

I certainly don't look fresh, Ms. Răm.

RAU

Summer's coming to an end. But there's light at the end of the tunnel as you return to school.

PYRUS

I need school, so I don't end up a "*đo vô hoc*" ("dough vo how"; Viet: "An uneducated person").

PARSLEY

Me (Vietnamese: "Mom"), you're the one who needs to be educated.

RAU nods in agreement.

PYRUS

Sorry for calling ya an invader.

RAU

I'm sorry to invade your space.

PYRUS

Enlighten me.

RAU

There is more to darkness than meets the eyes.

PYRUS

FigLeaf was the only light in the nightlife.

RAU

I'm sorry your aunty/uncle has to start over.

PYRUS

I'm glad he helped you get started. It's ya turn to give Malus the tips.

RAU gives PYRUS the last bullshit.

RAU

I'll give you one: to my son, say good-

PYRUS

Goodbye. I know... *Good riddance?*

RAU

Goodness gracious. Have something good to say. Stop being the root cause. Be the root effect.

PYRUS

Little herb... I... Sor-

PARSLEY

Breathe in, breathe out... Um, 6 carbon... 12 hydrogen... 6 oxygen...

PYRUS

Plus 6 oxygen molecules...

PARSLEY & PYRUS

Photosynthesis. Photosynthesis. Photosynthesis! I will always root for you.

PYRUS

I will never amount to anything. I won't mount a proper apology. But for once, I do care. This is despair. Don't look at this pear.

PARSLEY

You always amount to everything.

PYRUS hands a crop top to PARSLEY.

PYRUS

Don't puke on this one, okay?

PARSLEY

And don't let the flowers bully you!

PYRUS

Ah, another school year at THC. I'll climb high on a mountain.

RAU

I'm sorry things worked out the way they did.
But you can.

As MALUS had done for RAU, RAU
moves a plot of land for PYRUS.

RAU (CONT'D)

Make sure you grab a tax form on your way out!

PYRUS

Taxes?

RAU

You must pay the government bullshit to work.

PYRUS

What you're saying is a load of bullshit.

RAU

Well, you're old enough to intern. And that
bullshit you pocketed is your first paycheck.

PYRUS

Why?

RAU

I owe your aunty/uncle.

PYRUS

I'd probably get the salon shut down, too.

PARSLEY

Oh shut up, poop head.

PARSLEY hugs PYRUS.

PYRUS

I'd be supervised by dat? I'll clean dat dirt
in ya mouth, ya sweetgrass.

RAU

Finally, someone else up for the task.

PYRUS

I cannot thank you enough, Ms. Rām.

RAU

It's my turn to help you start over.

PARSLEY

You're welcome back any time!

RAU

With Malus's intent, there's always a plot for
you here.

13. "TURNOVER (A NEW LEAF)"

RAU opens a colorful tanning bed,
where PYRUS sits.

MALUS gets out of another tanning
bed. They watch as PYRUS gleams.
There are hints they opened a new
nightclub called "Fig Garden."

MALUS

TURN AROUND!

Business is booming again with
light patrons coming in and out.

PARSLEY & PYRUS

WE HAVE CHANGED THEM.
TURN OVER PAIRS OF FRESH EYES.
NEW LEAVES, COLORS.
TURN OVER TO THIS STRANGE LIGHT.

RAU & MALUS

LIGHT.

PARSLEY, RAU, PYRUS, MALUS
THIS DIRTY CITY IS OUR HOME.
THE NEIGHBORS, THEY'RE KNOWN
TO HELP US TO SOW OUR SEEDS AND GROW...
TURN OVER AND CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

Water rains down.

PARSLEY & RAU THIS IS THE SPARK OF... A FLORAL PARTNERSHIP. A FRIENDSHIP WHERE I CAN REST OUR GARDEN.	PYRUS & MALUS THIS IS THE SPARK OF... AN HERBAL PARTNERSHIP. A FRIENDSHIP THAT LEAVES THE BEST SHARED GARDEN.
---	---

PARSLEY and PYRUS turn the
"Closed" sign to "Open."

PARSLEY, RAU, MALUS, PYRUS
BUT THE BEST TURNOVER WE'VE HAD IS THE SUN!

A tanning bed opens with sunlight.

End of "TURNOVER (A NEW LEAF)"

POSTSHOW

The MAYOR enters.

MAYOR

We hope you enjoyed your stay in Dirty City.
Now, let's let these plants bow to the light.
(MORE)

MAYOR (CONT'D)

*Oh, I get the last bow. And before you return
to your home garden, let's take a group photo!*

14. "BOW - PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

COMPANY bows. They get the audience to repeat after them.

COMPANY
(Repeating)

PHOTOSYNTHESIS!

Someone gets a phone to record a video or selfie with the audience.

COMPANY (CONT'D)

PHOTO!

End of "BOW - PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

END OF THE PLOT