

O D Y S S E Y S T U D I O S

A r t i s t

Journal

M A R C E L L A

- Greg Marcy da Gama -

*- On The Surface of The Sun -*

M M X

Collaborative / Individual Work

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*On The Surface of The Sun*

FROM THE EPONYMOUS NOVELLA

by

Greg Marcy da Gama

MARCELLA PRINCE TREMBLE

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*JOURNALS & COLLAGES*

KOKOPELLI POETS MUSIC

MMX



*C o n e x i o n*



*H i s p a n a*

X O X O

HOW BRIGHT I BURN

No one understands

Under the skin

How bright I burn

The pain I'm in

The Joy of Beauty

Original Sin.

Mother despaired

Not understanding

Always planning -

*What am I going to do with her?*

Father, hero.

Great pride taker.

Encouraging

The Thrill of The Ride.

Victor laughs.

*I love life so much it's killing me!*

My kind of my man ...

Tio.

*We are locked. little fingers!*

Singing giggles.

May every girl have

*Un* Uncle *a’ mi Tio*!

Honoring -

*No love too strong*

*Marcella ... is free ..*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_*

A certain young man

Trickles in my brain

Cracked glass shots

Perspiry beads

Men smell

Different than women.

*You are a flower.*

He says.

*Su succulenta?*

I ask.

Narcotics

Ease pains.

My lover ..

*Eees James ...*

In the night

When all is quiet

Mother dreams

Papa paces

Tio snoozes

Deep in my heart

A great poison beats.

Fear.

Fear.

*That you are not*

*Whom you think*

*You are.*

*That I am not*

*Who I think*

*I am.*

The Beast

Rules the Night

Stealing breath

Infusing fright

Into the hearts

Of lonely

Little Girls.

Never ending

Wash the black doggie;

Dawn, fatigued.

Little black dog

Is still not white . . .

- DEDICATION -

MARCELLA, *On The Surface of The Sun* is my family Iliad. A drama with music, I came of age amidst intense family love, well-intentioned lies, and a smooth, slithering snake. Thanks, Buddha.

Outwardly, I shone with a childish beauty. Inwardly, sensing an elliptical heritage, the young artist in me spoke to torment. Torment asked, *Who is your father*? Victor Tremble, man-of-the-earth explorer-warrior, steady-hand to daddy's girl? Or, Enrique *"El Bestio"* Salazar*,* mother's former lover, a *narco-trafficante* whom I suspect is my benefactor? Seven, I overheard their late-night phone call. Mother's voice was icy, furiously demanding that Enrique acknowledge and accept his paternity of me, Marcella. *Who am I?* Years passed, fears were transformed. My emotional metronome wound tighter. Ticky-ticky, self-doubt.

Mesmerized by the shapes and sounds of the seven arts, on the surface of the sun I style creativity's glow, setting loose passions and intelligence while battling fires set by my mother's reckless beauty. Burning to stare down Enrique, hoping to once and forever know my real father, unspoken family truths handchecked my confidence. *La superficie del sol es* *muy* hot-popped! Come moonlight, it dreamily cools. The heart wants what the heart wants, even when it's wicked. *Live life as it could be, not as it is.* Seeking my place in this world, my DNA evolution is intended tribute to all aspiring artists.

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TIME AND PLACE -

Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles, California, USA - The present.

Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico - The present and a generation ago.

Pages from a young artist's journal, *On The Surface of The Sun* are simple sketches of a clap-fun, better-at-the-beach adolescence, shaded with my fondly imagined memories of Momma's life in Monterrey. An insouciant girl, they affectionately called me *Celitta*. I keep alive my inner-child Celitta by mischievously summoning her for spritely girl-talk and games impromptu. Late nights together, we play host to the *Celitta & Marcella Show!!* Pumped, we invite our friends: *The Mad Pride Girls*. Be scared; very scared.

Self-admittedly, at times I burn a bit bright. *So?* I love life. Isn't that good? Lucky for me, I can always count on having Celitta along with me for the ride, flitting about here and there and everywhere, treasuring the precious embers of our stars. I love my Celitta. *Marcella! Keep the child alive! I do! I do! Do you? Do you?* Yes, Celitta. I do. I do.

Magical? *Of course!* I am an artist. In any case, I am only loosely strapped into my rollercoaster. Captive of word and world, forgive me for believing that I can exist on the surface of the sun . . .

*"Let's frolic now n' later forget! It's all poetry, poetry, poetry!”*

- MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD -

Marcella Prince Tremble is my name. I was born and raised in Hermosa Beach, California. I believe that I am child to Victor Tremble and Maria Rodriguez. Second-generation emigrants from Franco's Spain, mother's *Rodriguez* family settled in Monterrey, Mexico. I honor Victor Tremble as my father. Muscular, towhead, humble, modest, country boy from Southern Pines, North Carolina, Daddy is a man-of-the-earth. Stellar marksman, the woods of his youth provided feral opportunity to prove out his Ulyssean mettle. Seventeen, Daddy left home to join the Army. Quiet, trustworthy, unbelievably resilient, Daddy was recruited by Special Forces. "Black Ops" sniper. *One Shot - One Kill* and Daddy kept hope alive. Mission's go bad. Some roads travelled run wrong. Daddy's teammate, Antonio Jimenez, took a direct hit. Under fire, Daddy didn't panic; he advanced. Tony's life, saved. In the company of his warrior peers, Daddy was awarded a Silver Star. Medallion for the ages, it swings on my bosom, shining five-point guard.

My mother, Maria, was the daughter of Alberto and Muriela Rodriguez. Granddaddy was a *detective'* in Mexico's incestuous wars with the drug cartels. Grammy was a home-maker, mother of older boy Tio - my Uncle Tio - and Maria, my Momma. When it came to love, shy Tio was of his own persuasion. On a shoddy baseball field they considered their stadium, Tio's young eye caught the eye of another youth, Tony Jimenez. Yes, that Tony. Good young boy even when fate led him to an orphanage. Growing up together, their friendship blossomed. Neither Granddaddy’s dismissive looks, nor jealous put downs of orphan mate Enrique Salazar, *nada* would keep apart these two boy-men. Momma matured out of awky adolescence into stun-me beauty. It would be her luck, and my unluck, that she fell hard for Enrique. Momma didn't care if Enrique was always *"in trouble"*, a problem child, or even that *abuelos* Alberto and Muriela angrily forbid her from seeing him. Momma was crazy for and crazed by, Enrique, her true love. Enrique. Smart, sexy, angry Narcissus. Momma would not be denied. Momma craves her excitements.

Enrique Salazar was a troubled youth. *Cough-cough*. Born in the back seat of a car, he ran the streets of Monterrey - a town he loved. Falling in with small-time *trafficante's,* Enrique's charisma and iron will led him quickly up evil's welcoming ladder. Youthful pragmatist, Enrique's life success key was always simple: *"Give them what they want!"* Intelligent and dangerous, Enrique was just what Momma wanted. When Momma turned sixteen, tragically, my grandparents were gunned down. Bam! *Narco-trafficantes*, the usual suspects. Enrique vowed to avenge their lives. Now too an orphan, Momma wanted to marry Enrique. Flee Monterrey, go to the safer and more glamorous world of Los Angeles. Seventeen, arrestingly lit of body and mind, Momma told Enrique that she was pregnant. Budding empire builder, Enrique declined to marry her! *Fool?* Beauty may not always know the truth but one day Beauty will.

My Uncle Tio was not above an interesting life. Tony left behind the orphanage and Monterrey, emigrating to the US. He too joined the Army. Trilingual, Special Forces quickly recruited Tony. As I said, my Daddy saved his life, destiny forever entwining them as "blood brothers". Tio was an intuitively wise musical poet. Harboring little desire for formal schooling, much to my then-living grandparent's frustration, playing his guitar, brotherly eye on Momma, Tio bid his time working as a *coyote'* for Enrique. Patient, Tio waited for the perfect moment to join Tony in LA. Lover of nature and its spirits, "Kokopelli" Tio was a hushed tone legend, easily reconciling complex moral ambiguities:

*" I never move drugs . . . I move human feet . . . Think of me as a Freedom Bird."*

Tony knew that Tio wouldn't leave Monterrey without Momma. Sly dog, he schemed. Victor Tremble, could my studly blood-brother ignite Maria's torch? Light their path to the United States? Laugh. *Si! Si!* Enrique passed on Momma. Good boy, Tony cooly invited Daddy to come and meet Momma and Tio. *He came. He saw. He was conquered*. Ignited, Christian Daddy anted into God's hand. Tequila n' lime. Monterrey. Good times. Daddy. Momma. Midnite marriage. *Tio!* *In the rearview mirror lies Me-hi-co!!* *Andalate! USA!! Learn English; first Spanglish! We're language brains!* Momma swole. Daddy glows. Me, baby Marcella. Six pounds-two ounces: Pink-toed, pure blonde delight. Thank-you very much.

Truth. A glorious seven, I was happy in my skin, inside and out. Then, on a Black Ops mission, Daddy was near fatally beaten. Snap-finger weird. Daddy came home permanently, and, without a word to say. Daddy cannot speak. Aching to help the love of my life, but, not knowing the right words, for Daddy I pledged to learn words with my hands; to be strong like him, willing to erase anything that might hurt us. Like the card game "Battle", I embraced the hand life was dealing. This was my family. *Celitta* was all-in. Tio stood close. And Momma? Ummm. Without Ulysses, Aphrodite is a black-anxious white.

I overheard Momma on the phone demanding a man named Enrique acknowledge his paternity of me. *"El Bestio! Marcella is YOUR daughter. YOU are her father! Verdade! Dame ayuda para nuestra hija!!"* What is happening? Daddy hurt; now this?

Tell me I am not daughter to The Beast. Who *is* my real father?Touched by the misfortune of memory, Enrique lingered on the scent of his former lover'sestrogenia. Eerily, Enrique later told me that he was dazzled by our potential to one day be the stuff of legend. Sick. Bad sick. Lover's bargain? Who knew. Not me. Not then. *El Bestio* consented. Here I am.

Momma was kept. Me? I easily slid into private school uniforms, art lessons and a *tres cool* wardrobe. Such are the *karmas* the Gods fling, never troubling to ask if unsuspecting hearts can shoulder their weight. *What doesn't actually kill you outright only serves to make you stronger.* If you say so. Ten years pass. Flowers bloom. Enrique reaches in, Narcissus seeking his reflection. Aroused, amoral capitalist that he was, *El Bestio* began texting me his affections. HOLA MI BELLA Unblinking to power, I answered.

Twenty, my nature is terminal enthusiasm. I think of myself as *lit*. Sometimes I feel like I'm living my life on the surface of the sun*.* Art-girl, unsure of who is her daddy. Intuiting evasive truths from the quivering tower-of-jello that is my mother, a fresh, womanly temper gained freedom in me. It felt right. Determined to find answers to my life's great question, I realized that I had to travel to Monterrey*. NOW!*

My men launched my voyage. Tio and Daddy helping me and boyfriend James quietly slip away. *Marcella mi Bella*.I will confront *El Bestio*. Kill-or-be-killed. Yes, I had an attitude. A good one, too. Some think I seduced The Beast's famous will, subserving it to a higher purpose - money. Hmm. This I admit: *We met. We partied. I shot him . . .*

Tio, Tony, Daddy and James came to my defense; Enrique's men to his. My men served for love. His, for money. In the fire of the belly of the beast, great heros birthed and died. The enemy perished. My Tio, a girl's closest friend, lay sacrificed. Wounded, my unearned beauty is forever marked by a scar, price paid to question paternity. Daddy ripped Enrique's wings like a butterfly. Free at last? Heritage firmly in hand, ten-thousand Benjamin's treated us to a nice, long family voyage. Momma's prayers were answered - *El Bestio*, vanquished. Sadly, so too were the songs of Kokopelli Tio. *Ulyssia* navigates *mi* *primera exploracion de la mundo*. Husband; James Prince. Grandparents; Maria and Victor. New baby girl, Victoria, links us to the stars. Life is a banquet. It is true. I say so. *Adios, mi California . . .*

*"I want to join a marching band! Manhattan, that's the biggest city in the land?"*

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*-* SOMOS UNA FAMILIA -

**Marcella -** Twentyish, tall, blonde, I sense the stares of others. Smoky blue-eyed, Hispana Americana. *Rare.* Over-the-top brainy; charismatic beauty, they say. Seductively perplexing, enigmatic young artist; *Ulyssia* yearning to know self. Flinging words as weapons; hungry, confidently - often seared with wit - in an illuminating phrase, *Marcella Prince-Tremble* - Virgin Mad Pride Girl - *"Marcella, I am lit."* Assertive. Afire. Quick to think, enjoying a drink, I relish this great feast of life. Insatiable? Perhaps, I am. Searching for my place in this world, outwardly self-assured, I carry myself with an endearing conceit. *"I'm the human equivalent of a chocolate croissant!"* Fast car, front seat, wind blows tears across the eye.

**Celitta -** My past and present, self-treasuring, inner-child. Sky-high expectations, thirsty for praise, Celitta lovingly sisters me. Hip, jazzy *Tinkerbell*. Easily touched, in my neighborhood, *Celitta* can fly. *Smack-a-Wham-O!* Chew gum, blow pink spheres, finger-twirl golden curls. Seven, Celitta is proud. Ivory bubble dress, canvas hi-tops, purloined make-up, delicious lip-stick, bracelets and bandera anklets; zooming by on stickered-skateboard, hear the song of her little bird: *"Words! Words! Beautiful words! Get your words, words, beautiful words! Right here!!"* Celitta is old-man Picasso's heartbeat mantra:*"Artist! Keep alive the child!"* Celitta's sturdy answer: *"I do! I do! Do you? Do you?"*

**Maria -** My mother. *Maria Tremble Rodriguez*. Late thirties; imaginative, smart, way undereducated. Maria's dark beauty competitively contrasts with my blonde *rubia*. Seventeen, family daughter of a slain Monterrey *narco-detective'*,Maria is crazy for Enrique Salazar, the young *trafficante'* who avenged her parent's slaying. Emotionally arrested, Catholic faith waivering, lovely, neurotic Maria means so well. Vulnerable teenager, self-protective necessity quietly morphs Maria into an exquisite, elegant liar. Narcissus Enrique rejects her sudden, pregnant call for marriage. Lonely, Maria cries and whispers. Big brother Tio intervenes. Opportunely, Tony introduces Maria to Victor Tremble, Special Forces soldier. Not yet love, hope rises. Sensuous Maria. Virile Victor. Midnight kiss. *"Hola! Los Angele-e-e-s!"*

**Enrique -***“El Bestio”* Salazar. Monterrey orphan. Mid-twenties, Enrique is a young *narco-trafficante'.* Charismatic snake, naturally brilliant realist, Enrique demurs, *"I only give them what they want."* *Violento*, pretentiously high-class, a self-taught bootstrapper, Enrique's lofty narcissism aspires to more than undereducated Maria. Impatient empire builder weighing costs-to-benefit, Enrique coldly dismisses Maria's marriage call. *Carajo!* Maria vanishes. Her foxy estrogenia is fondly missed. Seven years later, Victor is badly injured. Seeking money to educate me, in a secret call, Maria fences with her former lover, Enrique. *"El Bestio.* Marcella, is *your* daughter! *Our* beautiful young *prodigia!"* A fatally flawed man, he is touched by the misfortune of memory. Intrigued by my dazzling potential, *El Bestio* consents. Ten years pass. My feminity blooms full-flower. Aroused, The Beast reaches in for Beauty.

**Tio -** "The Freedom Bird". Maria's brother. Enrique's childhood friend once working as his *coyote*. Dignified poet, Tio quietly grieves the loss of his parents. Despising *los tentaclos de drogas*, Tio longed for redemption from their perditions. Lover of his closest boyhood friend, Tony Jimenez, Tio enviously watched orphan Antonio take the high road, migrating to the US, joining its Army. Masking their manly love under the patina of friendship, Tio wanted to leave Monterrey for Los Angeles, Tony, and all things good. Family rock-in-deep-waters, Tio would never leave Monterrey without Maria.  *Mi Dio. Por favor.* Show me the way from these roads travelled wrong.

**Antonio -** *Tony*. Tio and Maria's childhood friend; Enrique's orphan-mate. Tony matures in ways provided only by freedom and opportunity. Fleet of foot, trilingual, Tony is recruited by Special Forces. Longing for Tio to join him in LA, when Tio and Maria's parents are mysteriously gunned down, Tony accepts that Tio will never leave Monterrey without Maria. In his first tour of "Black Ops" duty, Tony takes a direct hit. His life is saved by team-mate Victor Tremble. Tony and Victor become "blood-brothers". The heart want what the heart wants, especially when it's good. Tony slyly wonders: Could handsome Victor Tremble light a torch and guide Maria and my Tio to the US? *Si! Si!*

**Victor -** Good man. Maria's man. North Carolina country-boy-kind-of-good. Humble and modest; yet, when necessary, deadly. Strong of impulse, few of words. *Never complain. Never explain*. Victor's spirit is wracked by the eye-blackening weight of his sniper duties. *"One Shot - One Kill."* "Bulleit Bourbon" soothes his demons. Muscular towhead, Victor's at-one bearing eases everyone. When Tony and Tio invite Victor to Monterrey to meet Maria, he enjoys and is much enjoyed. Ignited by Maria, stunning *querida*, quiet Christian Victor attributes it all to God's hand. Smoldering lovers. Midnight marriage. Victor. Maria. Tio. *In the rearview mirror lies Me-hi-co!* LA. Hermosa Beach. Maria swells. Victor beams. Baby Marcella . . . *Celitta* delights. Seven good years. Ops mission. Turbaned target take-out. Done. Collaterally, Victor kills a young girl. Disoriented. Captured. Beaten. Released. Victor cannot speak.

**James -** James Prince. My boyfriend. Young Brit soul-singer. *Luvangelslowly* rocks it 'n rolls it good. James owns a fabulous beach crib on the Strand. Lucky me. James is *My love / Slender gazelle / Smokes too much / Cool sweat beads 'round his neck / Always a little dirt under the fingernail / Looks good in a hat / Or nothing at all / Wispy moustache / Sooner would I die / Than let him see me cry / Young man's love unknown / Take my words / Breathe them into songs*. It's all poetry, poetry, poetry. Money, moxie, indolent manhood, young James is striking; a slow-cool bi-polarity to my burning fire. Greatly appreciated by my family, James fetches my smile with a calming passion. Truth? I think that just like me, James doubts what he knows or truly believes in. *Got-it-goin'-on*, young James. Oooh. Wants more. I want his more. *What does it take to keep up with a girl like Marcella?* Don't ask me. Show me.

**The Mad Pride Girls -** Fantasy and reality. Marcellian mix of my songs and verse, soarings and flight. Chic savages, transcendent incandescences. Like-minded friends, madly proud to be illuminated artists. "Gimme an "M"-"A"-"R"-"C"-"E" - What'cha got that you're tellin' me? - "L"-"L"-"L"-L"-"A" - I know, baby, what you're tryin' to say! MARCELLA! MARCELLA! MARCELLA!" Warm floating faces, The Mad Pride Girls text choral tone-poem messages. Hands-held, integrating dance and light, rhythms, set and mood. *"Can you hear us, now? /*  *Hurt girls / We're gonna make good / Doin' all right / Like we should / Tell me, baby / It's late in the hour / Share a cocktail with my Superpowers? / Yes . . . Yes . . . / We're Mad Pride Girls . . . / Listen in . . . / Closely . . . / We're all Mad Pride Girls . . ."*

**Players -** Players. People one expects to see in Hermosa Beach. Musclehead. Artist. Family-goers. Digital workers. Relaxing laborer. Players. *Una cantina*; drinking all night, dawn is fast approaching. Players. Deft-finger, Brit rock-n'-soul: *Luvangelslowly*. James; guitar. Young Gavin; electronica. Keiko; sultry, stand-up bass. Players. Monterrey. A *Brechtian*o three-penny opera. My extended artist-family. Musicians and dancers; poets and liars. James and me are graciously welcomed to a late-night *soirre*. Krunky-flamenco. *Kru-lenco.* Players. Players. Enough to want to shoot them: Bad guys with thin mustaches. *Pow!!*

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- THE BEAUTY THAT IS MY WORLD -

On the surface of the sun magic and illusion lie. In the beauty that is my world, I imagine things as they could be, not as they are. High, the ordinary is extraordinary. Homage to William Escher, my world is the Escherian House of Magic & Illusion. To me, *Great Escheria* astonishes. Evolutionary mind's eye. See things as they might be. Elegance and truth often lie right to the eye about who they are and are not. Parallax realities, differing in impression to each of us. That's how life really is. You just have to look - it's there. *Great Escheria* is all wonderously revolving mind and matter. My world, I find it a rather lovely place to observe and appreciate my wondrously evolving matter of mind. Conceit? *Absolutely!*

My world is compelling; at least to me. I find complexity to be beautiful. What is real? What is not? What is mind? Never matter. What is matter? Never mind. *Escheria,* what life might be, could be, is, when the surface of the sun is imaginatively experienced. Imagine it with me. See it? *Trumps de l'Oeil*. In the artist's mind's-eye, all is possible. Ever notice how people and their emotions conveniently appear and disappear? Amid balconies, frescoes, stairs and rooftops, I watch and learn. Magic and illusion color perception. *Escheria* is organic; my personal galaxy timepiece. Mine and mine alone. Gracefully ticking, subtly transporting my precious stars, arhythmically altering her shape, planing and rotating in her mysterious, unfathomable ways. *Great Escheria is my magic world.* Yes, I'm lit . . . Let's visit. My world offers everything from elfish, hovering *Celitta*; to me and Tio's loopity-loop lunch truck; James' ice-blue Porsche convertible speeding out high above, over and deep, into the night stars. *Basta!* Imagination and magical realism are better experienced than explained. Poet Jean Cocteau knew so well. *"Children will believe anything you tell them. This is their beauty."*  Believe. That is a truth.

On the surface of the sun I visually embroider space and time. Artistic modern impulse seduces the eye. Above on high floats a bright yellow cornucopia, its great horn pregnant with cartoony, balloon shapes! What does it hold? *Airships?* I honor the walls with Spanish tint, *naturalism* murals. Softly stroked pastels offer snow capped, ochre mountains peeking at bluish, California skies. In the distance, soft washes of tan, turquoise and coral overtones invoke the subtle colors and feel of palms, sandy beach and ocean. *Si. Si.*

*Donde esta?* *Somos a Playa del Hermosa.* Hermosa Beach,my beautiful beach. Desert meets the sea. Cool air blows. Refreshing, inside-inviting, hipster krunk-tracks soothe out the scene. Engaging rhythms trek beneath the patter of friends focusing in ever fresh surroundings. Setting sun fades a pink glow. Twilight's atmosphere begins to darken. Perspectives align. Waves roll, quietly break. Good-bye, day star. Hello, evening moon. Breeze. Night stars. Sheer fabric scrim panels waver. Gently, they disappear.

Soft, cobalt blue luminescence slowly lights the air. Wind chime night sounds wash and drift. *Tinkle.* Conspiracies of youthful artists render before one's eyes simple, arching structures appearing all-at-once elastic and convertible. And inherent to their design? Sneaky intent to disguise illusion's ability. Gargantuan objects; yet, culture common. Boom-box. Pencil. Perfume bottle. Things like these; more, extrapolated larger than life. My garden of weirdly amusing, desirable objects. Tasteful, a boom-box is "blown-up" into James' hip, tubular beach house. Lower entrance to the Strand, his music studio. Yes! Aloft, Pacific-view rooftop. Marvelous for launching speeches, or, stealing a lover's kiss. Boom-box? Function digitally superimposes onto its fabric skin. Boom-box, you are. *I think, therefore I am.*

On our way to Monterrey, James' and my boom-box intuitively transforms. *It's four a.m / Let's make some noise / Bust-a-move girls and boys / Acqui es mi cantina Mexicana!* A chance to lure *El Bestio*. Nimbly subtle, *Great Escheria* giggles, humbly and habitually lying to everyone's eyes all the while gracefully transporting my galaxy of stars. Doubter? On the surface of the sun walkways and windows lead everywhere and nowhere. Comfortable reposes reflect pasts; sometimes presents. Doors and mirrors fade into unseen locales. Proverbially, walls talk. *Escheria's* stucco walls flicker. Grainy films. Images. Secret signs. Family stories. Emiting memories, our films liberate hidden truths. Teach me, Buddha: *Hold fast to that which is good.* Momentarily afraid to confirm what it is I think I am seeing, I stare. Films. Faces. Heartbeats. *Who are we? Where are we going? How will we get there? Is there truth in our vision?*

On the surface of the sun visitors hunger for new experiences. Steeped in 21st century moral and visual ambiguity, personally or engaged; I-Phone or text message; with or without compliment of our men, women boldly dream of Valhalla and Vegas, achievement and teasing sins relished with eyes wide-open. We love the perverse impossibilities of *Cirque du Soliel*, silent Blue Men messiahs, Kriss Angel as he walks upon the waters. Freak? Wait. There's more. The Soprano’s battle cross-dressed *Good* & *Evil*. *Verdade.* We are not alone. Enjoy; remember. Saga concludes, we feign ourage at darkly ambiguous endings of anti-heroes and heroines. Their destinies remain a secret of the author! Adoringly, we insist on more. Momma craves her excitements. I am my mother's daughter. *Si! Si!* Thirsty for rare, blinking pinpoints of magical realism, closely, I listen. *El Bestio* knows me well: *You seek spectacle. Let me give you what you want.* My world is all-at-one. Artist, *Escheria* compels. Life's complexities appear real, then, not so surely. *Might be.* *Could be.* It's how I imagine it. Visual dreamers easily imagine my world. *This is your beauty.*

Celitta's and my life onthe surface of the sunis a fiery, spinning carousel.Narratively and visually we mark and signify the emotional places and paces of the people in our world, both real and imagined. Voice, body, and music carry person-to-person, place-to-place, head-to-hand. When word's emotion becomes too dynamic to be spoken, when words alone are not enough to convey the heart's passions, on the surface of the sun voices open and the words are sung. Music lifts the lyrics. When lyrical emotion is too strong even for song - emotions stream into dance. *Kru-lenko.* Artistically, our quest is to keep the creative fire alive and burning. Dreamy first sensing to final, thunderous, *"Si! Si!"* instinctively, both Celitta and I know that our fire is our guiding light and goal. Advance the fire. Evolve or die.Celitta's special gift is her illuminating energy. A tightly carried talisman burning brightly, sometimes darkly, through myriad challenges and fates. They say that every young *Ulyssia* must face up to her own life. Would I grow to be so brave. Kokopelli Tio tells me . . . It's only a matter of time.

- KOKOPELLI POETS MMIX -

Kokopelli Poets MMIX is a musical collaboration. Celitta, me, Peter Kingsbery, da gama, and a host of our musical friends all live near, in Hermosa. Over the course of a year, we joyously knocked around and back-and-forth lyrics, melodies and music; occasionally, even each other and warm flasks of cognac. That was fun. Art *is* a four-letter word. It felt good to listen, even better to sing. In thin air, they generously lent to us their considerable talents and passionate emotions. Celitta and I convey deep gratitude to the great musicians plucking our neighborhood. As is said, if they falter, forgive them, they are men.

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- S O N G S O F M Y S T O R Y -

A C T I

***Words, Words, Beautiful Words! / Emotional Choreography***

Ensemble

***Dear Diary - Dear Diary- Dear Diary***

Marcella

***It's Only A Matter of Time***

Tio / Maria

***One Shot - One Kill***

Victor

***Dream Talk***

James / Marcella

***Eres . . . Eres . . . Eres mi Enemigo* {*Pt. I*}**

Enrique

***I Remember When I Was A Little Girl***

Marcella / Celitta / The Mad Pride Girls

***Marcella, I Am Your Mother***

Maria / Marcella / Celitta

***W. A. A. W!***

James

***Yo Soy Su Tio***

Tio

***Roach Coach Manifesto***

Marcella / James

***It's Always Better At The Beach***

Muscle Heads / Artists / Office Workers / Laborers / Beachgoers / Marcella / Abuela Muriela

***How Bad Is My Jones? / Red Shoes To Wonderland***

Marcella / James / Keiko

***My Place In This World***

Marcella / The Mad Pride Girls

***At Least Tonite***

James / Marcella

- S O N G S O F M Y S T O R Y -

A C T II

***Well Behaved Women Rarely Make History***

Marcella / The Mad Pride Girls / James

***The Inner-Me***

Marcella / James

***She Is Our Girl!***

James / Tio

***Eres . . . Eres . . . Eres mi Enemigo* {*Pt. II*}**

Maria / Tio /Antonio /Victor / Enrique / Marcella / James / Muriela

***Earthworms In My Pocket / Then There Was One***

James / Marcella / Cantina Locals

***Jamie, Do You Love Me?***

Marcella

***Somos Una Familia***

La Familia de Monterrey / Marcella / James

***Mi Nombre Es Enrique Salazar / Give Them What They Want!***

Enrique / Marcella

***Song of Prayers***

Marcella / Maria / Muriela / Celitta / The Mad Pride Girls

***I Am My Mother's Daughter / A Single Night of Pleasure***

Marcella / Enrique

***Life is A Banquet***

Ensemble

***Si! Si!***

Ensemble

**ACT I**

**"THE AWAKENING"**

**SCENE I**

**WORDS, WORDS, BEAUTIFUL WORDS!**

**EMOTIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY**

**DEAR DIARY - DEAR DIARY**

**{ Marcella / Celitta / Maria / Enrique / Tio / Antonio / Victor / James / The Mad Pride Girls }**

Marcella sits alone. Atop an iconic, oval riser are spread about her tools and toys: note pads, pens, tequila, shot glass, cigarettes, laptop, cell phone. None of it matters. Marcella is thinking, writing, listening to her I-Pod. Celitta walks, runs, rolls, flits and flies about, clearly of her own mind. Cobalt blue-lit, the Great Escheria astonishes. Easily, Marcella calls forth onto the stage each character in her mind. Personally interceding and receding in the litany of her thoughts, Scene I unfolds like a classic, movie opening long-shot: perfectly gyrating, gravitating its singular sequence; uninterruptedly involved.

Three-in-the-morning. Writing and drinking. Low, delta-bass rumination seeps from Marcella's earphones into the studio atmosphere. High, she strunks up the funk. A bit of time passes. A cell phone beeps. Perched on an adjacent music stand its generous keypad illuminates bright orange into the cobalt blue night. Marcella peers, reading its message. Its text letters are blown large on scrim. It is easy to see. It is Enrique.

**ENRIQUE**

HOLA BELLA

Marcella rears her mane. Frustratingly familiar with the messenger, she quickly punches in her reply.

**MARCELLA**

WHAT DO YOU WANT

**ENRIQUE**

WANT?

**MARCELLA**

YES!

**ENRIQUE**

BEAUTY

Marcella hurls the phone. Celitta recoils. Exhaling deeply, Marcella pours tequila. Fingers run through luxurious blonde hair. Massaging eyelids and brow, Marcella eases her mind back into its rhythmic flow, gradually recovering a groove and intimacy with her thoughts and journal. She writes.

As Marcella writes, her mind's eye is heard in a dreamy voice-over. The people she writes of elegantly step out from amidst their shadings and shadows. The Great Escherian architecture continues evolving. As each person begins their turn on the stage, Marcella defines them in words, figures bathing in filmic memories cast large on nearby walls. Some rest in solitude, some partake in emotion or action. Escheria easily evolves and revolves; so too do their relations with each other. Pasts and presents collude. Sometimes, they collide.

Dreamy voice-over: Characters and their misty filmic memories make serial, episodic entrances:

**MARCELLA**

*Momma's a good woman / Kinked by her mind*

*Daddy's choked up / Quiet, but kind*

*Tio is gay / N' I could care less / Amongst all my friends / Tio's the best*

*Antonio his lover / Daddy's best friend / Tony & Tio love under cover / Boyhood w/o end*

*Enrique's The Beast / Many want to kill / Beauty doesn't know all the truth / But one day Beauty will*

*James is a man / Him I deeply understand / The first one to touch me / Below-above with hands*

*Grandmother Muriela / Abuelo Alberto / I never felt their hands*

*Who else lives in my world? / On the surface of the sun / Live The Mad Pride Girls . . .*

***"Words, Words, Beautiful Words!" / "Emotional Choreography"***

Amidst the rising set, blue-light and bass-line, characters step and tap exuding a cut in their strut, a graceful glide in their stride. Lithe bodies slink and krunk. Delta-bass rumination textures into an anomalous antiphony, an anticipatory overture, childlike, yet sexy. Rhythmically melding two worlds: *Words, Words, Beautiful Words!* and *Emotional Choreography*. Intense. A five-minute thrill ride. Melodious sing-a-song prelude; fist-stark, set-the-table antiphony. The Mad Pride Girls swirl and sing, belting a segue into an exciting, anxious *Live and Let Die* bridge, spirit establishing the Marcellian tale: A beautiful, thinking-girl's warrioress-to-be. Marcella may not yet know it. The music informs.

Celitta fast-skates by, singing out on her long, stickered-skateboard, proclaiming to the world her love for *Words, Words, Beautiful Words!* See how she flys! Across the stage, up a walkway, down a passage, throughout the Great Escher, Celitta's capable balance knows neither fear nor limits. Celitta loves the world. The world loves Celitta. In *Emotional Choreograpy's* antiphony, Celitta's players signify antiphonic contrast and respect. Excitedly, Celitta lifts the pace, race-skating rendevous with destiny. Marcella writes, furiously.

**CELITTA**

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing you

A *Won*-Derful Tale!

**MARIA**

*You are my daughter / So much I ought to / Share with you*

**CELITTA**

The waters are rising,

The clouds are inspiring,

Grab on n' cling to the rails!

Three scoops!

Three scoops!

Three scoops of Ice Cream!

'S a magical dream;

Come quickly,

Let us sail!!

**TIO**

*You're my Celitta / Verdade pretty neat-a / You really are / The Girl of My Dreams*

**CELITTA**

Let's write a song!

Won't you *please* come along?

I've words

To last the day long!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

**ENRIQUE**

*Are you my daughter? / Who knows? / But I ought to*

*After all I've bought you / I only want you / Here in my arms*

**CELITTA**

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing you

A *Won*-Derful Tale!

**VICTOR**

*I* *am your Daddy / Though I'm feelin' badly / Silenced away / Resigned to this world*

**CELITTA**

These Words,

They come

From my heart!

Whence they end,

I know not

Nor their start!

**ANTONIO**

*Don't worry, Tio / Even if they all know / The love we share / For people we care*

**CELITTA**

Yet they pour

From my mind,

In the darkness

Of time;

Each one hurled

From my lips

Like a dart!

**JAMES**

*Luvangelslowly / Fly with you boldly / The stars are all fallin' / O yea . . .*

**CELITTA**

And they rhyme . . .

And they rhyme . . .

And they rhyme . . .

Most of the time . . .

Or Not!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing

You a *Won*-Derful Tale!

Rising magically from her skateboard, circling above Marcella like the sprite she is, Celitta fashions a great oversized pencil into her small hands, onto a great pad scrawling the calligraphy of Marcella's thoughts. *Whoosh!* The words appear in the air one by one. Her face nodding intense agreement, Marcella's unspoken voice narrates a path for the critical eye’s widening aperture . . . GOT IT!

**MARCELLA**

*"No one can know all things. Still, it is incumbent upon us to recognize truth as it is revealed to us."*

**ENSEMBLE**

You're full of Words,

Full of words,

Full of words,

Little Bird!

Words!

Words!

Beautiful Words!

From the morning

To the night,

With the stars

Shining bright;

Each,

A Marcellian

*Won*-derful Word!

It's a

Marcellian

*Gal*-axy of Words!

Celitta flies and skates about, flitting to and fro, enjoying her reverie while overseeing Marcella's continued writing fury.

**CELITTA**

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing

You a *Won*-Derful Tale!

**ENRIQUE**

*Marcella / It's me? I am your Dad? / No daughter or child / I've ever had*

**CELITTA**

The waters are rising!

The clouds are inspiring!

Grab on n' cling to the rails!

Three scoops!

Three scoops!

Three scoop of Ice Cream!

'S a magical dream!

Come quickly;

Let us sail!!

**VICTOR**

*Marcella-Fella / Listen to your heart / No words can I say / But I fathered your start*

**CELITTA**

Let's write a song -

Won't you *please* come along?

I've words

To last

The day long!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

**MARIA**

*Little girl de mio / All this I did for you / Mi Dio! / You always were so especial / Que mas could I do?*

**CELITTA**

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing

You a *Won*-Derful Tale!

**TIO**

*Does it matter? / Down the line? / Where any of us began our time?*

*My little Marcella / You will always, always / Always be mine . . .*

**CELITTA**

These Words,

They come

From my heart!

Whence they end,

I know not

Nor their start!

**JAMES**

*Got a hot girl! / Got a smart girl! / 'Fraid of nothin' girl! / Not of this world!*

*Everythin' that you do . . . / Scares me deeply . . . / You know it's true . . .*

*Diamonds at your doorstep! / No sense ya' gettin no rest!*

*Who am I t' know what's best? / Heannh!*

**CELITTA**

Yet they pour

From my mind,

In the darkness

Of time;

Each one hurled

From my lips

Like a dart!

And they rhyme . . .

And they rhyme . . .

And they rhyme . . .

Most of the time . . .

Or Not!

I'm a Fish!

I'm a Frog!

I'm a Whale!

Gonna sing

You a *Won*-Derful Tale!

Celitta continues with her great pencil, scrawling the calligraphy of Marcella's thoughts.

"It's not what we don't know that hurts us.

It's what we think is true but isn't that so badly breaks our hearts."

**CELITTA**

It's all "Words! Words! Beautiful words!"

ξ

The emotional intensity of the bridge increases. The characters in Marcella's mind recede. Little Celitta flys away. Alone on the stage, bathed in a pulsing blue and orange light, Marcella ascends high atop a landing. Valiant. Poised. Anxiously magnificent; young Marcella opens. Standing, she delivers . . .

**DEAR DIARY - DEAR DIARY**

**{ Marcella }**

***"Dear Diary - Dear Diary"***

*"Dear Diary* . . .  *Dear Diary* . . .  *Dear Diary* . . .  *Dear Diary* . . .  *"*

Ain't nobody in the sad, sad city . . .

Welcome to my world.

Scannin' for hope and inspiration;

Are you a boy, or, are you a girl?

The reasons of love matter most.

{um-hmmm} {um-hmmm}

It's always anything but what you expect.

She said . . . She said . . .

*I can exist on the surface of the sun . . .*

*Let's frolic now n' later forget!*

Poetry . . .

N' such is poetry . . .

Poetry . . .

N' such is poetry . . .

I’ll feed your poor tired huddled masses!

Even the surfer with the shark's fin.

It's all hell fire, hell fire, hell fire!

The world's a roller coaster,

I’m not strapped in . . .

I've the numbing false sense,

That everything's okay.

I dream about love.

I dream about love.

Little dogs and pretty girls!

*She said . . . She said . . .*

Will you be the one to change my world?

Could you be the one who can change my world?

On the tip of my tongue,

An offensive is poised and rearing.

I hate to stay . . . But I hate to leave . . .

Tell me you find me . . .

Tell me you find me . . .

Tell me you find me . . .

Tell me you find me . . .

*Endearing*

Yes,

I want a world of peace;

More,

I want a piece of the world.

I've lost my mind.

Won’t you help me find it?

Boy, buy a ticket on my tilt-a-whirl!

15 rattlesnakes . . .

14 in the sack . . .

Un-hunh . . . Un-hunh . . .

I'm belted, buckled and booted bad . . .

Un-hunh . . . Un-hunh . . .

*I can exist on the surface of the sun* . . .

*Let's frolic now n' later forget!*

She said . . . She said . . .

She said . . . She said . . .

I want cigarettes and chocolate milk!

I'm a true original, ya' see.

Now lay your body on my bed of silk . . .

N' leave the rest to me.

Poetry . . .

Such is poetry . . .

*She said . . . She said . . .*

Will you be the one to change my world?

Could you be the one who can change my world?

Love is but friendship caught on fire.

*Caught on fire!*

{ whispered }

*Dear God??*

Monterrey.

Any chance I'll ever come back?

*No chance I’ll ever come back?*

ξ

The lights slowly darken;

Marcella's song comes to its whispery close.

She quietly walks up the stairs.

Dozing in a recliner is Victor Tremble.

Gently kissing Victor on the forehead, she tightens his blanket, warming a body.

Marcella recedes into the darkness.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE II**

**IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME**

**{ Tio / Maria }**

Slow light. Tio and Maria. Eyes exchange memories.

***"It's Only A Matter of Time"***

**TIO**

Maria, can you believe,

What our ears just heard?

Saddens my heart.

Fills me with fears.

It’s only a matter of time,

Till we’ll . . . We'll have to let go.

Who knows where our young bird,

Is ever to go?

One thing is sure;

We know in our hearts.

Marcella, she’s different.

She needs now her start . . .

**MARIA**

Tio, I care.

Yet, how can I dare?

Let into this world,

Such a strange, crazy girl . . .

**TIO**

Hush now, Maria!

Please no, *telenovela.*

This is Marcella’s river.

We must help her over.

Surely you see her,

Hardly different from you.

Maria, remember, you were once young, too . . .

*Calme . . . Hermana . . . Calme . . . Hermana . . . Calme . . .*

Childhood is wonder,

Never meant to last;

We all bear our shames,

Living down pasts.

It’s only a matter of time!

One day with courage;

It’s soon . . .

We’ll find words to tell her,

Under the moon.

Maria . . . It’s time . . .

Let go of Marcella.

Maria . . . It’s time . . .

Let go of Marcella.

It will do us no good

To show anger or rage.

For Marcella to return . . .

We must leave open the cage . . .

Leave open the cage . . .

*Hermana . . .*

**MARIA**

Tio, my strengths,

So different from you;

Daddy’s deranged,

Not sure what to do.

Victor’s been good . . .

Father and lover . . .

Doctor’s now say . . .

He’ll never recover!

*Tio! Tio! Tio!*

We’ve come so far,

Still so far to go;

I’ll pray on this, Tio,

Perhaps God will show . . .

*Es possible,* *mi hermano,*

Dear God will show?

**TIO / MARIA**

We love our . . .

Our little girl.

Clearly not . . .

Not of this world.

She’s a heart full of love,

N’ feet quick to dance;

No matter our pasts,

She deserves now her chance?

*Si, si, si . .*

No matter our pasts,

She deserves now her chance?

*Si, si, si . . . Si, si, si . . .*

No matter our pasts

She deserves now her chance?

No matter our pasts

She deserves now her chance?

No matter our pasts

She deserves now her chance?

No matter our pasts . . .

*No matter. . . No Matter. . . No Matter. . .*

It’s only a matter of time . . . It’s only a matter of time . . . It’s only a matter of time . . .

ξ

Tio & Maria recede back into the night.

Lights darken.

Battered Ulysses; against his natural discipline, Victor's body agitates.

Dreams rise within dreams.

Filmic images reel by onto various skins and scrim.

Victor filming Celitta riding her first training-wheels bicycle . . .

Pajama-opening her Christmas presents . . .

Fighting off a summer water spray . . .

Angelic in First Communion dress.

REM sleep.

Elusive peace.

Victor's holographic image rises.

Floating high, above, out over the landing . . .

Escheria revolves.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE III**

**ONE SHOT - ONE KILL**

**{ Victor }**

Raw, barren desert. Sunset encroaches. Hypnotic music envelopes a wailing Scirocco. Across a stark landscape in full Ghillie outfit, softly-lit Victor Tremble imperceptibly slithers over moonlit foliage. Unseen, venomous; silent Victor weaves his way. Controlled care and grace; he comes upon an upended boulder. He rises. Frightening. Surreal. Victor: *I am a deadly Wookie*. Carefully, he sets a line of fire. Sun and moon rise and set; once, again. Night desert sounds. A good mile from his target, miles from himself or anyone else; time passes. Certain of his aim, Victor quietly begins the reverie of a soldier alone on mission. Desert crickets begin to sing. Warm winds blow. A full-rising, amber moon illumines. Victor Tremble faces God and demon.

**VICTOR**

***"One Shot - One Kill"***

Seems like there's a strange sickness;

A sickness in the land.

Startin' to spread,

Person to person - head to head - hand to hand.

One person, then another. Soon seems that we'll never recover.

Everyone feels the dread . . .

I do.

Standin’ here nigh two days,

Waitin’ for my man;

Both have an appointment with The Great Maker.

Jus' that it’s gonna come faster for that other fella’,

Than he’ll ever understand.

{chuckles}

Tight-ass Patton was right.

The Art of War is to make the other poor bastard die . . . Die for *his* country;

Not you for yours . . .

Yet, I too,

Have somethin’ crawlin’

Deep under my skin;

Burnin’ like whiskey in a bleedin’ cut.

N’ I can’t say a single word,

Not even a single “but” . . .

For that would be my own end - like dyin’ by my own hand . . .

Dyin’ by my own hand. . .

Dyin’ by my own hand. . .

Dyin’ . . . Dyin' by my own hand . . .

Crazy, ain’t it?

*Knowin' somethin' ain’t right . . . In your mind.*

Crazy, ain’t it?

*Say one damned word . . . It’ll be the last time.*

Crazy, ain’t it?

*To be so happy . . . To do the crime.*

Crazy, ain’t it?

*Say one last word . . . Especially to him.*

Antonio Jimenez

*My own best friend.*

Even if it do feel like whiskey burnin’;

It's burnin' in an open cut . . .

Even if it do feel like whiskey burnin’.

I know the damned drill . . .

Keep my goddamned mouth shut . . . Keep my goddamned mouth shut . . .

But I ain’t dumb . . .

Even as I stay quiet . . .

In my mind it strangely seems,

What's goin' on . . . Well . . . It’s a life n’ death riot . . .

I got somethin’ wrong ya’ see.

Somethin’ really affectin’ me.

Up and down;

Down n’ up.

N’ I can’t say a word . . . . . . I can’t say a word . . .

I jus’ fill my cup,

With another touch,

Of that good ole Southern Whiskey . . . un-hunh . . . uh-hunh . . .

Yea . . . That good ole Southern Whiskey . . . un-hunh . . .

Sometimes though . . . A man grows tired;

Fightin’ the demons within.

Can’t say a word . . . Oh, not a word . . .

My friends would say it's the end.

And it’s true . . . Oh, yes it's true . . .

I know what they would do . . .

Oh, it's true . . . I *know* what they would do . . .

Oh, I'm gettin' t' feelin' blue . . .

I don't get much special *joy*

From bein’ a killer . . .

No matter how good they say I am.

N' I don't take it too personal.

Although . . . Seein' my man drop down to the ground . . . Jus' like he should . . .

When you take life year in, year out; year out, year in;

Ya' better not ask if what you do is a sin . . .

Umhh . . . Umhhh . . .

Ya’ see . . . To me . . . My rifle . . . Well, it's much more than a toy.

In my kind'a of work . . . It’s the only thing, separatin' men from the boys.

Yip. Yip. Damn straight. Oh . . . That it does . . .

Yip. Yip. Damn straight.

Mmmm . . .

This ain't no business for children;

That's for sure.

This ain't no business for children.

*"One shot . . . One kill . . ."*

Oh, that it does.

*"One shot . . . One kill . . ."*

Well, I don’t know the fancy “psy-chi-atric” word,

Makes my life feel like an injured bird.

Try to fly with all my might.

You jus’gotta look inside to see . . .

Dear God. Somethin' ain't right . . . Somethin' ain’t right . . .

But I got somethin’ to live for;

It's much greater than Me.

I served nineteen years for my family.

I served *nineteen years* for my family.

Jus' one more for the Government;

N’ I'll retire free.

Jus’ one more for the Government;

N’ I'll retire free!

{ Tee-hee! }

The things that drive a man . . .

Some more; some less.

Truly now; I must confess . . .

Even more than my beloved wife,

Maria.

She's made us a damned good life . . .

I gotta acknowledge her.

Well, I ought'a;

But there ain't nothin',

Oh, no; nothin' that beats my daughter. Oh, no . . .

My little Marcella . . .

*THERE’S* a good fella!

*Marcella . . .*

{ Oh, yea . . . }

My little Marcella . . .

Before me,

Here as I stand;

Preparin' my target

For the Promised Land.

I’m locked in chains.

N' I'm not free.

No, I'm not free . . .

N' my little Marcella . . .

She’s just like me . . .

My little Marcella . . .

She’s just like me . . .

*N’ I can’t say a word!*

*Cuz’ I don’t KNOW the words . . .*

*N’ I can’t say a word!*

*Cuz’ I don’t KNOW the words . . .*

*N’ I can’t say a word!*

*Cuz’ goddammit, I don’t KNOW the words . . . !*

*God-damn you, God! I don’t KNOW the damned words . . . !*

ξ

Sunrise limns the horizon. Victor returns to his sniper position. Scope the target. Aim. Breathe. *Fire!* Shudder and flame kick from the rifle muzzle. Fifty calibers pass cleanly through a tan, turbaned head. A walking village girl is struck by innocent, pass-through ricochet. Two bodies crumple. Time snaps. Victor drops his rifle; disbelieving, staggered. Want to help. Futile nonsense. Tremble. Good warrior! This?! Damner of God, now a god-damned killer of children! Glory be! Is today to be my judgment day? Dear God? Dear God? God . . . What have I done?

Psychic-core shaking. Overwhelmed. Drifting. Danger. Stranger in a strange land. No-man's land. Victor's rifle fire attracts enemy counter-forces. For the first time in Victor's long, glorious career, confidence and convictions abandon him. Disoriented, encircled; captured. Christian cross ripped away. Victor is hung high, an inverted Barrabas. Lights darken. A savage beating begins. It does not end.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE IV**

**DESAYUNA, MI CHICA AMIGA!**

**{ Victor / Celitta / Tio / Maria }**

Morning in the Tremble household. Dressed for school, Celitta shares an armchair with Victor, working his hands into the words that will be his new sign to the world. In the kitchen, Tio makes coffee and breakfast. Maria sits upstairs at her bedroom vanity, lavishly applying her make-up. Victor wants.

**CELITTA**

It's okay, Daddy. I've got your hands. Give them to me.

Good boy, daddy.

Okay, now look. Here. Let's make a "C". See? "C".

"C" is for *courage*; "C" is for *candy*; "C" is for *me*! "C" is for *Celitta*, Daddy!!

C'mon, daddy . . . Now you try it . . .

QUIT LOOKING AT *ME* DADDY! { giggles } Look down at your hands!!

**TIO**

Celitta, time now for you and breakfast. *Desayuna, mi chica amiga!*

Celitta keeps signing with Victor, jubilantly showing him how many new words she is learning, softly saying each sign-word into his ear. Victor struggles. A great, pained smile. Tio packs her lunch in a brown, paper bag. Maria comes down the stairs in near-harlot robe, her beautiful black hair stunning in its thick richness. She walks over to Victor and Celitta.

**MARIA**

Look at you two. If ever there were two sox unmatched.

Celitta, show Daddy the word for *hope*.

**CELITTA**

I don't know that word, Momma. But I'll be sure to ask.

I have hope Momma. Just not in my fingers!

**TIO**

Celitta! *Oye! Desayuna, mi chica amiga!* *Andalate!* The bus is here soon. Hurry!

ξ

Celitta quickly kisses Victor's cheek, rushes into the kitchen, grabs a muffin stuffing it into her mouth.

Hugging Tio, Celitta throws her book-satchel over her shoulder and bolts for the door, silently giggling.

Nodding, waving to all, she hurriedly walks backwards out the kitchen door.

Tio's clucked tongue nods and smiles.

She is our girl.

Racing out, he yells, *"Celitta, your lunch!"*

Maria stares silently at Victor.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE V**

**DREAM TALK**

**{ Marcella / James }**

Low lights around the boom-box beach studio. Rooftop. Night. James. Marcella. S' a lover-thing. Teasing, playful, goofy. Marcella n’ James grow intimate. Fingers n' feathers learn a bit 'bout the other. A bass fret thunks. Bodies move. Love mannequins pose for reward; quietly exploring secretly hidden crevices, those which only by being in love are we allowed to discover. Here resides one’s inner-being. Bass fret thunk takes another pass. Arched hands pause, retreat, then begin to push back, keeping one away. Smiles begin to breathe. A tilted head tosses. Answered. Eyes ask questions . . . Serious. M-m-m-m. Talk, you. See my face.

***"Dream Talk"***

**MARCELLA**

{ whispered }

James . . . James . . . James . . .

C’mon n’ break down the door;

Take me back to the real world.

Prisoner of my own mind;

Even if you deserve a happy girl.

**JAMES**

Sang to you,

You're the whipsmart girl!

Golden head on high.

Ridin’ in the fast car front seat,

Wind blows tears across the eye . . .

She said . . .

**MARCELLA**

*“I know the human being and fish can co-exist peacefully!”*

**JAMES**

N' you know that my only wish,

To watch you dreamin’, sleepily.

Never abandon a woman,

Who voices the world like you;

Somethin’ about your honesty,

Keeps our one as two.

What can I do,

With a girl like you?

A girl like you . . .

A girl like you . . .

What can I do,

With a girl like you?

A girl like you . . .

A girl like you . . .

What can I do,

With a girl like you?

A girl like you . . .

A girl like you . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

Under the covers, you call me your lover.

*Dream talk! Dream talk!*

**JAMES**

Startin’ to fill me with fear . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

Under the covers you call me your lover.

*Dream talk! Dream talk!*

**MARCELLA**

Promise . . . You’ll never leave me dear . . .

{ Whispered }

*“I’m the human equivalent of a chocolate croissant!”*

**JAMES**

N’ now you make me cry;

Dashing to the stars so fast.

I am so afraid you just might die.

**MARCELLA**

{ Whispered }

*I cannot help myself - I was born this way*

There’s something dear . . . I must confess:

*Manic-depression . . . is a pulsating mess.*

*A pulsating mess.*

Please don’t let my secret out.

Others think I’m bright.

With you, I let my hair down.

I know you’ll make it right.

*D’ya think a happy life is beyond our reach?*

How’s my beret?

I go now and make a speech . . .

C’mon n’ break down the door;

Take me back to the real world.

A prisoner of my own mind;

Even if you deserve a happy girl.

**JAMES**

Sang to you,

Your'e the whipsmart girl!

Golden head on high.

Ridin’ in the fast car front seat,

Wind blows tears across the eye . . .

She said . . .

**MARCELLA**

*“I know the human being and fish can co-exist peacefully!”*

**JAMES**

Can I help you with your loneliness?

End this suffering,

So needlessly?

Never abandon a woman,

Who voices the world like you;

Somethin’ about your honesty,

Keeps our one as two.

What can I do,

With a girl like you?

A girl like you . . .

A girl like you . . .

What can I do,

With a girl like you?

A girl like you . . .

A girl like you . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

Under the covers, you call me your lover.

*Dream talk! Dream talk!*

**MARCELLA**

Startin’ to fill me with fear . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

Under the covers you call me your lover.

*Dream talk! Dream talk!*

**JAMES**

Promise . . . You’ll never leave me dear . . .

ξ

Marcella turns to leave. She hands James an Oragami folded note.

Flush, James does not want Marcella to leave.

**MARCELLA**

A poem for you.

**JAMES**

What is it?

**MARCELLA**

What else?

Words . . .

Words as a Weapon.

*W - A - A - W !!*

Goodnight, my love . . .

*Aye!* Look above, Jamie!

*The stars are all falling*

*To earth with a terrible crash!*

ξ

Marcella disappears onto The Strand, into the night. Left lonely, disconsolate, James slumps onto the couch. His cell phone announces a text message. Pull it close. Marcella. Leap! Circle! Yes! Yes! Yes! Fist pumps punctuate the air.

**I'M THE PRIZE**

**IN THE CEREAL BOX!**

**( DON'T YOU SEE, JAMES? )**

Marcella walks on. Her phone rings. Message. It is Enrique.

**EL BESTIO**

HOLA BELLA

**MARCELLA**

WHAT DO YOU WANT

**EL BESTIO**

YOU LOOK NICE TONITE

**MARCELLA**

HOW DO YOU KNOW

**EL BESTIO**

MIRRORS

ξ

Marcella shuts its off.

Into the darkness she walks alone.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE VI**

**HOW ARE YOU**. . .  **MY BEAST OF THE NIGHT?**

**{ Celitta / Victor / Tio / Antonio / Maria / Enrique }**

Late evening. The Tremble home. Celitta plays in her pajamas. Tio is well-dressed. Slender Antonio fills out a muscle-shirt. Victor lounges in his bathrobe. As always, Maria looks lovely. Tio and Antonio steal a kiss in the kitchen. Celitta sits with her Daddy; stacks and stacks of books, games and young artist supplies strew the room. Celitta scribbles, quoting poetry to her father. On the upper landing, Maria stands proud looking down over this pacific moment. Her extraordinary child. Her fallen warrior. She returns to her vanity. Her place of comfort, Maria glances repeatedly at a cell phone on a sidetable. Walking back out onto the landing, seeing Celitta and Victor continuing to enjoy their moment, she shakes her head, great black mane falling around her shoulders. Returning to the vanity, her eye catches the cell phone again and again. Decisions. Maria returns to the landing. She summons Celitta.

**MARIA**

"Celitta?! *Celitta? Arriba! Por favor!*"

Celitta hurriedly forms a few more letters in Victor's hand. They struggle to sign "I LOVE YOU." Victor does not quite grasp it. Celitta mocks a blown kiss and races up the stairs by two's, singing out in Latin memorized from the Church missal.

**CELITTA**

*"Dominus no viscum / Et cum spirit / Tu-tu all . . ."*

*"Kyrie - Kyrie - Celitta's in the house - I'm coming up the hall . . ."*

She arrives at her mother's door, imitating a toy soldier.

*"Ah-men! Ma-ma!"*

{ Bowing }

*Y ahora -* How might I be of service to you - *Senora!?*

**MARIA**

Celitta. Make this phone where the call is not checked.

*"Hace donde impossible saber quien es hablando."*

Celitta takes and easily operates the phone by second nature.

**CELITTA**

It's all digitally-based, Mom. You just have to scroll through the menus.

**MARIA**

Menus?! Thank you, Celitta! My God, you are such a smart girl!

**CELITTA**

It's only technology, Mother. It's called "Caller ID".

You could learn it if you wanted to. I can teach you. Here.

With a few clicks, Maria's caller ID is blocked. Celitta extends the phone back to Maria, devilishly throwing her arm around her mother's shoulder. Phone in outstretched hand, Celitta mugs at the camera.

**CELITTA**

*C'mon, Momma! Let's take our picture!*

Perplexed, Maria unconsciously fusses her hair, forcing a smile. Celitta takes their photo. She quickly pushes buttons. Mother-daughter screen saver. Maria marvels. Celitta renders technical complexities simple and smilingly.

**CELITTA**

Look, Momma! Look! I've put our picture as your wallpaper!! See!

**MARIA**

*Aye! Mi Dio*! You little *loca!* How did you do that! *Aye!*

Give me a hug, Celitta. Now, go away. Give Momma some privacy, now, no?

*Gracias, Celitta.*

Dismissed; soldier Celitta spins on her heels. She marches from the room. Turning into the darkened hallway, Celitta smartly marks time-in-place. Sensuous Maria: *"How are you . . . My beast of the night?"*  A mere child, Celitta, hearing Maria's conversation, she freezes at attention.

**MARIA**

*?Como esta . . . Mi Bestio?*

*Mi Bestio del a noche . . .*

**ENRIQUE**

*Quien es?* Who is this?

**MARIA**

Who is this?

{ *She purrs.*}

Now you know!

**ENRIQUE**

Jesus, Maria that is you! *Carajo! Carajo!*

{ Enrique throws a great breath }

**MARIA**

{ Maria catches a great breath }

*Bestio*.

*Eschuche,* close. Listen.

Victor is terribly injured. Good as dead.

*Pero, Enrique . . .*

*Bestio . . .*

Marcella is *your* daughter, *Bestio!*

I don't care about anything!

Nothing! Nothing for me!

*Silencie! Silencie!*

Listen.

I want, I expect.

You will take responsibility for Marcella.

*Comprende?!*

*Enrique!*

She . . .

We . . .

Need your help!

*Bestio! You are Marcella's father!*

There is a long pause. Enrique considers what he has heard. Crushed, Celitta can not listen to any more. Bolting, she races down the stairs into the living room careening in a great circle around Victor, her reddening face crashing, again racing, straining for Tio and Antonio coming from the kitchen. Disjointed, a mess, all arms, Celitta jumps up to Tio hugging neck and shoulders. No sounds. Images. Upstairs, Maria cradles to her ear a silent phone.

**MARIA**

Enrique? . . .

Enrique?

Say something!

Stand up for something besides yourself, for once!

I'm sorry . . .

*Enrique . . .*

Seeing how upset Celitta is, Antonio rubs her back; Tio waves him goodnight. Antonio lets himself out. Tio takes Celitta into his room. Quietly, for a long time, Tio tenderly rocks his crying neice.

**ENRIQUE**

Now, you be quiet, Maria.

You say I am Marcella's father.

Nothing for almost seven years . . . Now I have a daughter?

*Ahora tengo una hija? Incredible' . . .*

Marcella is my daughter . . . ? When you came to me pregnant at seventeen?

Oh, that is so *muy rico . . .* So very rich.

Maria . . . I don't know whether I believe you or not.

{ A great, satisfied laugh. }

Believe you? Can even  *I* believe you?

Maria . . . You, *mi preciosa* black flower.

*Mi flora negra. Que bonita.*

Tell me, Maria. What color is her hair?

**MARIA**

Why . . . Marcella has dark hair . . . Like us . . .

**ENRIQUE**

Are you sure, Maria?

*Maria?*

Don't you like living in your nice, two-story, pink beach house so close to the water?

Aren't you close to Marcella's school?

Frightened, Maria realizes that Enrique knows much more than he is revealing. She chooses truth.

**MARIA**

Yes . . . I mean no . . . I am only kidding, Enrique.

*Marcella es una rubia egualmenta a mi madre.*

Marcella is blonde, just like Momma.

**ENRIQUE**

May her soul rest in peace.

**MARIA**

Thank you, *Enrique.*

Thank you always for what you did.

*Gracias, para* what you do now.

**ENRIQUE**

*Quiet, Maria!*

I haven't said I will do anything . . .

You and that silly Caller ID!

You think I don't know everything of . . .

{ Quiet. }

. . . This is what we will do . . .

{Enrique spits her name with contempt}

" Maria . . . "

Say . . . Maybe once a month . . . I will have an envelope delivered to you . . .

At that sad . . . sad . . . Unmanly house of yours.

By the way . . . How is that *marijon,* Tio?

Still writing "love" poetry for his pretty little boy-soldier, Antonio?

{ Laughter and quiet }

Maria.

If Marcella is that smart, beautiful; if she's everything that you say she is,

Then, one day . . . and *I* will pick that time . . .

Marcella . . . She will come to Monterrey.

She will live with me; her "Father".

Then I can see for myself, up close,

What kind of woman . . .

What kind of woman came from this *fabulosa* young girl.

*Marcella* . . . My "daughter".

That is what we will do, Maria.

Do you understand me?

**MARIA**

Yes . . . *Si, si . . .*  I understand you, *Bestio*.

**ENRIQUE**

Send me a picture. You do have a picture of you two, don't you?

**MARIA**

*Si, Enrique.* I have a picture.

**ENRIQUE**

That's it. No talking to me about "us". No "nothing" about the past. No *nada.*

{ Whispers }

"Liar"

*Mentirosa*

Maria, Maria . . .

You . . . You who said you loved me.

I always planned to marry you . . .

You *estupida,* uneducated beauty.

Sometime.

But not because you come running to me that you were pregnant!

And then, so easily; so *muy facil,* you betray me *para uno gringo "country boy"!!*

And look at where you are now.

Reduced to begging on your knees . . .

And where is your great "Victor"?

Poor creature of a man . . .

Silent and defeated . . .

Unable to either protect,

Or, I imagine,

Even properly love a woman such as you.

A man who cannot protect his family . . .

He is no man at all.

Maria, Maria . . .

You'll have your money . . . But trust me . . . Is pleasure ever free?

*"Maria? Maria . . . Eres . . . eres . . . eres mi enimigo."*

Winning financial tribute, ecstatic, Maria ignores Enrique's rattle. She believes she has what she wants. Self-protectively lying Maria. Inexplicable; she trades Celitta's future for her present.

**MARIA**

God, *mi Dio,* Enrique! Marcella is so smart! She is *too* smart!

*Una prodigia!*

She is smart like YOU, *Bestio!*

**ENRIQUE**

Smart like me, hmmh?

I like that. I'd like to see that. For myself.

Well, we'll see.

Good bye, Maria.

*Adios.*

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE VII**

**ERES**. . . **ERES** . . .  **ERES MI ENIMIGO, {Pt. I}**

**{ Enrique }**

Grainy film of Enrique in his office boardroom; limo; opera; shooting someone; reading a book; kissing a young Maria breaking away from his arms; sending a text message. Images of his true life.

***" Eres . . . Eres . . . Eres mi Enimigo****"*

**ENRIQUE**

Everyone wants so much from me;

They all want it

So "honestly."

That's the way it is for me . . .

Give and take . . .

So easily.

Leaving dark to dark,

N' the misfortune . . . of memory.

No one wants to see the hand,

Or bite the provider,

Of he who's The Man . . .

Sick. Sick. Sick.

You're all so sick to me.

Judges and jailers in the land of the free.

Always forgetting . . . I only do what you let me.

That's the way it is . . . And, will always be.

S' why,

N' its why;

Wherever I go . . .

I bring nightimes of laughter

To all in "The Show".

The misfortune of memory,

You turn away what you see.

Yet I carry your heart,

Always near me.

For, my little *cabrone,*

I bring your death,

Easily, easily, easily with me.

You are . . . You are . . . You are my enemy.

*"Eres . . . Eres . . . Eres mi enimigo."*

*Y es porque*

*Y es mas porque*

*A donde yo me voy*

*Yo treajo su corozone circa con migo*

*Yo traejo su muerte*

*Facil con migo*

*Y es porque*

*Y es mas porque*

*Eres . . . Eeres . . . Eres mi enimigo.*

ξ

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE VIII**

**I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL**

{The Beast in The Night}

**{ Marcella / Celitta / The Mad Pride Girls / Maria }**

Marcella and Celitta. Middle of the night. Cobalt-blue luminescence and accoutrements; her cell phone rings. The same orange glow illuminates. Tipsy from tequila; no signs of letting up, Marcella ignores it. Ringing again, she tosses it to the side. Celitta, as always, *elle es la petite femme completement de la vie.* The Mad Pride Girls; whatever, wherever they choose to be. Lonely,they sing together.

***"I Remember When I Was a Little Girl"***

**MARCELLA**

I remember,

When I was

An itty-little girl.

**CELITTA**

I so much loved

My Momma's voice;

But I . . . I knew,

I was indeed Daddy's choice.

**MARCELLA / CELITTA / THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

That's the way of this world;

When you're born to be,

Daddy's little girl.

I-l-o-v-e-*you.*

Yes, I do.

**MARCELLA**

Toys n' dolls,

N' havin' fun;

Livin' large,

*"The Special One!"*

**CELITTA**

Feelin' beauty,

Outside n' in.

Things were so

Much different then.

I was still happy . . .

In my own skin.

**MARCELLA / CELITTA / THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

But that was then;

N' this is now.

Listen closely girls,

We'll show you how.

**MARCELLA**

For me,

Marcella,

That Little Fella . . .

**CELITTA**

. . . Celitta did begin!

A little secret

I will confess!

From early on

I was the best!

Marcella-Fella

Than all the rest!

**THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

A chosen child,

Put to the test!

**MARCELLA**

*"Si, Si?"*

*Sez' Momma.*

*N' who in the hell*

*Does she think she is?*

**THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

N' what was it

That she could do?

Made *Celitta* so different

From the normal U?

**MARCELLA / CELITTA / THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

Strength & Muscle

Felt need for Speed!

Brains n' Fire

Set burn to Read!

Letters on the page!

That girl was all the rage!

Your time n' your attentions,

She could easily engage!

It's really very e-

- Asy to see;

It was the stunning aura,

Of her *phys-i-o-lo-gy* !

**CELITTA**

{ Not bad at four to be so free! }

**MARCELLA**

Feelin' beauty,

Outside n' in.

Things were so

Much different then.

I was still happy . . .

In my own skin.

**CELITTA**

When Daddy was gone,

It hurt so bad.

Not even Tio's laughter,

Could make me glad.

**MARCELLA / CELITTA**

Crazy, was I?

Crazy to them!

Had to be

My own girl friend.

*Los Lonely Girls,*

Me n' Momma.

Lookin' for friends . . .

In Mad Pride Worlds.

Readin' a book;

Hide under covers!

Secret Explorers!

Star-struck lovers!

Momma sez: *Let me see!*

*"Segure esta, es no por-no-gra-phy?!"*

Daddy returns.

Mama she spurns.

Up late at night;

Moanin' n' cryin',

"Beast in the Night"

Me. I'm just laughin'!

Undercover flashlight!

Daddy takes Momma,

Strong now his arms.

Momma whimpers quiet,

Hushed by his charms.

Daddy gets hurt.

I feel so alone.

Mama says words.

In our own home.

*"How are you my Beast of the Night?"*

**MARCELLA / CELITTA / THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

The Beast in The Night!

*El Bestio del a Noche!*

The Beast in The Night!!

**MARIA**

{ sexy whisper }

*?Como esta . . . Mi Bestio?*

*Mi Bestio del a noche . . .*

**CELITTA**

My heart,

Little heart;

*Mi corazone,*

Beat with fright . . .

**MARCELLA / CELITTA / THE MAD PRIDE GIRLS**

The Beast in The Night!

*El Bestio del a Noche!*

The Beast in The Night!!

**MARCELLA**

{softly spoken}

Finally she learned,

To lie so well;

That only I,

Really,

Knew the truth of her hell.

ξ

Marcella's cell phone rings. Resigned, she anwers it. Orange glow. Message. Enrique.

**EL BESTIO**

HOLA BELLA

**MARCELLA**

WHAT DO YOU WANT!

**EL BESTIO**

A WOMAN LIKE YOU

COME TO MONTERREY

**MARCELLA**

WHY

**EL BESTIO**

SEE FOR YOURSELF

**MARCELLA**

I SEE FOR MYSELF

**EL BESTIO**

THE BEAST WONT HURT YOU

**MARCELLA**

BECAUSE YOU LOVE ME?

**EL BESTIO**

LOVE?

**MARCELLA**

LOVE

**EL BESTIO**

LOVEI DONT KNOW

**MARCELLA**

SAD

**EL BESTIO**

FEAR I KNOW

**MARCELLA**

OF WHAT

**EL BESTIO**

YOU HAVE FEAR

**MARCELLA**

NO I DONT

**EL BESTIO**

YES YOU DO

**MARCELLA**

NO I DONT!

**EL BESTIO**

BELLA YOU FEAR ME

**MARCELLA**

KEEP AWAY EL BESTIO!

*VETE!!*

ξ

Hurl!

Unite!

Tigresses in imaginary cages.

Marcella, Celitta, and The Mad Pride Girls rush to each other *en unison*.

Backs to backs, encircling, searching the night for danger.

Cobalt-blue essence flickers.

Flicker.

Extinguish.

Darkness.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE IX**

**MARCELLA, I AM YOUR MOTHER**

**{ Marcella / Maria / Celitta / Victor / Tio }**

Maria and Marcella are in the family living room / studio. Marcella writes, reads, texts, i-pods; smokes; scratches, walks about talking to herself. Agitation. Maria sits on the couch speaking Spanglish too loudly on her cell phone. Latino pop music blares from a radio. The television mutelessly images a popular Mexican soap opera. *Una telanovena*. The men and the women are all *passionata y muy bello*. Celitta watercolors in the corner near an open window. Wearing her private Catholic girl's school, plaid-skirt uniform, she is fiercely engaged. Thinking, rushing, gushing; uninhibited strokes fuel childish beauty. For whom, for what; why does Celitta so rush?

Marcella, is first to lose it. She can take no more. She attacks the radio, forcefully cutting off the music, in turn, drawing attention to herself. Celitta snaps to attention, staring at her Mother. She cannot speak. She quivers. Expressionlessly, she lunges at the painting, taking it, smearing it across her face, onto her dress and then over her hands. Wordlessly, she lets it fall to the floor. Marcella screams out, whirling to in front of her Mother, protectively blocking the path to Celitta.

**MARCELLA**

Momma! That's enough! Stop it! *Shut up!*

Shouting out Marcella's name, Maria quickly jumps up from the couch covering the phone. Hurriedly, she ends her call. A frozen mess at her empty easel, Celitta stands staring, head nodding vigorously. Head-nod, head-nod, head-nod; slowly her stare comes to rest on Maria and Marcella.

**MARIA**

What are you doing, Marcella! *Mi Celitta!*

**MARCELLA**

What am I doing? What are you doing? What are you doing with that constant

{She shapes her fingers and thumb into a fast-talking mouth }

*"Hablando, hablando, hablando!"*

Eh?Didn't they teach you to read *books* in those good Catholic girl schools, Momma?

Is that why you spend your days watching telenovelasand doing your hair?

Who do you think you are? Salma Hayek, guest-starring on *"El Cartel"* ?

Is that what you learned - *like me!* - in all those good Catholic girl schools, Momma?!

Oh, I am sure you were their best student!

{ *Marcella screams. Celitta screams.* }

This is crazy, Mother! Why do you always talk so much . . . and yet . . .

It's always *lies* from your tongue?!

**MARIA**

Marcella, shush now! *Mi Celitta,* must I say *"Cayete!"* ?

What are you talking about?

I . . . I . . .

**MARCELLA**

You . . . you . . .

You what?!

Mother and daughter's eyes meet and lock. Breaths are caught. Visual boundaries are tested; tightened. Foxes, bulls, it's easy to see silent asking; "How far will we take this? How far may I go?" Fear and mutual incomprehension gradually dissolve to feigned make-nice. Maria; mother, not long till forty: *What am I doing? Don't think like that! Monterrey is possible. Somehow.* At this point, Maria has much more to save. Turning, Maria is now oblique to both Marcella and Celitta. Maria leaves vacantly unrecognized that Celitta has smeared herself with paint. Strange, a mother providing for but not rushing to her child's aid. She could be speaking to them both. Maria begins. Haltingly.

**MARIA**

. . . Why are you so quiet, *mi hija*?

It’s not like you daughter to suddenly have nothing to say . . .

Was . . . was working on your studies

Especially tiring today?

**CELITTA**

{ *Beginning to cry* }

. . . No, Mama . . . It’s not about books. It's never about books . . .

It's about . . . It's about . . .

You're breaking my heart . . . Mama!

{ Crying, Celitta looks up the landing at Victor in his chair }

Talk family with you . . .

I don’t know . . . where . . . how to start . . .

{ *Under her breath, she moans, "Beast!"* }

**MARIA**

Come, Marcella; easy now, *mi Celitta.*

Mama will show you how.

First one word, then the next.

See, it’s easy. Now, give your best . . .

Is it about that cute boy you've met?

{ Sobbing, Celitta nods no. Marcella races to Maria }

**MARCELLA**

Stop it, Mama!

You clueless . . . . . . bitch!

That’s such a stupid thing to say!

As if I don’t know more about men than you!

In every single way! *Carajo!* James?! NOT! *Loca!*

You don't get it, Momma!

Look around!

You make it impossible for me to talk to you about anything!

Look around, Momma!

Who the hell are you

To keep treatin’ me like a child?

I’ve had enough!

This is it, Momma!

I've had it!

I’m going out into the world!

Like you did,

As a girl

In Monterrey!

I'm going to quit school!

I'm going to . . .

I'm going to . .

If I want to . . . I want to . . .

I'm going to run a lunch truck!

Just like Tio did in Monterrey!

Isn't that right, Momma?!

Tio ran a lunch truck!

N' you went to nice private girl's schools just like me!

N' my grandparents were killed in an automobile accident!

Isn't that right, Momma?!

*Pero* . . .  *pero* . . .Why can I find no record of that on the Internet?!

Hunh, Momma?! Why?!

*!Porque no, Momma!*

**MARIA**

Don't *hable* to me about the Internet!

*Yo no se* the Internet!

I know the truth! That's what I know!

And the truth is what I say it is!

You be quiet!

**MARCELLA**

Oh, "Be quiet!" That's *muy rico,* Momma.

Yea, that's really rich!

You make me sick!

I'm going to get a lunch truck!

I'm going to the beach!

I'm going to do what *I* want to do!

N' everything's within my reach!

I'm not stupid, Mother.

Unlike you -

I'm afraid of no one!

Not what anyone thinks!

What anyone says!

Whomever they are!

Wherever they are!

I will not be frightened by THE TRUTH, Momma!

N', Momma, what is the truth?!

Do you think you any longer even know the truth?!

MOMMA!!

Who buys me these dresses?!

Who pays for my schools!

Who buys your make-up?!

MOMMA!

DO YOU THINK I'M A FOOL!!

Marcella shakes. Conspirator. Provocateur. Investigator. Interregator.

Holding firm her line in the sand, *La Matadora* goes in for the kill:

Even if *"Maria de Monterrey"* still thinks I am nothing but a child . . .

Look at me Mama!

James is my lover!

Your daughter!

She’s wild!

I smoke!

I drink!

I do what I want!

What I want!

And you . . . !!

Look at you . . .!

*"Movie star" wannabe!*

Who are you saving yourself for, Momma!!

Who are you saving yourself for!

It's disgusting . . .

You think I know nothing of your past?!!

You think your little girl was always sleeping fast?!

I don’t need you . . .

AND DADDY'S TIME IS PAST!!

LOOK AT HIM!

{ whispers }

He's over! He's finished!

Incensed, Maria rushes the room, lunging at boldly unafraid Marcella. Knowing she is about to be struck, Marcella continues her whisper:

Mama, *es no importa a mi* what you think . . .

You go to hell with that damned beast . . .

Maria fiercely slaps Marcella. Unbelievable to Maria, Marcella cooly returns her slap, easily giving what she gets. Shot by the emotion, paint-smeared Celitta drops to the floor. Semi-conscious, she crawls behind the sofa, hiding. Mother and daughter, Maria and Marcella entangle. Sharp-nailed struggling, fingers and faces contort in disease. Hurting each other, two beautiful women grow ugly. Hate and Pride place bets by the second. Burning eyes re-meet and lock. Unwanted cognition of the who and the where.

Bodies begin to buckle. Maria realizes it first: Challenged, intentioned love is fruitless. Eyes welt. Marcella acknowledges her mother's moment, however, she will not let herself cry. Reaching tentatively, they collapse sideways onto the sofa; first Marcella, then Maria. Touches, glances, eye contact and speak-quiet expression that only eyes can do. Dear God; even if we have never known it - isn't it true? *Si?* Good families forgive their untruths? Good families reconcile past lies and mistakes? *Si?*

Ocean sunset. Tawny light and evening breeze creep into the bay window.

The animals cool . . . Maria's impulse? Open a bit. . . . *I*. . . *I don't want to lose my daughter* . . . *Mi precia Celitta*. . .  *I want to know her. How mi Dio to talk to Marcella? These lies are silly* . . . *Look at her. Muy damned fine. Muy guapa.* *That is my daughter!* Maria swipes at blackening eyes. Wounded beauty; shorts, heels, gorgeous. She composes her face. *What might I say? Enrique? No! - Too much, too soon; too bad! What? How to come close to Marcella?* Upstairs, Victor sits oblivious; dreamily turning the knobs on his scanner; the Great Indian Chief listens peacefully to the sounds of passing clouds. Marcella bears the look of injured youth: In the right; unheard. Sick of it, Marcella prepares to quit it altogether. Maria stands. Unable to look at Marcella, she softly begins.

**MARIA**

Marcella. . .

No matter what you think you know . . . *Yo se verdadamente* . . .

I've been there. I was there.

I am still there.

*Pero* . . .

*Para ti . . . Yo soy siempre acqui.*

***"Marcella, I Am Your Mother"***

Hard to believe,

Tequila and lime;

Monterrey, good times.

What a man your Da-dee was . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee is . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee was . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee is . . . {!}

Papa. Papa.

Tough. Strong.

Protective then,

The whole day long.

Loved me.

{ That is private talk }

Not for a daughter’s ears;

Loved me.

{ That is private talk }

Not for a girl of your years.

Papa, he never said too much.

Quiet about this,

N’ such n’ such.

But he was loving,

{ N’ I loved his touch. }

Come with me! { he said }

And away we go!

Blink! Snap fingers!

In the rearview mirror

Lies Mexico!

*Andelate, USA!- USA! - USA!*

Learn English!

First Spanglish!

The language brain

A great incision!

{ O thank you God, for Univision! }

*En el noche del Sabado,*

*Con tortillas y picante;*

*En el noche del Sabado,*

*Con tortillas y picante;*

*En el noche del Sabado,*

*Con tortillas y picante;*

Papa put his strong arms around me;

N’ we turned the lights way down low.

Papa put his strong arms around me;

N’ low light we watched . . .

*Sabado Gigante!*

{ Maria looks up the landing at Victor }

Do you understand?

What a man!

{ whispers }

Que un hombre! . . .

To him, I gave my love.

And look now at you . . . my little dove . . .

*Marcella . . .*

I don’t know what to say about you . . .

So different from me { and yet like me too }.

I am grown . . . and have no answers.

Doesn’t matter –

Doesn’t matter -

American or Spanish . . .

God works in such mysterious ways . . .

Honestly, I haven’t understood these days.

O, Papa gone, { n’ you share his blood }.

First love, last rites, is that the way it was?

The way it was?

First love, last rites, is that the way it was?

The way it was?

Don’t punish me for what I don’t know.

I’ve done the best; let’s make a go.

Baby, I don’t want your soul to yelp . . .

I read in the magazines,

Maybe we need help?

Let’s be happy.

It’s just us two.

You have me;

N’ I have you.

*Tengo a ti*

*Y basta para mi* . . .

*Tengo a ti*

*Y basta para mi* . . .

*Tengo a ti*

*Y basta para mi* . . .

Hard to believe,

Tequila and lime;

Monterrey, good times.

What a man your Da-dee was . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee is . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee was . . . {!}

What a man your Da-dee is . . . {!}

Come with me!

Away we go!

Blink! Snap fingers!

Down Mexico!

For you I want just the same!

Like I did with the white boy!

James!

Like I did just the same!

Like you do with the white boy!

James!

I am your Mother!

For me there is no other!

But you . . .

But you . . .

*Marcella!! Marcella!! Marcella!!*

A "lunch-truck", hunh, baby? *. . .*  *Quien sabes? . . .*  We try? *. . .*  *"Porque no?"*

ξ

Arms over arms intertwined, Maria and Marcella bend at the waist laughing in the other's face, playfully pushing and pulling; glamour bulls locking horns, now licking faces. Giggling, they break. Marcella starts to speak; speechless, out the front door she begins to leave. Fingers wave, lips move, words go unspoken. *Good night, Mama... Good night, Baby.* The door is left open. Maria stands quietly, gazing up at Victor. Tongues may lie but the heart suffers its truths. Maria exhausts a purgatory of tears.

Tio enters the house through the kitchen, singing out for his Celitta. Looking into the living room Tio sees a paint-covered, red-eyed Celitta slowly climbing out from behind the couch; an open front door. Maria crying. Tio says nothing. He is not Marcella's father. Maria looks up signaling to Tio she is fine. Tend to Celitta. Tio's attentions turn to haltingly-breathing, red-eyed Celitta. Taking Celitta by the hand towards the kitchen, Tio does his best to jovially ignore but also tend to her lovely red-eyed mess.

**TIO**

{ *Taking Celitta by the hand towards the kitchen.* }

What . . . what's wrong my litle dove? Have you had bad words with Ma-Ma?

**CELITTA**

Bad words, Tio . . . Bad words . . . Tio . . .

Tio, could we please make some popcorn? . . . I love to make popcorn . . .

**TIO**

{ Tio does his best to ignore but also tend to her mess}

*Seguro, guapa, pero* . . .

Can we make it Spanish-style!

*Si! Si!?*

*"Con espicios!"*

*Celitta?*

**CELITTA**

{ *sniveling* }

*Si, Si, Tio.*

*Si! Si!*

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE X**

**DO YOU LOVE ME, JAMES?**

**{ Marcella / James }**

In the boom-box music studio Marcella and James shoulder dip sway in a lover's wet-mouth embrace. Hot is hot. Candles, steam, and clicktracks; smoky atmosphere n' red wine linger ... Rock this way? ... Walk this way? I can feel you ... baby ... Marcella does not easily give. Hand and body-checks deny, encourage, James' possessing impulses. Marcella wants to be James' woman; she who in her mind will "clean his guns". Intelligent beauty asks, "Will you use them on my behalf?" Marcella's mental make-up shares Victor's integrity and a lust for knowing what she wants. Her virginity is not a bargaining chip. Confused, she breaks away.

**MARCELLA**

James.

**JAMES**

Yes, Marcella.

**MARCELLA**

Do you love me, James?

**JAMES**

Do I love you?

Do I love you?

*Do I love you?*

**MARCELLA**

Stop saying that!

DO YOU LOVE ME?!

**JAMES**

Why . . . why yes . . .

I love you, Marcella.

**MARCELLA**

No, you don't.

*You don't!*

If you did, you would just say it!

James!

*I am a woman worth being captured as a prize!*

Don't you understand that?!

And aren't you a prize, James?

You better be.

**JAMES**

I do . . .

I am . . .

And I better be, too.

My God.

How you use words.

Weapons.

I'm a songwriter. Written one or two.

Nobody baby . . . says it like you . . .

James moves to his keyboard. Flick. Click-track. Marcella transfixes in the moment. The gravity of love is a powerful elixer. James softly rocks. Marcella begins to sway. She moves the moves. Tantalizing. James riffs.

*To me. You see.*

*I like you like that.*

{ *Mother Theresa carryin' a baseball bat* }

*Wears her Spanish* . . .

*Like a cocktail ring.*

*Bling. Bling.*

*Bling-a-ding-ding* . . . *.*

*Blonde haired cat.*

*Mine.*

*Yours.*

*Yes.*

*Si, Si.*

*Marcella-Marvella.*

*Marcella-Marvella.*

*Marcella-Marvella.*

I - Love - You.

James begins singing; lyrics, words from Marcella's oragami love note, intermingled with his own.

*"****Words As A Weapon"***

Sexy women.

Luring men.

Needing them,

For food.

Desiring each other;

Desire.

Oh, yea.

But is it always good?

*Words as a Weapon.*

*Through minefields we're steppin',*

*Neither is sure of the path;*

*Embrace me my darlin',*

*The stars are now fallin',  
To earth with a terrible crash!*

Thought of your flesh,

I inhaled the scent.

Strength,

Tone of muscle;

Gonna revel in the best.

While fingers make merry,

I work to serve;

A little diddy 'cross your chest.

Stunning youth,

Age of Gold.

Aching hearts,

Stories unfold.

*Words as a Weapon.*

*Through minefields we're steppin',*

*Neither is sure of the path;*

*Embrace me my darlin',*

*The stars are now fallin',  
To earth with a terrible crash!*

*Words as a Weapon.*

*Through minefields we're steppin',*

*Neither is sure of the path;*

*Embrace me my darlin',*

*The stars are now fallin',  
To earth with a terrible crash!*

What else could end

The things that you say?

How else might we ruin

A perfect day?

Time a'comin,

Soon 4:00 am;

Rise little sleepy-dust,

Let's do it again.

Night comes . . .

A final glass of wine *. . .*

You whisper,

That you want me . . .

*Lover boy, it's time* . . .

Brush back the hair,

Fresh pony-tail;

Water face splash,

Aw, that smile never fails.

Meanwhile;

Guilt keeps me warm,

'Neath the down cover.

Fingers close eyes,

Snickers your lover.

I HATE YOU!!

I HATE YOU!!

She screams.

I fade,

Into my dreams . . .

I LOVE YOU!!

I LOVE YOU!!

I shout.

Go now . . .

Go now . . .

Get out . . .

*Words as a Weapon.*

*Through minefields we're steppin',*

*Neither is sure of the path;*

*Embrace me my darlin',*

*The stars are now fallin',  
To earth with a terrible crash!*

*Oh, embrace me my darlin',*

*The stars are all fallin',  
To earth with a terrible crash!*

ξ

The moment is powerful. Marcella flushes. Never good at these genuine emotional encounters, she rushes and kisses James. Taking out her cell, she begins texting James even as she prepares to walk out the door. James advances to in her way. Marcella smiles, walks around him, holding up a denying palm leaving James standing alone. An unlooked at wave goodbye. Out comes James' cell. Marcella walks home along The Strand. Music on her nano-pod: Taiko tone poems. Taiko tone poems soothe and cleanse the weight of heart and mind.

Meditating and texting; endearing, sweet-nothing messages appear large on a rear scrim.

Walkin' a groovy walk . . . Marcella girl is high. Still, she can talk the talk . . .

**MARCELLA**

FANTASTIC SONG!

**JAMES**

T/U

4U

YOUR POEM

**MARCELLA**

SHUT UP!

**JAMES**

LOL

**MARCELLA**

I M GTTING RCH CCH.

**JAMES**

?

**MARCELLA**

ROACH COACH!

**JAMES**

? THT

**MARCELLA**

LUNCH TRUCK

**JAMES**

?

**MARCELLA**

U'LL C

LUV LUV

HOME NOW

**JAMES**

NO MO WRDS?

**MARCELLA**

R U BABY?

**JAMES**

YES

**MARCELLA**

OK BABY

HERE BABY

I LUV DOGS N TIGERS

N SHARKS N PANDAS

TREAT ME RIGHT

I'LL PUT ON MY 'JAMMAS

(!)

**JAMES**

WHEN?!!

**MARCELLA**

NIGHT, BIG BOY

**JAMES**

NIGHT

ξ

Arriving home, it is late night. Marcella enters, surveying the living room with its large windows, easel, books; everything she's ever wanted. She loves this place. Paid for by whom? And they love me! Insane!

Seeing the light in the kitchen, hoping he is awake, Marcella calls out for Tio.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XI**

**YO SOY SU TIO**

**{ Tio / Marcella / Celitta }**

A light low, Tio is in the kitchen, alone, standing at the island drinking a Pacifica. He writes a poem. He drops the pencil onto the pad and table. Having had a few, Tio feels bright. Night, he wears trousers, shoes, G-shirt. Perking at the entry sounds, he hears Marcella call his name.

**TIO**

Is that my girl?

*Is that my girl?*

**MARCELLA**

Yes . . . this is your girl.

{ Entering the kitchen }

Hi, Tio.

Look at you!

Writing a poem?

Having fun?

**TIO**

Yes, I am having fun.

My, you look nice.

**MARCELLA**

{ laughing }

Well, so do you !

**TIO**

Like a Pacifica?

**MARCELLA**

*I do! I do!*

*Do you? Do you?*

Tio smiles. He gets them a beer signaling to the living room. They sit. She looks down at her cell phone glowing orange. Face pinching, she sets it aside. Tio sets down his beer, knowingly nodding at Marcella. Placing a shushing finger to her lips, she whispers in his ear. Tio's eyes begin to tear; he catches himself.

**TIO**

I . . . I spoke with your Mother.

Wow. That's some pretty crazy stuff you two have going on.

You want to drop out of school . . . run a "Roach Coach"?

Celitta . . . truth . . . I don't know a damned thing about lunch trucks.

**MARCELLA**

I know that, Tio . . .

*Tio!* I don't want you to buy me a lunch truck! I'm not asking you to do that.

But Tio . . . If it's money . . . I mean . . . Tio . . . Tio?

Where has the money come from for me to go to school all these years?

Who makes sure I have everything I want or need?

Look at Momma.

{ Mockingly fussing with her hair }

Tio? Where does this money come from?

{ She finishes her beer in a great gulp }

Is it *my* money, Tio? How much is it? Is it a million dollars?

I can never get a straight answer . . .

. . . That doesn't mean I haven't figured things out.

I think I know . . .

*Si, si* . . .  *Tio.*

There *are* some crazy things going on.

Things that . . . *Cosas* even you Tio don't know about.

*Cosas* no one else knows about either . . .

Marcella looks down at her cell phone, again glowing orange. She turns it off. Nodding in agreement, finishing his beer, it is Tio who now places a shushing finger to his lips. Leaning over to Marcella, he whispers in her ear. Marcella places her hand over Tio's, squeezing hard. Smiling, Tio rises to his feet.

***"Yo Soy Su Tio"***

**TIO**

Marcella.

You’re still smilin’.

Wild as the wind;

Same little niece,

As when you were ten . . .

{ Celitta magically appears. Near Marcella's shoulders, she leans in on her listening delightfully. }

You said, *Ti-O!*

*Vamanos a Nueve York!*

*I want to join a marching band!*

*Manhattan, that’s the biggest city in the land?*

I feared for you,

To be on the loose.

Mother Mary,

She cooked your goose.

{ But, I still love you! }

You said, *Tio,*

"Tio! Make my heart giggle!!"

I said,

“You want to help me feed a mouse to my snake?”

You said,

“*Si, si, si!* That’s exactly what it will take!"

Tio grabs his black fedora from a hall tree and begins dancing. Marcella and Celitta join in with him just as they must have danced when Marcella was a child. Celitta runs and "play-hides" behind Tio, gaily mimicking and mirroring his every move and expression.

*Aye, carumba!*

*Vaya con Dios* . . .

The things in life

It takes to please us . . .

*Aye, carumba!*

*Vaya con Dios* . . .

The things in life

It takes to please us . . .

Seriously now,

You are near grown.

The die is cast,

The seeds are sown.

I want and expect

So much for you.

Can you keep together

What is the family due?

{ I know you can }

And I want you to.

Hush, now!

Don’t say a word *. . .*

I was a *coyote.*

Think of me

As a "Freedom Bird".

Here in this little box,

I have the future that you seek.

*Si! Si!*

I never moved drugs.

I moved human feet.

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Tio sings and high up over the audience the great cornucopia of yellow, balloonish figures begins magically launching its cargo: Little yellow balloon "lunch trucks" begin floating everywhere . . .

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*Take it! Take it! Take it!*

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*Make us better with your hopes* *. . .*

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*This now* . . .

*And always was* . . .

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*For anything you want* . . .

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*My little niece Marcella* . . .

*I never had a son* . . .

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

Roach-Coach!

*To me,*

*You are the one.*

*You are my son* . . .

Speak not of family,

And roads traveled wrong.

I know you love to laugh;

I always got in trouble for laughing.

It’s only ten thousand dollars,

Not so much to holler.

*Take it now!*

*Take it now!*

*Take it now!*

Don’t make me cry . . .

*Buy, buy, buy this Coach before it is too late!*

*Buy, buy, buy this Coach before it is too late!*

Hey? Could you be the next President of the United States?

{ How I make myself laugh! }

Yes!

*You could be the next President of the United States! YES!*

*O Yo soy su Tio*

*Yo soy su Tio*

*Yo soy su Tio*

*Yo soy su Tio*

Marcella.

You’re still smilin’.

Wild as the wind;

Same little niece,

As when you were ten . . .

Same little niece

As when you were ten . . .

Same little niece

As when you were ten . . .

ξ

Dance complete, Tio presents to Marcella a tin box.

Ten thousand dollars.

Dreams for a lunch truck.

Celitta hugs at Tio's waist.

Head bowed, Marcella smiles, curtsies, devoutly honoring the man who has always believed in her.

Lights down.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XII**

**ROACH COACH MANIFESTO**

**{ Marcella / James }**

Blasting a krunky, anthemic siren of *The Lonely Bull*, Marcella grandly announces her arrival in the brand new-to-her, yellow roach coach, *"The Freedom Bird".* Noodling on his small, portable keyboard, James sits up in wonderous astonishment. Marcella parks, jumps up through a window onto the coach's roof and begins singing, enjoining James' entreaty. Acappella voices over zany musical sounds frame an aural Mexican sub-text. Soon, they are both at mad play, dancing and singing 'round bus and stage, pumped with love, energy, and the delicious abandon of youth.

***"Roach Coach Manifesto"***

**MARCELLA**

{From the coach rooftop}

This is

My Roach Coach Manifesto!

N' I'll do it *muy El-Besto!*

We'll make some money

N' toast with *Cri-sto!*

Let's see if you

Are that much a man!

Jamie! Jamie! Leave your band!

Come with me

Live off the land!

COME MAKE TACOS WITH ME!

WON'T YOU PLEASE COME MAKE TACOS WITH ME!!

James lays down his keyboard in astonished wonder. Standing, he marvels at Marcella.

**MARCELLA**

Guacamole for The Masses!

We'll get them off their asses!

Sauce so hot,

*Eees* *Hot! Hot! Hot!*

*Till the White People say*

*It's Not! Not! Not!*

**JAMES**

GIRL OF GIRLS,

I LOVE YA FLATTA';

*PERO,* I PLAY PIANO,

NOT PLAY DEE SPATULA!

**MARCELLA**

{ Aside }

*Nice try, James;*

*That rhyme sucks;*

*Pero, I'll write you one,*

*For just twenty bucks!*

. . . *Senor!*

This is my

Roach Coach Manifesto!

At last my chance

I'll make it *muy El-Besto!*

**JAMES**

{ British accent. Mimicking reading from a menu, real or imagined. }

"*Good day, Sir!*

Have you any desire

For jalapenos

With your

'Wee-Bose Ranch-E-Rose' ? "

**MARCELLA**

*"Juebos Rancheros!"*

Whoever doth take the chance,

To work but once with me;

I'll spread the wealth,

Improve your health,

Economic Liberty!

**JAMES**

To sleep with Marcella!

*Any* plan to hatch her!

God save the Queen!

But please . . .

*No Margaret Thatcher*!

**MARCELLA**

*Jamie - please!*

I ask of you;

You know what

I want to do.

*Jamie,*

*Leave your work!*

With me,

No one ever gets hurt!

*It'll be good,*

*I promise!*

Or haven’t you noticed . . .

With me,

Baby . . .

*It's always good - like it should!*

Be!

JAMIE . . . Please . . .

WON'T YOU PLEASE

COME MAKE TACOS WITH ME!

*Si?*

**JAMES**

*Si! Si!*

{ *No!* }{ *No!* }

Marcella jumps back onto the roof, slides into the window, onto her driver's seat, yanking the siren and driving off. James turns and madcap chases, hopping a ride onto the back bumper, echoing the refrain.

**MARCELLA /** JAMES

{ Antiphony }

***Si! Si!***

{ *No!* }{ *No!* }

***Si! Si!***

{ *No!* }{ *No!* }

***Si! Si!***

{ *No!* }{ *No!* }

*Si! Si!*

*Si! Si!*

**{ *No!* }{ *No!* }**

*Si! Si!*

**{ *No!* }{ *No!* }**

*Si! Si!*

**{ *No!* }{ *No!* }**

***Si! Si!***

ξ

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XIII**

**IT'S ALWAYS BETTER AT THE BEACH**

**{ The Beach Players / Marcella / James / Tio / Abuela Incarnate }**

A grand, raucous, '60's beach-medley welcoming the beautiful Marcella, new owner of the local “Roach Coach”. Artists, muscle-heads, lunchers, laborers, beachgoers and a very special little old lady each take their turn. *“The Freedom Bird”* is a trippy show on wheels. Marcella, James, Tio and crew diligently serve and work the crowd.

***"It's Always Better At The Beach"***

**{ Muscle-Heads pumping iron }**

S' always better at the beach!

Everything you want is in your reach!

Got the sun n' the fun . . .

Don’t need no mon . . .

It's better; it's better, it's better; it's better; it's better, better, better . . .

It’s always better at the beach!

Everything you want is in your reach!

**{ Artists as they sketch and work }**

The light is fantastic for the eye!

Look around! Everywhere, there is blue sky!

Feel the coolness of the wind . . .

It’s so easy to begin.

It's better; it's better, it's better; it's better; it's better, it's better, it's better, better, better . . .

It’s always better at the beach!

Everything you want is in your reach!

**{ Business People out for their lunches }**

It’s so damned good to leave that work!

We hate our bosses - they’re such jerks!

Come down here,

To escape our fears.

Office workers,

Still stuck in gear!

Used to want to learn,

But the bastards

Still don't want to teach!

It’s always better at the beach!

S' always better at the beach!

It's always better at the . . .

**{ Laborers lounging in the shade }**

Just to eat a lunch, can make one so ha-ppy . . .

To laugh and rest and not show my ID . . .

Burgers or taco,

Either way you want to go;

It’s always better at the beach . . .

**{ Beachgoers }**

S' always better at the beach!

Even if the water could use a little bleach!

N' even if it’s hard to park,

There ain't no worry from The Great White Shark!

It’s always better, s' always better at the beach! Yea . . .

{Marcella alights to the roof. Whistles, cheers. Tio, James & crew hang out the truck windows}

**MARCELLA**

*I’m so happy to have so many new friends!*

*I hope this life will never, ever end!*

*To serve you all food and drink;*

*Is an honor. More than you can think!*

*Hey! It’s always better at the beach!*

**{ All together in staggered unison }**

It’s always better at the beach!

Everything you want is in your reach!

The light is fantastic for the eye!

Look around, everywhere,

There is blue sky!

S' always better at the beach!

It’s so damned good to leave that work!

I hate my boss he’s such a jerk!

Just to eat a lunch can make one so happy!

To laugh and rest and not show ID!

And even, even if it’s hard to park!

There ain't no worry from The Great White Shark!

*From all the gals;*

*N’ all the fellas;*

*Welcome to our world* . . .

*Beautiful, Marcella* . . .

A little, old, fading-blonde Spanish lady in a sun hat bicycles up The Strand.

As she passes, she pauses. Her stern, wagging finger evokes a foretelling:

**ABUELA INCARNATE**

*Acuerde este "rubia"* . . .

Young lady . . .

**ENSEMBLE**

*IT’S ALWAYS BETTER AT THE BEACH!!*

*Everything you want* . . .

ξ

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XIV**

**HOW BAD IS MY JONES? / RED SHOES TO WONDERLAND**

**{ Marcella / James / Keiko** }

*Luvangelslowly* jams in the beach studio. Transcendent; Marcella enters from The Strand, already the gayest of the group. Prodded by the hipster back-beat of the improvised tempo, silly, seriously, Marcella moves to the microphone, motioning James to keep it going. Her voice carries a tone poem *. . .*

***"How Bad is My Jones?"***

**{ Marcella }**

Baby, you want to know,

How bad is my Jones?

I would rather have

Art than Food

Beauty than Sex

Sex than Power

Power than Love

Love than Hate

Hate than Death

Death than Dishonor

Dishonor than Exposure.

Baby, that's how bad is my Jones.

Art is my mistress.

Coddling me,

Throughout the day,

Full milky breasts squirting;

Gently laying endorphins

Along the character-driven trot lines

Of my brain;

Electrifying my neurotransmitters

Sprinkling them with *Surprise*.

Staggering expectations

Are sometimes hard to live with!

So is the Bitch Goddess . . .

*Success*.

Vanity kills!

Beauty builds!

It's a Sisyphean struggle

To maintain the balance

Between competing lovers:

Sense,

And irresponsible *drunkenness*.

Still,

I gladly Woman-Up

To the task.

*One! Two! Three! Four! Five!*

To Art I give,

Trembling Praise.

In exchange,

She gives me

Fertile quivers.

Daring me

To tie and bind her.

Ravish her form.

Exhausted,

My eggs drop

Like turtles',

Onto the beach sand.

Art's whiskered kisses

Rub Beauty's

Soft flesh.

My mistress

Is the mother

Of our love.

THAT,

Is how bad,

Is my Jones.

HUNNH!!

ξ

Absent a stadium audience, *Luvangelslowly* claps, whistles, cheers.

James; pride in Marcella.

Overcome with the urge to immediately sing back to her,

Magician with hands and voice,

James turns to Gavin and Keiko.

Head nod, he leads them into a slow, sexy groove . . .

***"Red Shoes to Wonderland"***

**JAMES**

On the run,  
In this great, huge world.  
I searched for you,  
I see you're searchin' too . . .

I know that girls who glide  
Need guys who thump;  
I see ya' lookin' at me,  
You know what you want.

*Livin' la dolce vita!*  
N' dancin' the bump-bump.

*Livin' la dolce vita!*  
N' dancin' the bump-bump.

{um-hmm} {um-hmm}

As they might do in a stage performance, James playfully "grinds" with Keiko.

Doing it again in the second pass, Marcella moves closer, suspicious if not jealous.

You're lookin' for a lovely man,  
T' maybe share your life with;  
You say I'm ya' Luvangelslowly,  
I wanna hold my new gift . . .   
{ Baby? Can I please hold my new gift? }  
Through the stars with struggle;  
Come n' take my hand.  
You're lookin' mighty nice . . .

Wearin' red shoes to wonderland . . .   
Wearin' red shoes to wonderland . . .

Ya' said a cute boy is sexy;  
But sexier is a man.  
Ya' said your bedroom was filled with flowers;  
Are you offerin' me your hand?  
  
Words fly from lips,  
Different languages flow and run.  
Baby? You're startin' to glow . . .   
Beginnin' to speak in tongues.  
 *Livin' la dolce vita!*

Enjoyin' the bump-bump . . .   
Bump-Bump . . .

Bump-Bump . . .

Bump-Bump . . .

Bump!

{um-hmm} {um-hmm}   
  
Somethin' about this moment,  
Has just the right attitude;  
Confessin' I'm kinda dizzy,  
From all this new found altitude.  
  
Ya' def' the smartest girl  
Ever to rock my world.

Ya' think I found my girl?  
{ Baby? I think I found my girl . . . }

Through the stars with struggle;  
Come and take my hand.  
You're lookin' mighty nice . . .

Wearin' red shoes to wonderland . . .   
Wearin' red shoes to wonderland . . .

ξ

Song finished, unimpressed, Marcella says nothing about James and Keiko's "grind".

Her bouyant mood has diminished and James senses it at once.

It is a good time to call it an evening.

Gavin and Keiko tidy their gear and begin to head out.

James and Gavin share a brotherly handshake and hug.

Sultry Keiko softly kisses James on each cheek, lingering for a momentary whisper.

As Keiko leaves, Marcella makes a point of icily ignoring her.

. . .

Marcella and James stand apart warily eyeing each other.

. . .

Alone now with James, Marcella moodily walks around his studio.

Her cell phone rings.

She looks down at the orange glow key pad.

Disgust rules her face.

James sees this. He has seen it before.

. . .

Marcella thrusts the phone into her purse, heading for upstairs and the living room/loft.

James follows.

Agitated, Marcella paces about, opening a window here and there . . .

Absentmindedly, she touches and places things for artistic effect.

Ensuring that as objects their distance is proper to each other, she floats . . .

Frustrated, James explodes.

**JAMES**

Who's calling you?!

*Who's always sending you messages?!!*

Marcella turns away. Quiet. Long, long quiet. James slowly cools.

Marcella . . . You can tell me, you know . . .

Marvella . . . You can trust me . . .

. . .

Silence.

James waits the patient wait of the male lover who has yet come to know his woman.

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XV**

**MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD**

**{ Marcella / James }**

Getting no answer, James approaches Marcella from behind placing his hands gently upon her. Shivering her shoulders, shaking blonde mane, taking a step forward Marcella releases herself from James' touch ... A quiet moment passes. Aloft, the lighting is dark and intimate. Moonlight and ocean breeze filter in through skylights. Marcella turns and faces James. The heart wants what the heart wants.

***"My Place In This World"***

**MARCELLA**

James *. . .*  Jimmy *. . .*  Jaime *. . .*

{ *Be still my beating heart* *. . .* }

{ Marcella suddenly thrusts out her palms in a furious slam. Magic. Music appears. }

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

*Sing like you love me!*

**JAMES**

{ Astonished }

I said!

She said!

**MARCELLA**

I want my words to impress you.

You give me this my love,

What I ask;

What I want;

I promise this night to undress you.

My place - your place;

Members of the human race.

It's all the same;

Nothing wild,

It's all so tame.

That was until,

I saw your face.

*James! Jimmy! Jaimie!*

Get right behind me!

Listen to my words!

*James! Jimmy! Jaimie!*

Nothin' gonna sty-mie!

Me! Me!

You! You!

*Whoo! Whoo! W-o-o-o-h, yea!*

Heart full of sass,

Smile: *Kick your ass!*

Blonde hair Latina,

Searchin' for her past.

Momma's lyin' . . .

Daddy's tryin' . . .

Tio's laughin' . . .

*MARCELLA'S CRASHIN'!*

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

You know I'm smarter than that!

Smarter than you!

Keep the truth from me, baby!

Watch what I'll do!

Lover-boy,

With sandy hair;

We'll have kids so beautiful,

People will stare.

Stand by me, James . . .

I want my way.

Come with me lover,

To Monterrey . . .

Come with me lover,

To Monterrey . . .

Monterrey . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

My place - your place;

Members of the human race.

It's all the same,

Nothin' wild;

It's all so tame.

That was until,

I saw your face.

**MARCELLA**

*James! Jimmy! Jaimie!*

Get right behind me!

Listen to my words!

*James! Jimmy! Jaimie!*

Nothin' gonna sty-mie!

Me! Me!

You! You!

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

*Whoo! Whoo! W-o-o-o-h! W-o-o-o-h! W-o-o-o-h! W-o-o-o-h! W-o-o-o-o-h!!*

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

My place in this world . . .

**MARCELLA**

*Stand by me, James!*

*Stand by me, James!*

*Take me, baby!*

*Take me!*

*My place in this world!*

*Jamie! Jamie! Jamie!*

*Yes, it is!*

*Take me, baby!*

*Baby, baby, baby!*

*James!*

*Take me!*

*My place in this world!*

*Take me!*

*Take me!*

*To my place in this world!!*

ξ

Marcella and James stand close. Each has what they want. Someone to believe in; someone to be believed by. Agreement. Promises made. Lovers to be. Somehow, they will forge a way to Monterrey.

**MARCELLA**

James?

Can you be a brave man, James?

My love?

*" Con corage?"*

\* \* \* \*

**ACT I, SCENE XVI**

**AT LEAST TONITE**

**{ Marcella / James }**

Marcella turns giddy. Coupled to the power of conspiracy, emotion is intoxicating. She pours tequila. Flitting about, she deliriously recites to James her now admittable lover's adorations. James, a man; he is both tenderly amused and deeply touched at this, his, very special young woman's stirring affections . . .

*My God. What have I here?*

**MARCELLA**

{ aswirl }

*My man, James.*

*Slender gazelle who smokes too much;*

*Cool sweat beads 'round his neck;*

*Always a little dirt under the fingernail;*

*Looks good in a hat, or nothing at all;*

*N' just . . . N' just a bit of wispy mustache.*

*QUERIDO!*

*I am the ice beneath his skates!*

*Gas clouds bursting from his sun!*

*A man of neither past nor future -*

{ *"Hold me, now." he whispers.* }

*N' though I would sooner die,*

*Than to ever let him see me cry;*

*I; Querida, not yet known a man's love;*

*He takes my words,*

*Breathing them into songs.*

*Nowhere, anywhere;*

*Wherever I might be;*

*Even if I might purse my lips*

*N' whistle!*

*The music of our love*

*Quickly rushes the air.*

*I cannot say,*

*Nor speak to the imperfections of our lives;*

*Or why, where,*

*This love may grow.*

{ *Or, dear God, die out?* }

*But,*

*I long to hold his manhood.*

*Hands and sweet, sweet face;*

*Clutched deep,*

*Thrust within my hips;*

*Bosom . . . and lips.*

*His . .*

*Eyes that kiss;*

*Like butterflies.*

*A mirage.*

*Rain:*

*On The Surface of The Sun.*

*My Sun!*

*My James!*

*My God!*

*QUERIDO!!*

*You are the one . .*

*For me . .*

*For me . .*

ξ

James . . .

If I give you my love . . .

Will you change?

**JAMES**

No, Marcella . . . I won't change . . .

*But I'm sure you will.*

Exhausted, laughing, they collapse together on James' great white bed. Marcella pulls a scrim, enshrouding them in white, cottony billow. Taking each in their arms, we see only silohuetted figures slowly, carefully, intimately undressing each other. As they begin to sing, the great white bed begins to rise, its billowy train cascading onto the floor. In soft circular motion, the bed rises higher and higher . . .

***"At Least Tonight"***

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

**JAMES**

Well I have your love,  
N' it means so much to me;

Knowing in my heart,  
We'll pass into eternity.

**MARCELLA**

N' I have the time,

My whole life in front of me;

If I can escape,

Cold harsh reality.

**JAMES**  
N' though I don't have a crystal ball,  
N' I really can’t see past this glass of wine,  
Through the smoky haze of your smile . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

So r-i-i-i-de with me darlin' . . .  
Up through the heights with me darlin' . . .

Shed your s-o-o-o-ul for me darlin' . . .

**JAMES**  
I am your man

**MARCELLA**  
You are my man

**JAMES**  
I am your man

**MARCELLA**  
At least tonight

**JAMES**

At least tonight

**MARCELLA**

There was a time,  
It was when I was young;  
I thought the world was mine,  
Cuz' I was having so much fun.

{ Oh, yea . . . }  
  
Now it seems clear the price we pay;  
The heart takin' what it thinks it wants.   
Might I do good at least for once?

For once?

N' you have my love,

But my family is not free;  
Balancing our lives,

Living so dangerously.

**JAMES**

We could turn the tide,

N' the stars above the beach;

No questions of fate,

Simply loverly.

**MARCELLA**

N' though I don't have a crystal ball,  
N' I really can’t see past this glass of wine,  
Through the smoky haze of your smile . . .

**MARCELLA / JAMES**

R-i-i-i-de with me darlin' . . .  
Up through the height's with me darlin' . . .

Shed your s-o-o-o-ul for me darlin' . . .

**JAMES**  
I am your man

**MARCELLA**  
You are my man

**JAMES**  
I am your man

**MARCELLA**  
At least tonight

**JAMES**

At least tonight

ξ

**{ ACT I FINIS }**

**INTERMEZZO**

***- Champagne cocktails. Mexican beach hor'deurves -***