

Apoc . . .  
4 short plays  
by  
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## PLAY 1: WHALE SONG

A small attic. Grey light smears through a filthy window. The place is full of bric-a-brac, items from a hundred lost childhoods. A **Man** and a **Woman** exist in the attic and it is obvious that they have been there a long, long time. Wind alternately whispers and howls outside. There are also other sounds, guttural, sharp, and dangerous. Throughout the the play, both the Man and the Woman should be arranging, examining, remembering various items that are strewn around them. Everything, from a ripped magazine to a dirt-soiled and fraying teddy bear, is potent.

MAN

I remember on the day the sun died I was watching a family across the street falling down the steps of their stoop. A Brooklyn day, clear, sharp. Was it fall? I think it was. The impact was thousands of miles away, the newscasters looked half dead at the desks. Lightning shook the sky. The old woman in the apartment above was crying for her dead son and a car was blasting Don McLean's "American Pie." I was strangely calm. Focused. Like I had been waiting all my life for the world to end. I remember, you were too young, the sounds of air raid sirens. This was in Maryland, right outside of DC in the Seventies, and the strange peace that would thrill through my eight year old body as they broke the air with such a sad urgency, as if crying out in elegy. When the sky fell and the sun died, I made green tea and couldn't help but smile and think of the whales and their lost lives, opposable thumbs reclaimed within flippers. I understood, or thought I understood, why they returned to the ocean, went back under the waves. Shame. Shame and guilt. Those millions of years ago. I saw, suddenly, brightly: a species lost, a species dying of good intentions. They had stared into the sky, mapped its intricacies through their songs: composing hymns to the stars. Hymns of complex harmonies and subtle melodies. When the sky fell on them, they were dumbfounded. Forsaken. A religion of song crumbling to dust under an asteroid impact. Cousin species lay dying at their feet, eyes wide, bleeding and with only a dim understanding of what death meant.

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

Guardians of life, the whales had sung odes to the stars, saw themselves reflected in the majestic play of auroras, knew with certainty that they were masters of the world, life, and glorious song. Even the universe itself. Then the world died as it, you know, does now and again. The whale song, prayers forged from the quantum flux and foam of the universe . . . Failed. The sky fell. The sun died and billions perished, suffocating on the black dust that covered the world like sin. Many kept singing, despite the dirt that filled their lungs. Kept singing despite the frozen air slicing their throats. Other shut themselves up, closed their throats, stopped their songs. These were the ones that survived. I saw this all as I sipped my tea and the sky fell around me. You see, the universe doesn't give a damn about the moral obligation of survival. So they returned, under the waves, learned to sing a different song, more complex by far than prayer. A song of survival. A song of mourning. A song of clear, focused loss. Cities built of songs, giants walking the earth.

A long pause. The wind moans.  
The Man goes to the dirty  
window, wipes at it with a  
dirty sleeve and stares intently  
out at the world beyond.

THE WOMAN

The old comforter: thick and worn, was her mother's and her grandmother's and it smelled safely old. Of cider, of being held close to her grandmother's sweetly, cinnamon smell. Of strange, important secrets, shared between half guilty and startled cousins and then the embarrassed giggling and dreaming of Tom Cruise. Planning their escape to Hollywood, where they would be Blond, and their budding breasts would be Voluptuous. They had heard one of the older girls use that word: voluptuous and didn't know exactly what it meant, but the sound of it started their blood. In hushed seriousness, they spoke of being Stars. The next Marilyn. International. They would, huddling close beneath that old, time-beaten comforter, speak of that ultimate, elusive desire: Glamour.

Pause.

THE WOMAN

But today, she is wearing a simple dress. Patterned with light blue flowers, like tiny pieces of the sky—like the sky was once ago—tiny pieces of the sky once ago interrupted by a few darker, blotting purples. All cast down on a white cotton. One strap is falling down over her shoulder, and the dress reaches to just below her knees.

(MORE)

THE WOMAN (CONT'D)

She is barefoot, and treading carefully along the place where the water and the sand try desperately to hold one another. She is careful because some of the rocks are toothy and sharp. She can remember, as a child, ignoring them, sometimes completely surprised when she found herself bleeding as she walked up the beach to her home. Her distressing mother would wash the sand and grit from the wounds—not untenderly—while all the time snapping her pink chewing gum and saying, "you always forget. Don't forget." And then she would go out the next day, to where the water and the sand try desperately to hold one another. And forget.

Pause. The Woman joins The Man at the window and they stare out at a darkening world. The light coming from the window is fading, turning a greasy black. The wind sounds lonely, like it wants the couple to come out and play. Together, they move into the clutter of stuff and begin to make a building out of old books, toys, broken furniture, picture frames, etc.

THE WOMAN

One day, it may have been summer, her grandmother took a small, stolid box from the big, brass-handled dresser which sentinel stood in the hallway, by the door to her grandmother's room. Bent and vaguely unreal, her grandmother went downstairs. It was funny how the stairs seemed to creak out a bit more respectfully to that dignified, blue-veined woman. Her grandmother sat down on the deep lavender sofa, almost swallowed by it and looked at that old, old box with watery eyes. She sat down as well, and, when the box was shakingly opened, she thought she heard, if for just the quickest of seconds, a soft, masculine voice sigh from the brass hinges. What is in there, she asked, her voice sounding brassy and brash in the funeral silence of that living room. Shh. Your grandfather's ghost. And she was almost afraid as her grandmother picked up something from inside the box, imagining a tiny, white, tormented figure to leap out, thirsty for her smooth, young blood. But no. It was only a small, silver and red fishing lure, hanging, somewhat disappointingly, from her grandmother's trembling, leathern hand. Sparkling and spinning and hypnotic. She felt uncomfortable. She had never seen her grandmother cry, and she didn't know what to do, so she kissed her grandmother's dusty cheek, and went outside to play.

The building falls. The Man  
weeps softly, the Woman holds  
him.

THE WOMAN

Rotting apples reflected in her eyes and the smell of tired,  
wetgold leaves under the gray shawl of an autumn mist. She  
shivers, half-heartedly, as the air, snakelike, slides along  
the aching whiteness of her skin. She hugs her arms around  
her, turning--

Long pause. A distant sound  
like a kitten mewing rides on  
the wind.

THE MAN

I would have liked to have known her.

Pause.

THE WOMAN

I. I do not know if she would have liked to have known you.  
Then, there. That time.

She opens up a tackle box,  
begins to play with a number  
of bright, silver lures. The  
Man lights several candles to  
combat the deepening gloom.  
Slowly, the Woman slides a  
hook under her skin. Not deeply,  
there is no blood, but the  
lure is fastened enough to  
stay, hanging from her finger  
when she holds out her hand.  
The Man watches, closely. She  
repeats this process until she  
has a fishing lure hanging  
from each of the fingers on  
her left hand. She jangles  
them, lightly. They sparkle in  
the candlelight. She smiles.

THE MAN

Stories broken in my mind, the edges dull but slippery. Never  
the time, never the mind. Memory, they say, is like a drug.  
Or. No, that's not it.

Pause

THE MAN

Does that hurt?

THE WOMAN

No. Not really.

THE MAN

I used to bang my head against my locker in high school.  
That didn't hurt either.

Pause

THE MAN

But it looked like it did. Made a noise like it did.

THE WOMAN

See. No blood. If there's no blood . . .

Pause

THE MAN

Are you hungry?

THE WOMAN

I was. Once. Not now.

THE MAN

That's good.

Pause

THE MAN

We don't have any more food.

THE WOMAN

So. Yes, that's good.

THE MAN

Can I.

Pause

THE MAN

Hold your hand? Your other hand?

THE WOMAN

Yes.

THE MAN

Thank you.

They hold hands for several moments. Still. Breathing deeply. The wind sings. The lures jangle. Their breathing synchronizes.

THE MAN

His pale blue eyes looking down on me. Seven or eight. Maybe nine. So utterly safe and warm. Reading to me from the Tales of Roland. His voice . . . I can't remember his voice. I mean, I can remember his voice, but not how it sounded when reading to me, a child. But I miss the sound of it. He read: They breathed softly; they dream of war and victory. And at a marble table in the middle of the hall Charlemagne sits: his head reclines upon his breast; his countenance beams with the fire of youth; his hair and beard fall in long white waves to the ground. Long time has he waited there with his comrades. Often times the dawning of their new life seems at hand, and a hum of joy runs through the halls. Then all the warriors rise to their feet: they seize their lances and their swords; but suddenly their joy is quenched, and again their eyes are closed in slumber. Only the king remains awake for a while; and he cries out, until the sound is echoed through the mountains, "ye dwarfs who guard my dwelling, what year is this?" The dwarfs answer; and the shadows settle again upon his features. "Sleep on, comrades," he says, "the hour has not yet come." With a dull sound, each warrior falls prone upon the earth: they sleep, and await the hour when the spell shall be broken. The king, with his long white beard, and his flowing hair, and his countenance glowing with youth, sits again at the marble table.

THE WOMAN

He was arrogant. Cruel sometimes. His eyes were like the dark root-cellar in my grandmother's house, storing jars of pickles, bags of potatoes, rhubarb jam. My stomach always fluttered, a little scared, when I had to go down in that place. But once down, I felt . . . peaceful. The cool earth smell like a moment of certainty, rough and large yet protecting. I was still a girl in many ways, though not as naive as I appeared. He was a boy, though I thought him to be a man. No one ever told me I was beautiful. Except my grandmother. He never said it. But the painting . . . the fact that he created something so beautiful *from* me . . . The painting meant . . . meant I was beautiful.

Pause

THE WOMAN

I dreamt away a whole year, once. Woke up and was thirty-eight. Or forty-two. Or twenty-seven. But that. That was a long time ago. I think. The dust settled everywhere and I watched my cat die slowly of it, coughing out thick fur-balls of tar and black. Like the world. We were all choking on a giant lump that broke our air, fouled our sea. Stole our sun.

Pause

THE WOMAN  
And I am very, very glad now that I do not have a child.

THE MAN  
But still.

THE WOMAN  
Perhaps.

Pause

THE WOMAN  
Perhaps.

THE MAN  
Are you?

THE WOMAN  
Yes.

THE MAN  
Tired?

THE WOMAN  
Yes.

She removes the fishing lures  
from her hand.

THE WOMAN  
There is no blood. There is never any blood.

THE MAN  
Sleep soon?

THE WOMAN  
Yes. I. Yes.

Together, they blow out the  
candles. A dull green glow  
comes in from the window. There  
is the snuffling sound of a  
great beast prowling, hungry.  
She picks up a small music box  
from the floor. They go to the  
window. Hold hands.

THE MAN  
It's good. That we are here. For each other, I mean. Not  
alone.

THE WOMAN  
Yes. Mostly.

THE MAN  
Do you think we will dream?

THE WOMAN  
No.

THE MAN  
Oh.

Pause

THE WOMAN  
We will become dream.

THE MAN  
Ah.

She opens the music box. A small tune plays, tiny and fragile compared to the wind and the noise of the beast, but still managing to play high and clear. Darkness fills the attic until we are left with nothing but the music box's final notes echoing. Then: nothing.

**PLAY 2: MELLON**

**Mellon**, on the run for centuries now. Mellon is an androgynous figure that can be played by either man or woman, and is gendered both or neither. In either case, Mellon is thin, with high cheekbones, a parched look, dry skin, dark hair. Like a fallen angel fallen on bad times.

**Farley**, Companion, Fool, & Clown. Farley follows most of the time, leads occasionally, and understands Mellon better than Mellon. Farley is old, moves old, breathes old. Farley can be played by a man or a woman, and is gendered the sex of the actor.

**Tia**, once a human, now a nanotech God. Tia can be played by a man or a woman, but is gendered woman.

The desert. The light is white and hot. Throughout the play sounds of buzzards, the scuttling sounds of reptiles over tiny pebbles. The wind. All these sounds should create a constant, if almost subconscious, aural picture of the world of the play. There should be no moment without this soundscape until indicated at the very end of the play. There are several rocks on stage. Heavy, ponderous rocks good for sitting on. MELLON appears on stage, carrying a duffel bag, faded and grey and patched. Mellon has been walking a long, long time. Mellon sits on one of the rocks, takes out an apple from the bag, a knife from his/her pocket and begins to slowly skin the apple. Mellon whistles a soft tune, a gypsy tune. There is power in the melody.

When Mellon finishes peeling the apple, Mellon holds the ribbon of apple skin up to the sky. FARLEY enters. Farley carries a pink, Hello Kitty backpack in one hand, an old transistor radio in the other and is dressed in motley. The radio plays a constant static that seems out of place in this desert. Farley sits, heavily, dropping the backpack and stares at Mellon. Mellon is still examining the apple peel.

FARLEY  
Whatcher doin' that fer?

MELLON  
Finding our position.

FARLEY  
Withen an apple peel in the sun?

MELLON  
No.

FARLEY  
Looks liked an apple peel in the sun.

MELLON  
It does.

FARLEY  
So iffen it ain't an apple peel in the sun, whatcher doing that fer?

MELLON  
Magic.

He pops the apple peel into his mouth, chews surprisingly loud and grotesque. Farley grunts, takes off his/her boots and rubs his/her feet. Mellon begins to cut chunks of apple and pop them into Mellon's mouth.

MELLON

There was a time before the current time, when all the sky was pink and a serpent encircled the world in tender loving mercies. A fallen rabbit, with a twinkle of dark lightening in his eyes masturbated the snake until the snake came, collected the snakes seed in a series of acorn seed tops, buried them underground in his warren, pissed on them for water, then watched them grow. One by one. But the snake, she had been told of this by the old, tired Water Buffalo--

FARLEY

She? Thoughts you said twas a he I mean seed an' all?

MELLON

Seeds and sexes were very different back then, old friend, very different.

FARLEY

Don't sees why theys should'uh been. Perfectly all right with men as men an' women as women.

MELLON

But Men and Women hadn't been invented yet.

FARLEY

Still.

Pause.

FARLEY

Still an' all.

Mellon finishes the apple.  
Examines the core. Places it,  
gently, behind one of the rocks.

Pause.

The radio static starts to  
crackle and break into distinct  
voices - the RADIO VOICES are  
clear, but very far away and  
tinny and it is not necessary  
that every word be  
understandable to the audience.

RADIO VOICE 1

When Tiamat had thus lent import to her handiwork, She prepared for battle against the gods, her offspring. To avenge Apsu, Tiamat planned evil. That she was girding for battle was divulged to Ea. As soon as Ea heard of this matter, He lapsed into dark silence and sat still. The days went by, and his anger subsided, He went to Anshar, his fore father.

(MORE)

RADIO VOICE 1 (CONT'D)

When he came before his grandfather, Anshar, He repeated all that Tiamat had plotted to him.

Farley hits at the radio until it fuzzes back into static.

FARLEY

Them's better.

Pause

Mellon takes out a cheap ukelele from the duffel bag and begins to tune it.

MELLON

May I--

FARLEY

Finish. Yeah.

Farley takes out an old, battered water bottle that contains a brownish, thick liquid and starts drinking.

MELLON

The old, tired, but wise Water Buffalo had seen the dark, ruby orbs growing out of the ground above Rabbit's warren and thought to herself "Snake should know about this." So she set out with her friend--

FARLEY

Lawds no, no digressin' inter a story 'bout Water Buffalo and Lily Pad and fewking Frog as theys travail the country searchin' fer this that and th'other before theys get to Snake. As me old grandpappy said - stay the fewk on target.

Mellon, having finished tuning the uke, puts it back, gently, in the bag. Pulls out a pair of dark sunglasses, puts them on, and lies on the ground, looking up at the sun.

MELLON

Snake found out, ate all the ruby orbs but the one that Fox had stolen and that's where all the apples in the world come from.

Long Pause.

FARLEY

Humph. Not very satisfyin' when you puts it like that now is it.

MELLON

No.

Mellon lays on the ground.  
Farley sits and drinks. The  
sky burns. Snakes rustle.

FARLEY

My Mam used to tell me stories, back in the day. She was shite at it though. Forgettin' all the details, mixin' up the names, making things up one night contradicted the night befer.

Pause.

FARLEY

Shite at it I tells ya.

Pause.

FARLEY

Miss my Mam's stories though. Miss her eyes when they told 'em. Shinin' blue like a day you can never see the end of, those eyes lookin' down 'pon me in my wide-eyed and innocence.

Farley swigs the vile liquid,  
chokes a little.

FARLEY

Funny that then. Must be . . . oh, centuries gone now. Dead inter dust by now. Dust maybe's you an' I breathed. Ha. Funny that. Breathing my Mam.

Farley takes a deep breath.  
Coughs. Swigs again.

MELLON

Sometimes stories need to be told wrong. So we can remember them right.

Pause. The radio static creeps  
back into words:

RADIO VOICE 2

Sharp of tooth, unsparing of fang. With venom for blood she has filled their bodies. Roaring dragons she has clothed with terror, Has crowned them with haloes, making them like gods, So that he who beholds them is overcome by terror, Their bodies rear up and none can withstand their attack.

(MORE)

RADIO VOICE 2 (CONT'D)

She has set up the Viper, the Dragon, and the Sphinx, The Great-Lion, the Mad-Dog, and the Scorpion-Man, Mighty lion-demons, the Dragon-Fly, the Centaur--Bearing weapons that spare not, fearless in battle.

Farley twists the knob on the radio violently and is shaken and uncomfortable by the words from the radio. Static resumes. Farley slowly relaxes.

FARLEY

You think we lost 'em?

MELLON

Her.

FARLEY

Her is a them.

MELLON

Not always.

FARLEY

Near enough for goddamned government work.

MELLON

Do you even know what that saying means?

Pause.

MELLON

She is "she" enough to be a her. I think.

FARLEY

Cause'n you slept with *her* I reckon.

MELLON

And you lay with *them*?

FARLEY

Not lay - twas 'gulfed. Interpen'trated. Liken seven millions three hundred fifty seven thousands two hundreds and thirteens tiny ants with sharp li'le mindables burr'in inter me and chomping my soul.

Pause.

FARLEY

Spit me back out after a time. Nevers known why.

MELLON

Mandibles.

FARLEY  
Huh?

MELLON  
Mandible. Not "mindables."

FARLEY  
Whatever.

MELLON  
Yes.

Pause.

MELLON  
I remember her, white as snow that night. Her eyes like liquid amber. Her breath hot and laced with cinnamon. Listen. Close your eyes. I can feel her now. Feel her coming out of them, binding, finding. Like a song you half forget and half get wrong and half just plain misremember.

Pause.

MELLON  
I'm tired of movement, Farley. Tired to my core. Think I might . . .

FARLEY  
Fewk that!

Farley puts boots back on feet.

FARLEY  
't'ain't a bad life thissun. Tirin' and a tad hard on ther feet, but still. An' well. Still. Them "rock stars" lived on the road, soes we is in good comp'ny.

MELLON  
Farley.

FARLEY  
Eh?

MELLON  
Do you know what a "rock star" is?

FARLEY  
Not nearly but figure some kinda rock spirit fer them rollin' rocks we seen in the desert.

MELLON  
Maybe. Maybe.

Farley gathers the Hello Kitty bag and starts to head off. Mellon still lies on the ground, facing off against the sun.

FARLEY

You comin'?

MELLON

No. Think I'll wait till she gets here. Say hi. See if. Anything's changed.

Farley digs into the backpack and comes out with a small metal device. Tosses it to Mellon who gracefully, casually catches it.

MELLON

I may not use it. I may let her . . . Then you'll be without it.

FARLEY

You'll use it.

MELLON

I'm tired. I may--

FARLEY

You'll use it.

Farley exits. Times passes at an accelerated rate. Sunset. Night sounds of predators, snakes and spiders. Dawn. Mellon does not move. Day. Sundown. Night. The air begins to fog with nanomachines, billions and billions of sub-microscopic robots. There is a quiet hum of magic and technology meeting to create TIA Mellon stands, hides the metal device in a coat pocket and waits, hands clasped behind his back and head bowed. The nanomachines coalesce, stick and become a beautiful woman who appears young, but holds ancient powers in her eyes, and a profound sorrow in her voice. She is dressed in distressed leather pants, Dr. Martin's, and a crimson short-sleeved shirt.

Tattoos of dragons crawl up  
and down her arms. She takes  
an icy, long breath.

TIA

Mellon.

Mellon removes the sunglasses  
and puts them in a jacket  
pocket.

MELLON

Tia.

Mellon's voice is full of awe  
and fear and desire and love  
and self-pity. Mellon does not  
look up.

TIA

Where's Farley.

MELLON

Gone. Running. The usual.

TIA

And you are . . .

MELLON

Here. Waiting.

TIA

The . . . occasional.

She goes to Mellon, they stand  
close, looking at each other.  
Pause. Something passes between  
them. Something hot, dangerous  
and electric. Tia turns and  
walks several paces away.

MELLON

You look good this time.

TIA

You look. Tired. You're eyes are darker than I remember.

MELLON

How long? For you I mean?

TIA

You always ask that. There's never a good answer. When I'm .  
. . when I'm scattered, time moves differently.

(MORE)

TIA (CONT'D)

Fractally - like each moment is composed of an iteration of moments and each of those is composed of another iterations of moments. Recursive.

MELLON

And yet, you continue to follow. To appear. To want.

TIA

Yes. But.

Pause.

TIA

Mellon.

Pause.

TIA

I am starting.

Pause.

TIA

To forget things. The world slipping into static, moments that break apart and never come back together in quite the same way, with quite the same information. Entropy.

Pause.

MELLON

Despite it all. It's good to see you.

TIA

How long? For you?

MELLON

Time . . . moves differently here, for us, as well. A decade or so. I'm tired.

TIA

Tired enough?

MELLON

I don't know.

TIA

I don't understand. It's what you wanted. I was a by-product, an accident. A guinea pig made god when all the time it was you wanting to touch the world in ways both inimitable and impossible.

MELLON

Not an accident. Never. I . . . I can still taste the desire, the dreams of immortality. Power over mass and energy. To fly. To swim the stars and taste whole galaxies in one swallow. You and I dancing on the event horizon of a black hole.

TIA

You didn't have the skin for it.

MELLON

In the end. No.

Pause. The past washes over both of them, heavy and filled with the scent of burning flesh and scorched earth.

TIA

And so you left me alone. Fragmented. Multitudinous. But alone.

MELLON

Yes.

TIA

Are you tired enough? Now? Of the running? Come with me.

She takes his hand. He does not pull away.

TIA

Let me kiss you.

MELLON

Will it feel soft?

TIA

Yes.

MELLON

Will it hurt?

TIA

Yes.

MELLON

Will I still be me?

TIA

No.

MELLON

Are you still you?

TIA

No one ever is.

Tia pulls him close. Mellon resists for a moment then folds into Tia's warmth. They kiss. The nanomachines begin to move into Mellon, filling him with power and dissolution. He pushes her away from him.

MELLON

No. Not this time. I'm not tired enough to be other than me.

Mellon removes the metal device from the jacket pocket, shoves it into Tia's stomach. It becomes apparent that it is a weapon designed to set up an energy field that disrupts the nanomachines' ability to come together.

Farley enters and watches as Tia gasps, her mouth opening wide with fear and anger, her eyes burning.

TIA

Mellon . . .

She begins to dissolve into the billions of tiny machines that each retain only a tiny fragment of her consciousness.

TIA

. . . you have given. Let us make monsters, . . . and the gods in the midst . . . . . let us do battle and against the gods . . .

She is gone. Mellon drops the weapon to the ground and collapses, sick with self-disgust.

FARLEY

Couldn't . . .

MELLON

Shut up.

Farley shuts up, retrieves the weapon from the ground in front of Mellon, put it into the backpack. Places a hand on Mellon's shoulder.

FARLEY

I . . .

Farley stops, gently pats Mellon's head, then shuffles away to one of the rocks. Takes off boots and begins massaging his/her feet. Mellon remains kneeling. The radio comes into clarity:

RADIO VOICE 3

His heart was gloomy, his mood restless. He covered his mouth to stifle his outcry:. . . battle.. . .you . . .Lo, you killed Mummu and Apsu. Now, kill Kingu, who marches before her.. . . Wisdom. Nudimmud, the. . . of the gods, . . . . . . . . be glad and rejoice; You shall soon tread upon the neck of Tiamat!. . . be glad and rejoice; You shall soon tread upon the neck of Tiamat!

Farley hits the radio. It dissolves once more to static. Mellon pulls the sunglasses from his/her coat and puts them on. Stands.

MELLON

Time to go.

FARLEY

Where?

MELLON

Does it matter?

For a moment, the air sparkles in an attempt to coalesce. It fails. Lights fade out. The desert rustles for a moment, the sound of static, and then: silence.

**PLAY 3: OTHER MEMORIES**

A coffee shop in disarray. One of the tables is upside down, the other is on its side and only one of the stools is upright, the other stools and chairs appear to have been thrown about the place with abandon and violence. It is sunset, and the light streams gold into the coffee shop, but night is quickly approaching and the darkness outside will slowly seep into the space throughout the play. In the distance, an explosion, some gunshots and two screams, one from a man and one from a woman. Then silence. Moments pass and JACK emerges from the bathroom exit, crawling on his belly and holding a large metal pipe in one hand. Seeing that the shop is empty, he quickly crawls behind the counter. Another scream, this time closer. From behind the counter we can hear Jack muttering to himself.

JACK

Oh god, oh god, oh god. Not real. This is not happening not happening.

He laughs a laugh on the edge of madness.

JACK

Just dreaming all a dream not real must've ate a bad burrito always have nightmares when I eat Taco Bell you think I'd learn but . . .

There is a loud crash right outside the coffee shop, like a car plowing into a dumpster.

JACK

Shit!

He is quiet. Slowly he peeks out from behind the counter furthest from the entrance door.

A shadow fills the doorway, Jack backs behind the counter. JILL enters, a small pistol in one hand, hair disheveled, wide-eyed with shock and terror. Casting a quick eye on the shop, she see it is empty, then turns back toward the entrance, making sure she hasn't been followed. Jack runs from behind the counter, metal pipe raised above his head to deliver a skull-crushing blow and letting out a crazed yell. Jill turns pistol raised to shoot. They recognize each other only a split-second before attempting to kill each other.

JACK

Jill!

JILL

Jack!

They stand still for an uncomfortable moment, battling conflicting desires. Finally, the need to have human contact overwhelms all of the hurt and bad memories and they rush together and tightly embrace.

Beat. A scream, several blocks away. Jack and Jill both move to the door to see if there is immediate danger. Seeing nothing and no one, they relax slightly and back away from the door. Throughout, however, they will both keep a close watch on the entrance in case someone else . . . or something else approaches.

Jill rights one of the tables and pulls up a chair. Jack moves toward her, but now the moment has gone all awkward again.

JILL

So. Um.

JACK  
Yeah.

JILL  
How are you?

JACK  
How . . .

They both laugh, the tension  
breaks and Jack pulls up a  
chair to sit next to her.

JACK  
Well, honestly, I've had better days.

JILL  
Yeah. I hear ya.

Pause.

JILL  
Look, I don't think we should stay here too long. Too exposed.

JACK  
You have a car?

JILL  
I did. Don't anymore, that was me out there, that crash.

JACK  
Oh.

JILL  
Fucker was the in the back seat. Thought I'd got him in the  
head, but all of sudden I saw him . . . saw him in the rear  
view . . .

Jill goes into a state of shock,  
remembering the sight. Her  
body convulses suddenly and  
she begins to cry, shaking  
from the terror of coming so  
close to death. Jack puts an  
arm around her shoulders, kisses  
her forehead and strokes her  
arm gently.

JACK  
Shh.

Her sobs grow.

JILL

The look in his eyes. Jack. The look in his eyes was . . . like he was looking a million miles away, blackness. Like I didn't exist. Not really, not as *me*. I was just . . . a . . . just a thing. An object. Something to be used and thrown away.

JACK

Shh. I know. I know.

JILL

You don't. You always said that, but you don't. You've never been looked at like that. You've never had to remember--

She pulls away from Jack.

JILL

I'd seen that same look a hundred times before in his eyes.

She breaks off.

JILL

Fuck it. He's dead dead now. God I wish we'd holed up in a bar. I could use a drink.

JACK

You know, there are advantages to bumping into your slightly-alcoholic-writer-ex-boyfriend who has taken to writing in coffee shops fortified with a bit o' the Irish magic . . .

He pulls a flask from his pocket, tosses it to Jill.

JILL

My hero!

JACK

Always was, you just didn't take the time to notice. Or forgot it all too soon.

A slightly awkward pause until he grins and winks at her. She grins back and takes a hearty swig.

JACK

I . . . Jill.

Pause.

JACK

Actually, I'm pretty damn scared right now.  
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Don't really have any heroic ideas, just a bunch of jumbled memories of us and how you used to feel next to me and how much I laughed that first time we went out and saw whatever the fuck movie it was I forget but remember so fucking clearly that eruption of cola from your nose as I made you laugh so hard and now the world's gone to shit and all I can do is remember the times we had and the times we didn't have. And  
. . .

Pause.

JACK

Sorry.

JILL

Fuck heroic. Fuck memories.

They come together, kissing and embracing with a desperation borne out of fear and adrenaline and the need to touch life after being surrounded by death. This is not about love, or even sex, but about life.

They forget the doorway.

They forget the gun.

They go down on the floor, clumsy but intense as they begin to undress each other. Suddenly, the entrance door bangs open as two zombies crash into the space. Jack and Jill hurriedly try to reach the gun and the metal pipe on top of the table, but they manage only to knock the table over, their weapons flying out of reach as the zombies come at them, quicker than expected.

BLACKNESS

SCREAMS

The sound of breaking bones.

Silence broken only by the off-kilter shuffling of zombies and a disturbing slurping sound.

After a few moments, the lights come back up. Jack and Jill have been dragged behind the counter, their legs still visible, perhaps even still twitching. Zombie Earl is behind the counter, bent over and doing something we don't want to see. Zombie Bob rights the table, pulls up a chair, holds Jack's flask in his hand. Contemplates a moment then takes a swig. Swallows, then chokes and spits some blood from his mouth.

ZOMBIE BOB

Damn it. I miss my whiskey.

ZOMBIE EARL

What?

ZOMBIE BOB

I said I miss my whiskey! I'm so tired of blood and brains.

ZOMBIE EARL

What?

ZOMBIE BOB

I said I'm tired of blood and brains! What the hell are you doing back there.

ZOMBIE EARL

Nothing.

ZOMBIE BOB

Don't look like nothing.

ZOMBIE EARL

Surprise.

ZOMBIE BOB

Surprise. Huh. Not sure I like surprises no more. Remember once, my thirty-second birthday, the wife threw me a surprise party. Got in touch with friends I hadn't seen since high school, Chris, Nick and Jon. Hadn't even realized just how much I missed 'em until I seen 'em again. Hell, she'd even gotten my first real love to be there. Emily.

Pause.

ZOMBIE BOB

Hell of thing, that was, havin' the balls to invite my first love. She was terrific.

Zombie Earl has risen to listen attentively to Bob's story.

ZOMBIE EARL

Who? Emily?

ZOMBIE BOB

Nahh. The wife.

ZOMBIE EARL

Right.

He bends back down behind the counter. Zombie Bob gazes at the flask, masochistically downs another shot. Coughs up more blood.

ZOMBIE BOB

Shit. Wish that shit would stay down.

Pause.

ZOMBIE BOB

Course, that might not be my memory and all.

ZOMBIE EARL

What?

ZOMBIE BOB

Damn boy, this is getting real annoying with you "whatting" everything I say. I said it might not be my memory is all. All the brains that we done eat, all those memories leaking into mine. Like, I'm pretty sure I never played Goldilocks in my third-grade play, or swam the English Channel when I was fifty-two. Hell, I wasn't even fifty-two when I . . . well, you know. My god! All these memories.

He throws the flask across the room.

ZOMBIE BOB

Like goin' cross-country on a motorcycle, or makin' love to a stranger in a taxi cab, or watching my baby girl smile as she takes my finger in her tiny hand and squeezes, or feeling the rush of wind and the silence of the sky while hang-gliding, the taste of mustard on rye, the sound of my father laughing big and round like what church bells sound like. So much life, so much . . .

Slow, churning anger.

ZOMBIE BOB

Now it's just blood and guts and brains and this constant aching hunger that fills me with a hollow emptiness. I can't feel anything, all the colors look gray. I miss . . . I miss the sound of my fucking heartbeat.

He throws the table, stands  
and rages through the space.

ZOMBIE BOB

I can't remember what memories are mine and what are other peoples, other brains. I think . . .

He comes to a stand-still.  
Zombie Earl has stopped what  
he was doing behind the counter  
and comes near Zombie Bob.

ZOMBIE BOB

I think that means that I didn't really have any strong memories to begin with.

Pause.

ZOMBIE BOB

Like I didn't take my chance. While I had it. While I could hear my heart beating. While I could enjoy Irish whiskey.

Pause.

ZOMBIE BOB

While I was alive.

Zombie Bob sits down again,  
heavily, tiredly.

ZOMBIE EARL

Yeah.

Pause

ZOMBIE BOB

What?

ZOMBIE EARL

I mean. Yeah. I . . . know what you mean. I think. Right?  
Like I know . . . I mean. Er.

ZOMBIE BOB

What? What are you trying to say?

ZOMBIE EARL

Just . . . you know. Yeah, I mean it seems like we should be *dismembering* and not remembering. Right?

Pause.

Pause.

Zombie Bob laughs like a maniacal undead creature, who, for a brief moment, finds the world to be simply, utterly goddamned funny. Zombie Earl thinks the laughter is at him.

ZOMBIE EARL

I mean. Sorry. Maybe not . . .

Zombie Earl slinks back toward the counter, Zombie Bob catches his breath and waves at his companion.

ZOMBIE BOB

No, no . . . wasn't laughing at you. Kid, you just freakin' made my day. "Dis" not "re" . . . That's rich kid, very very rich.

Zombie Earl still looks a bit confused and hurt.

ZOMBIE BOB

Hey, no really. Whatcha doin' behind that counter, hey Kid?

Zombie Earl brightens.

ZOMBIE EARL

Whip or no whip?

ZOMBIE BOB

What?

ZOMBIE EARL

Whip or no whip?

ZOMBIE BOB

Cream? Whipped cream?

ZOMBIE EARL

Yeah. Whip or no whip?

Zombie Earl ducks behind the counter, grabs something and turns his back to both Zombie Bob and the audience. Zombie Bob is curious and heads over to the counter.

ZOMBIE BOB

Hell, it'll probably cramp and choke me like a sonuvabitch, but whatever you are doing . . . whip.

We hear the unmistakable hissing sound of canned whipped cream. Then, Zombie Earl turns to reveal a head that matches Jill's, a circle cut from the top of the skull and a straw sticking out. Grinning, he hands it to Zombie Bob.

ZOMBIE EARL

House special: venti pineal frappacino, with one shot of sugar-free vanilla syrup and whipped cream to top it off.

Zombie Bob looks at Zombie Earl for a long moment, not sure if he is going to laugh or cry. Zombie Earl raises his own head, matching that of Jack.

Laughter wins out. Then Zombie Bob takes a sip.

ZOMBIE BOB

I guess other people's memories are better than no memories at all.

They slurp. Lights fade.

Blackness descends.

**PLAY 4: MOVIE TIME**

A white room gone grey and dingy. Some cots and makeshift counters. A large duffel bag filled with cans of food, some porn, and trinkets. Throughout the play, PHILIP will compulsively unpack and pack and itemize the contents of the duffel bag. On one wall there is a large swatch of black fabric, and a smaller swatch of white canvas pinned to the black, forming a screen for video. Lights dim to black, revealing a video playing on the screen. Grainy, super-8 film that has been converted to digital and is being shown on a video projector.

Sounds of children playing, but the sounds do not correspond to the video.

TRACY sits with the computer that is connected to the video projector. The movie backs up, starts again. A young girl grins at the camera. The film stops. Tracy hums loudly a song from her childhood. The movie backs up further, then, as it begins to play, Tracy stands and moves toward the canvas which shows a rapid succession of times and places and people. Tracy approaches the canvas, detours to turn off the lights, then stands between the projector and the image as light plays and shifts. She touches the canvas. Then wrinkles it, to see how different textures affect the light and picture. She moves behind the black fabric, distorting the image from behind.

Philip enters. He has dark hair and a slight limp.

In the darkness Philip watches as Tracy deforms the image by slowly moving a fist outward from behind the black fabric.

Huh. Looks like-

Who-

Just me.

Whatcha doin?

Nothing.

Working on a movie?

Not really.

Looks like you are working on a movie.

Not really.

Any news?

About Allison or David?

Yeah.

No.

Has the sky turned back?

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

Tracy comes from behind the fabric and quickly turns on the lights, then goes back to her computer.

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

Pause.

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP

TRACY

PHILIP  
No. Still red as blood.

TRACY  
Ahh.

PHILIP  
Oh, hey, I found something.

He searches his pockets twice before finding a wrinkled and greasy piece of paper. The writing on it is large enough to be seen from the audience, black and thick letters that, while childlike, were definitely made by an adult. He reads:

PHILIP  
The blood of one Fundamentalist mixed with the piss of a Democrat. Steep with licorice for twelve days—the magic number—then mix in eye of dog and liver of newt and one pinch of ginger.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Stir.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Drink.

Pause.

PHILIP  
Pray.

Pause.

PHILIP  
I was thinking. Just thought. You know, maybe. Umm. You . . .  
. could use . . .

Pause.

PHILIP  
Whatcha doin?

TRACY  
Trying to . . . no. Sounds silly.

Philip comes close. Tracy edges away.

TRACY

Can you . . . turn off the lights. I want to see something.

PHILIP

Sure.

Philip turns off the lights. The video shakes, blurs and images of a girl shift from scene to scene. The majority of the video appears to consist of beginnings and endings of scenes: the light flaring, the film leader showing dust and scratches and dirt.

PHILIP

Where's all the stuff you used to have in there? The swings and stuff?

TRACY

Gone. Not necessary. Not for what . . .

PHILIP

What are you doing? Seems to be, if you don't mind my saying. Worse. Less, you know. Interesting.

TRACY

Philip.

Pause.

PHILIP

Tracy.

TRACY

How long have they been gone?

PHILIP

Allison . . .

TRACY

And David. Yes. How long?

Pause. Philip puts the lights back on.

PHILIP

Three months. Maybe four.

TRACY  
How long has the sky . . .

PHILIP  
Been bleeding?

TRACY  
Yes. How long?

PHILIP  
Six, maybe seven months.

Pause.

TRACY  
I'm trying.

Pause

TRACY  
I am trying to.

Pause

TRACY  
I am trying to make a crack. Trying to split some time. Not much, just enough for me . . . maybe us, but really definitely me, sorry. To slip back.

PHILIP  
Back where? There?

TRACY  
Yeah.

PHILIP  
Allison always said you were crazy.

TRACY  
It's not crazy. Just. Look.

She pulls Philip away from the duffel bag, sits him down as if he were a child and tries to explain.

TRACY  
Look. Ok. We think, and by we I mean, you, them . . . most people yeah, most people, but not all ok, not all, think that time can't be touched, can't be folded or stroked, that it is beyond us like the thrill you get from . . . from . . . from driving a really fast car really fast is beyond a cat. But no . . . really, just *think* about it.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

Time is always moving differently, it's like plastic: sometimes melty and soft and sometimes brittle, ready to crack. Time in sex, right, that time is different than doctor office time, right.

PHILIP

Well, yeah as far as-

TRACY

And sleep time, dream time moves even more different, right, like molten rubber, like the smell of oatmeal and blood while test time moves fast and smells like burning wires, a sharp toast smell. Time moves up, speeds down, twists and shouts all the time we just, I mean, you, them . . . most people, yeah, most people but not all, ok, not all, just never notice . . .

PHILIP

That time moves and changes?

TRACY

Right. Never notice.

PHILIP

But you do?

TRACY

Not always. Not ever. But sometimes and occasionally.

She turns off the light. Spliced moments appear on the white fabric, broken bits of film and just behind, appearing fragmentary and ghostlike, the image of a young girl. Smiling, playing rough, looking sad. Images that are moments in flux, broken doorways.

PHILIP

I remember a day, like that. I think. Were your days longer than grown up days? Like the sun was content to hang around and wait for you to get tired enough for night? The summers especially. Like time was yours instead of you being time's.

TRACY

You do understand.

The screen blanks to white.  
Philip approaches and stands  
in front of the screen, touching  
the blank white fabric  
tentatively, as if expecting  
cracks to swallow his fingers.  
They don't.

PHILIP

It's our internal clock, Tracy. Not time itself.

He turns. His face lit harsh  
by the projector light.

PHILIP

Our perception of time changes as our metabolism changes, as  
our neurons fire slower, time speeds up.

From far away, a music box  
plays and a child laughs. A  
car door slams. Silence.

Long pause.

TRACY

No.

PHILIP

Yes.

Philip turns the lights back  
on. Turns the projector off.

PHILIP

Nothing can crack time open, Tracy. Not four billion deaths.  
Not a wounded planet. Not the sound of a baby's first gasping  
cry of life. Time is not something other, something to be  
touched or molded or shifted or twisted. Time is. We are  
products of time. Perceptions touch nothing but the inside  
of our skulls, hollow bellies, and trembling arms.

He packs up the duffel bag.  
Zips it shut with a surprising  
violence.

PHILIP

Time is a constant. Like death. A series of deaths.

TRACY

No.

PHILIP

Yes.

Pause.

I'm going after them.  
PHILIP

Allison and  
TRACY

David. Yes.  
PHILIP

But you'll-  
TRACY

Probably. But the only way forward is . . . well, forward.  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

Do you want to come with me?  
PHILIP

Pause.

No.  
TRACY

I'm taking the rest of the food.  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

I'll leave you some water. But-  
PHILIP

No.  
TRACY

Goodbye.  
PHILIP

Silence. Philip walks out of the room. Tracy sits. Philip re-enters.

I do wish . . .  
PHILIP

He stops. Shrugs then leaves again.

Tracy sits. Time . . .  
stretches.

The lights go off. The projector  
lights up. Broken time plays  
on the screen. Silence.  
Playgrounds and blue skies,  
missing teeth and pigtails,  
puppies and mud. Tracy goes to  
the screen. A crack appears?  
She turns her head. Just enough  
to go through a crack in time  
as the projector goes black.

Silence.

A child's laugh. The sound of  
a playground.