

Two Plays: Mobile and Open Line

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ABSTRACT.

Two Plays: Mobile and Open Line

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Open Line is an Old Montrealer's monologue, funeral dirge, to herself; to her life, to an age quickly disappearing, barely residing among the lucid, erratic, memories. Amy Collins, the protagonist, is alone. Mr. Collins is dead. She is lonely, confused and fearful of the world. Mentally and physically, she is under siege while remaining, trying to remain, true to the glowing, glimmering memory of a city that has grown too big, too fast.

Mobile is primarily a study of a particular relationship, exploring the cold and glassy veneer that covers a sad and evocative decline and evolution between its protagonists. The mobile that turns and nods, the objects attached that collide and tangle, represent the characters themselves, stuck through mutual pain and illogical drives to each other and their own reactions to the slight breezes, light caresses, of circumstance.

"...A missing ear finds itself again"

Benjamin Péret

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OPEN LINE

OPEN LINE, a one-act monologue

Montreal, La Salle, Sunday evening, 1984.

AMY, a woman in her eighties with a dollish, antique face sits under an over-sized, bright, auburn wig in a fat worn, tasteless armchair in her lower La Salle apartment, which is strewn with garbage, spilt ash-trays, boxes, brown paper bags, piles of newspapers, an old radio, a plant, a smashed t.v. set, plates of decaying food, tins, a rusty bird-cage (with prone parakeet), dead leaves, wreaths, pigeon feathers, old clothes, irons, "household aids," general junk. The walls are yellow with brown water-stains; a hole in the sagging ceiling permits liquid to drip to the floor. The pipes bang and burp loudly. A crucifix stands out among the framed homilies, portraits and old photographs hanging crookedly on the walls, The carpet is discoloured, as are the ripped doilies over the backs of the disintergrating chairs. But there is one thing that stands out oddly and proudly: a handsome, tall, golden-varnished oak cabinet that dominates the background. Through its glass windows can be seen old dolls, a silver tea set, figurines.

AMY sits in an old dusty evening dress, smoking a rolled cigarette. The cigarette is in a gaudy old-fashioned holder and she smokes it regally. From time to time she dabs her head and neck with a wet cloth from a Habitant soup can set between her blue-veined, boney ankles.

Amy: Hello

How nice of you to come, how nice

I'm sorry about the mess, Teresa

couldn't come in today;

actually it's her day off

Church I give them

Church

or they'll steal

They steal anyway

CONFIDENTIALLY

Polish

But I always say if you enunciate clearly they do a reasonable job

Anyway anyway

Would you like something - tea, coffee, cocoa?

Nicotine? Margarine? Gasoline?

Excuse me, I'm very rude, terribly rude  
Albert? Al-bert? We have guests.

FINDS CAT FOOD BOX

Perhaps you would like a biscuit?

OFFERS THEM TO AUDIENCE

I made them myself  
Not very warm out, is it?  
Time of the year, I suppose.  
Most winters are cold, the  
nature of things,  
right Albert?  
Of course, of course.  
I hope  
you're comfortable, yes  
hard to be  
comfortable  
these days, isn't it?

SITS. DIPS A CLOTH IN THE CAN AND  
WIPES IT THROUGH HER WIG.

Last night we had a wonderful time. The  
orchestra played far too quickly but Albert



4  
had a wonderful time.

I danced with the Major  
who has a breath problem  
and Albert became quite gregarious, didn't  
you, dear?

We love the St. Andrews Ball. Were you  
ill?

SHORT PAUSE

Albert, come and say hello to our guests. ?

Yes, well, it's so nice of you to call

So nice

We haven't seen each other for such a long  
time

I would just like to say -

Albert and I are

so in love so

nice of you to call

touch of the flu, he has

yes, wonderful to see you

hardly see anyone

these days

these days, well

are so short, aren't they?

Everyone fit, I hope?

No one stabbed themselves with a carving  
knife

The weather has been good, perhaps we could  
arrange dinner

Discovered by the girl after seventy-two  
hours

So nice to see you. Everyone is just fine,  
studying law, business, medicine, going out  
with Mr. Chamber's son

Through the chest, the blade in  
to his  
heart

into

Do you know

that

family?

Neither do I

Oh, well, he has a lot of money  
that's one thing, I suppose

STARES AT ONE MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE

I know you

Yes, I do

I knew your family

I knew your father

I knew him very well

How is he?

PAUSE

"Such a shame.. At least no one can see."

Mother said

"Some people have their faces totally  
removed

The wound, is it

complete?"

AMY NODS HER HEAD AS THE RADIO CRACKLES  
TO LIFE, A SMOOTH COLD VOICE.

Radio: And there's all kinds of sexuality and there's  
all kinds of killing of animals and it's, it's  
incredible. There are churches for the  
homosexual -

Amy: But not for me

Radio: It's kind of hard to believe but they have  
them there in California.

Amy: None.

Radio: And rock and roll -

Amy: His genitals

completely

Blown

off

Radio: It feeds the deep lower nature of the people.

Take God's word if you won't take mine: this  
sort of thing is the devil's heartbeat.

Amy: And certainly has nothing to do -

Radio: And certainly has nothing to do with the teach-  
ings of the Holy Bible and that's what we're  
interested in, isn't it, m'am?

PAUSE

Isn't it, m'am?

THE RADIO DIES. AMY SINGS.

Amy: Jesus loves me, this I know  
For the Bible tells me so  
When at last I come to die  
Take me home with thee on high  
Yes, Jesus loves me  
Yes, Jesus loves me  
Yes, Jesus loves me  
Take me  
Take me  
Bible tells me so

THE LIGHTS CUT. ONLY THE BLUE GLOW REMAINS.

Amy: When When When

THE HEAVY BREATHING OF THE BEAST, THE  
CAT.

Cat. Bloody cat.  
Claws of steel  
Big black tom  
Yellow-eyed tom  
Always wants to climb in here  
The night before Mr. Collins,  
Albert,  
passed on, he  
sits and scratches on the window  
through the night  
the

THE CAT SNARLS. WE HEAR ITS FUR ON THE  
WINDOW.

devil  
Get away  
Get away

HOLDS HER EARS, SQUEEZING HER TEMPLES.

Stop

Stop

And to think

I remember him as a kitten

chasing ribbons in the bushes

I have to keep the windows locked even in  
summer

Why does he want -

Go away. Go away cat

Leave the old alone

PAUSE

It's a horrible world

They have everything out there

I can't go out

The streets aren't safe

It's like the wild west.

Did you hear about the woman, the

woman who was robbed and raped

and stabbed to

death, left face down

in a pool of blood in an alley?

Did you hear?

Shocking, shocking

'Course that woman wore red

No normal person wears red  
That provokes them, the blacks.  
They are dirty, you know  
they don't have the same culture  
they haven't grown up,  
where we know what's expected  
That's the truth.  
It's a matter of culture,  
how one is brought up  
Even the French know that

THE LIGHTS FLICKER ON.

Oh, God  
What is she talking about?  
She's old.  
Her brain is soft  
I'm hungry, I think, I think I'm hungry.  
Perhaps I'll have a can of soup  
Tomato soup, hmmm  
Wouldn't that be lovely  
That's the only soup Mr. Collins would have.  
He was a gentleman, he was. Had three cabinets  
full of socks and a drawer for collar pins  
Warm tomato soup with crackers and milk  
Two digestive biscuits for dessert, hmmm

Wouldn't that be nice

PAUSE. SLOWLY

When When When

Will it all reveal itself

When will the hooded  
proowler

burgler

murderer

leave the note

an envelope on the stair

If only this life were a set of tragedies

collected from boxes of tea

then I could see what happened

with some certainty, yes, if only this life

only this life

if -

We could

sit

under the trees

on the Mountain

We could talk

We used to talk, Mr. Collins and myself,

Albert and I

Can't recall what we talked about



Words rarely matter  
It's the tenderness behind them that counts  
Young people don't understand this  
Young people don't understand much  
Forgive me for sounding old  
But that's  
who I am

A CLOUD OF SMOKE RISES ABOVE HER.

Oh, Albert  
I feel so old  
No, I don't

SIGHS

Yes, I do  
I think I understand  
too  
well

THE RADIO RESURRECTS ITSELF WHILE AMY  
SITS AND STUDIES HER FACE IN A PILL-  
BOX MIRROR.

Radio: If you have received the Holy Spirit - Have you  
been water baptized by immersion?

Caller: Well; not really, as a Catholic, as a baby, you know, sprinkled -

Radio: Well, will you pray about it?

Amy: No.

Radio: If you have a relationship with the Lord and you've given him your heart, He will lead you into all-truth -

Amy: Ha!

Radio: Search God --

Amy: My rouge is sinking:

Radio: - and He will not only give you the gift of His Spirit, He will enable you to live a renewed life full of His love, His joy, His peace. He will carve His laws on your breast -

Amy: I tried this other cream but wrinkles - they're inevitable, I guess. Shut up, you old bag.

PAWS AT HER WRINKLES.

Radio: You will be forever blest, forever drawn into the power, the very presence of God, filled with His spirit that produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, regularity -

AMY KICKS THE RADIO. IT GASPS,  
EMITTING A RASPY ELECTRONIC BREATH.  
THE LIGHTS FLUTTER AND EXTINGUISH.

Amy: When When When  
Everybody yelling  
Everybody preaching  
Nobody listens.

THE PIPES GURGLE.

He did love me. He did. Don't ever say  
that.

He loved me and we talked.  
We went to the Mountain on Sundays.  
Sundays, Today is Sunday.  
Every day is Sunday.

THE CAT HOWLS, A TERRIBLE LONG BITTER  
HOWL. AMY BENDS FORWARD, COVERING HER  
HEAD.

I could - I could -  
I can't

missed so much

Albert, we killed each other

Christ, I was so -

I am still alive

PAUSE

Do you want me to go mad like

Mother?

Is that what you want?

She washed the gasoline from the lamps

through her hair

and burst into flame

walking towards me

outstretched arms, face

melting clots to the -

I was nine years old my birthday I had been

terrible that day, terrible

all the presents thrown

on the floor

I was a terrible girl

I was a terrible

wicked little girl

terrible wicked selfish

It wasn't all my fault I told Kathleen

told her not to bring any of her friends

especially Merna and so Merna has to show  
up and Kathleen and Mummy said Merna could  
stay even though it was my birthday

my birthday

so I smacked Kathleen

Mother was watching

and she

sent me to my room

arms outstretched

her mouth open, sounded like mice

Don't leave. You're not going, are you?

Why does everybody have to leave?

Albert tell these people not to go.

Got to go sometime, Amy

the black cat

Another night, leave another night,

so nice of you -

Afterall, it's

not every night we have

company, is it Albert?

nice to see you, yes, yes

We've been well, very well

They asked if we've been well, Albert

Fine, we've been away, visiting Clare and

John in Métis. Had a marvelous time,

marvelous, yes

WITH PECULIAR AGITATION -

Where are the canapés!? Teresa?

Set another table, yes, well you can see  
for yourself, can't you!?

Excuse me.

Can-op-és!

LIGHTS RISE

Stop it old woman  
I'm sorry  
My tongue aches my  
body screams I  
can't perform, if you know  
what I mean

MOVES TO TELEVISION

I watched C.B.C. for twelve straight years  
green dots, red dots,  
the sound went, the figures blurred  
I liked them better that way  
even the wars

Day after day after ~~day~~

Can't tell the vicor

from the victim

No deposit, no return

LIGHTS CIGARETTE. COUGHS

Hmmmm, mild, so special

so very special

Death to death. Hate

you, hate you. Sucked

you off, spat

it back. Ya, I ate what my baby feed me,

but I smashed its

fucking head in; yap, yap, yap;

you brought the world ~~to~~ me.

But I never wanted the fucking world

Only this loneliness

creeps like a snake, some fucking -

LOOKS TO WINDOW

Fucking Cat

get that living tongue

Snap

Cobra killed the Cat

Suck the bone, the poison crack

Hurl it through the screen

just images, ribbons floating

Oh, God, I ache, the

memory -

He twists me, trying to make me -

who needs some car, sunset, juice, machine,

toy, more "beauty," the seventeen year old

weight-lifter sucking sweet black

effervescent ooze from a can,

Monkey see, doggy do

What did I throw

through the tube?

This tiny

flick, this shrug

this

PAUSE

I wish I could burst like that tube

People forget

We all forget

Until we can't remember anything

but the past

the past

cracks

as we wither and weaken in the boxes of our

love

the melting of faith -

Reality obtrudes



like a knife in the nursery

SHIVERS

It's cold in here

There's a draught

creeping,

every moment - colder and colder

One day they'll find me

stuck to this chair like an ice cube

The cat will have eaten my eyes

Nice pussy, nice pussy

STANDS, STOOPED AND SHALLOW, PICKS  
UP A TINY PITCHER AND SEEMS TO WATER  
A PLANT.

Albert's legacy,

all that's left,

these plants, figurines

Earth.

A CHUNK OF PLASTER FALLS NEAR HER JUST  
AS SHE MOVES OUT OF THE WAY.

Oh, let it fall, Jesus

Last year they pulled the heating off, do you  
remember? Wasn't that awful, just before Albert....

It's an old apartment building. Used to bright.

They covered the skylight with tar.

We had parties, didn't we? You came. Every-  
one in the city  
saw

what happened

I could see them, their sharp  
lips, lots of  
interesting conversation

SHAKES VIOLENTLY. THE CAT SCREAMS.

Go away. Go away

Please -

Are you hungry?

I should just let him in, horrid beast

Go away

COLLAPSES INTO HER CHAIR.

It seems like I care. I don't  
care. Why should I care?

I know. I know what's happening. You think I-  
don't

PAUSE

At the bottom

After

Albert

After

the parties and interesting conversation

After

my friends

After

SHORT PAUSE

After

At the very bottom

of the bag,

the bottom-

line,

the world does not need me,

I could call someone

Radio insists the city is listening

AMY SMILES. THE RADIO BUZZES, FADES.

Dumb old thing

Doesn't listen and if it does

it certainly doesn't remember

anything I say

Just another voice

An old bitter voice  
No one cares  
I used to call all the time  
Thought it was important to speak out,  
to be heard  
I used to be on the line  
dialing and dialing  
My finger sore  
One minute angry  
another minute scared,  
waiting on the line  
while the Russians crept  
into Canada  
molested the children  
While the French  
ruined the world.  
Got to fight back  
I said  
Got to unify, to unify and  
fight back  
Another crazy  
English bleeding  
over the air

PAUSE

At night I'd shiver in fright  
 alone in bed  
 in bed, I  
 miss my husband, you know

BREAKS, CRIES.

Oh, God  
 Eyes blue, capricious as the oceans,  
 I told him  
 Scarlet cheeks  
 Immensely attractive, a handsome boy -  
 Albert!  
 Excuse me.  
 I'm a very dignified lady  
 I am

THE LIGHTS BLUE.

I remember when Westmount was a swamp  
 Only those who had to lived there  
 Outremont was nice, apparently  
 I remember arc-lamps, carriages, horses  
 When we used to sleigh ride to the Mountain  
 Boys and girls chaperoned, of course  
 When. When When  
 All the best people

The Allans, The Redpaths, The Drummonds  
 When the city was small and proper  
 I was part of something  
 something good  
 Near the end Albert said we used to ride  
 we rode everywhere, Albert.  
 Automobiles were ugly and noisy.  
 and your lips were so -

PAUSE

When When When  
 The parties, the balls, the Ritz  
 the big houses along Pine, Dorchester, Peel,  
 the Vane Horne glowing on winter nights  
 And bells, a city of churches, when the  
 French were just  
 Catholics bent under a cold, dark burden  
 bells would fill the city  
 Clang, clang, clang

SMILES

goddamn bells  
 Still

Wonderful days  
Such wonderful days  
I remember the gondola to the top  
of the Mountain  
dropping feathers as we rose  
The river blue  
boats hooting  
We toured the port with Father  
Twenty-four ocean liners  
all in a row  
Say what you want  
Montreal was a grand city  
a beauty  
better than New York  
better than London  
Solid and sober  
Solid and sober  
Albert drank because of the pain,  
there was no  
other reason, the pain  
they expected, everyone was  
expected to maintain themselves  
through appearances  
One never ever mentioned  
vulgar things

No, no, no.

One slip, a single indiscretion and  
your name

fell

from the list

My father played bridge with Lord Strathcona

I began my life with servants who wore white  
gloves above the elbow and starched white aprons

PLASTER FALLS FROM THE CEILING.

Now

NUDGES A PIECE WITH HER STICK. SLOWLY  
BENDS OVER, PICKS IT UP.

Now

I'd rather not

dwell

I prefer the past, wouldn't you?

LETS IT ALL FALL FROM HER FINGERS.

Most melt

in some corner

When I melt I'll



melt

DABS GASOLINE AROUND HER NECK.

Father played bridge with Lord Strathcona

My family was related to the Rosses

through marriage, you know

Father played -

The War changed everything

The Great War

Not too quickly but

Forever and enough.

You couldn't even try to compromise!

PAUSE. HER SHOULDERS TREMBLE.

Is that true?

I leave the world of unfinished sentences

What?

Is that true?

I begin to think

and begin again

to remember

what never took place

But I have pictures

many pictures

I could show you  
You can have them  
the drawers are so heavy, yes

PAUSE. AMY STRIKES A MATCH, HOLDS IT BEFORE  
HER EYES.

THE LIGHTS DIM, FADE OUT TO BLUE.

Maybe I should

IN A SING-SONG VOICE.

Snap cobra killed the cat  
Suck the bone, the poison crack  
Crack  
Crack  
Crack

GOES TO THE WINDOW, MANAGES TO PULL OPEN THE  
WINDOW. THE CURTAIN BLOWS WILDLY. AMY  
RETURNS TO HER CHAIR, SITS HEAVILY.

So nice of you to come, yes  
I can show you  
Still  
I can show you  
I can

I can

SILENCE

Perhaps another time

THE CEILING FALLS: CLOUDS OF GREY  
PLASTER. THE PIPES MOAN AS THE RADIO  
BUZZES TO LIFE, A COLD SMOOTH VOICE  
FILLS THE AIR. AS IT SPEAKS AMY'S EYES  
CLOSE, HER HEAD NODS AND DROPS.

Radio: But with just one application of ViJoie lotion  
you can have the healthy, spotless, complexion  
you deserve....

BLACKOUT. THE RADIO SHUTS OFF. IN THE  
BACKGROUND, VERY LIGHTLY, CAN BE HEARD  
THE LIGHT BREATHING OF A CAT.

MOBILE

MOBILE, a one-act play in five scenes.

Characters:

Rosy, a woman in her late twenties

Chris, a man in his twenties

John, a man in his twenties

Nelson, a man of twenty-five

Scene I A mid-winter afternoon, Montreal  
II A few days later, afternoon  
III A month later  
IV Two weeks later, evening  
V A few weeks later, evening

## Scene I

Two comfortable and elegant armchairs in Chris and Rossy's living-room in Montreal. A coffee-table separates the chairs, a bright Calderesque mobile moves above them. Darkness surrounds the chairs. A few tangerines in a bowl, old roses in a pot, and a red telephone, sit on the table. Rossy is a loud woman, dressed with corresponding colour and flamboyance. Chris wears black slacks and a red cashmere sweater.

As the lights rise she is standing, holding a cup while he sits picking at his nails with the tip of a pair of scissors.

Rossy: Let's go somewhere hot. Would you like that? Would you like to go somewhere?

(SHE GOES TO HIM, STANDS OVER HIM, PUTS HER HANDS UNDER CHRIS' CHIN. HE DOESN'T RESPOND. SHE SIGHS, MOVES AWAY.)

Chris: Come here.

Rossy: What for?

Chris: Do that again.

Rossy: I can't.

Chris: Why not?

Rossy: My fingers are bloody.

Chris: Oh God, I'm always bleeding.

Rossy: Yes. (PAUSE) Are we having lunch. We could meet. I could meet you at eight thirty on the corner. Or would you rather meet me at the club?

Chris: (SHRUGS) All right. Eight thirty at the club?

Rossy: I'll be there.

Chris: If I'm still at the bar wait for me in the back.

Rossy: I won't embarrass anyone. (KISSES HIM)  
I'll talk to beautiful Nora by the door.

Chris: You shouldn't tease Nora. He smashed a guy's face in yesterday.

Rossy: Well, he won't smash my face because he knows who my boyfriend is. He's well aware that you'd liquidate him if he dared smudge a fine lady's honour.

Chris: How does he know this?

Rossy: Because I bloody well told him, that's why. I told him you'd shove a dagger through his

heart if he dared even touch me. He knows this. (SPITS INTO A FLOWER POT) Was that alright?

Chris: I'd prefer if you waited in the back. (HE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE, LEAFS THROUGH A MAGAZINE. THE PHONE RINGS. ROSSY LOOKS AT HIM. THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN.)

Rossy: (IRONIC) Who could that be?

Chris: I'm not here.

Rossy: (NOT MOVING) Who would disturb, who would dare shatter this moment of rare intimacy. (PICKS UP THE RECEIVER.) Hello, hello.... No, he's not.... Alright, I'll tell him. Ciao. Yes.... Goodbye, John. (RETURNS RECEIVER) That was our friend, says he's lost in a world without love.

Chris: That's nothing new. What did he want?

Rossy: You, as usual. Last week I saw him crawling along St. Catherine Street with mascara streaked all over his face. I don't know what's wrong with the boy, do you? Probably not the faintest idea....

Chris: Well, he hates his father.

Rossy: I have vacuum-cleaners - doesn't make me do five downers, drink and then collapse in someone's garage.



Chris: What are you talking about?

Rossy: He's crazy. You should hear what they're saying.

Chris: I listen to what they're saying. I hear the shit every goddamn night. (PAUSE)

What are you thinking? Do you want...?

(SHORT PAUSE, SLIGHTLY IRONIC) Do you want to talk?

Rossy: (MOVING AWAY) Not this afternoon... Soon though, soon.

Chris: What would you like to talk about soon?

Rossy: (SMILING IRONICALLY) We've been creating awkward sentences lately.

Chris: I suppose.

Rossy: But you are improving... in conversation.

Chris: Yes, thanks to you.

Rossy: I remember whole afternoons when you didn't say a word. You were much more violent then.

Chris: I hate this job.

Rossy: You know the name of that tune.

Chris: Are you going to another movie? (PAUSE)

Rossy: A German movie. A young man hallucinates about America, living out a Jesse James fantasy in Hamburg.

Chris: Does Hans get shot robbing a bank?

Rossy: (LIFELESS IRONY) Wolfgang has a sex change and commits suicide. Very uplifting.

Chris: You've seen it before?

Rossy: Uhuh, many, many times. (LOOKS AT CHRIS)  
Ah, you were so wild once, so wild. And handsome. And marvelous. I still have dreams about you. John's in love with you. You know that, don't you?

Chris: He didn't mention it.

Rossy: Well, he is. I had a drink with him. He says he dreams about you, too. (CHRIS SHRUGS) What's it like to be part of someone's dream? (PAUSE) I used to think, when you were quiet, that you knew something. The way you didn't move your lips created this illusion of mystery.

Chris: Ya, ya, ya.

Rossy: He told me he loves your eyes.

Chris: He's perverse. He has a glass of eyeballs on his desk.

Rossy: Seems quite genteel to me.

Chris: I thought he was living with a model, some guy from Toronto.

Rossy: But he still loves you. He's painting your portrait. (PULLS HER HAIR BACK, SMOOTHES SOME OF HER MAKE-UP ON HER FACE.)

Chris: He can't paint his asshole. (PAUSE) You look wonderful.

Rossy: Considering I once wanted to be a nun.

Chris: Liar.

Rossy: It's true. I was raised by nuns. Christ, I'm not a liar. (RUBBING HER ARMS) It's fucking freezing in this place.

Chris: Close the window.

Rossy: Then it gets stuffy.

Chris: (SHRUGS) That's the way it is. Do you want a sweater?

Rossy: I want to go to Greece.

Chris: I want to hold you.

Rossy: Somewhere blue, with a pink sky, orange sails on the water, waves kissing on the shores.

Chris: Give me a kiss.

Rossy: I take a kiss. (THEY KISS FOR SEVERAL SECONDS, SEPARATE UNEASILY.)

Chris: Why don't you start another mobile?

Rossy: I don't have time. (SHE HOLDS HIM, HE REACHES FOR A CIGARETTE. STANDS. PAUSE.)

GOES TO GET CIGARETTE.)

Why, why do you ask?

Chris: I thought you might enjoy creating something that's all. Nothing tricky.

Rossy: Something to keep my fingers occupied, is that it? So you can go out and get what you want?

Chris: (SMILING) Exactly.

Rossy: Well I don't need it. You do the mobile. You cut the tin and blow the glass. You try to make it work. Can you make it work?  
(BLOWS AT THE MOBILE. A GUST. IT HEAVES, REVOLVES CHAOTICALLY.) I'm tired of mobiles, makes me feel like I'm in a cage.

Chris: Where's the cat?

Rossy: Don't ask.

Chris: Here pussy, pussy, pussy.

Rossy: He's dead. I ate his heart.

Chris: (PAUSE) Where is she? (PAUSE. ROSSY STARES AT CHRIS. CHRIS IS ANGRY BUT COLD.) Where ~~is~~ the pussy?

Rossy: I killed it. I ripped it open in the bathtub. All cat brains are the same size.  
Did you know that? You knew that. (CHRIS, ALMOST CASUALLY, FLICKS HIS CIGARETTE TOWARDS ROSSY.) You fucker! Are you crazy?!

Chris: You're crazy darling.

Rosy: Not like you.

Chris: Where's our baby?

Rosy: You're an asshole, that's what you are.

Chris: Where's our baby? (PAUSE)

Rosy: I don't know. I don't know. (PAUSE. SIGHS.)

Oh, Christ.

Chris: The cat wouldn't just leave, would he?

Rosy: (QUIETLY) I haven't seen the bitch for months.

Chris: It's a he, isn't he a he? (LOOKS FOR CAT.)

Here pussy, pussy, pussy. Come here cat, come to Mama. Come on home to Mama. (DUCKS BEHIND CHAIR INTO DARKNESS. PAUSE.

REAPPEARS BEHIND ROSSY'S CHAIR. HIS HANDS HOLD HERS. SHE JUMPS, SCARED.) Sorry.

God, your hands are cold.

Rosy: (SHE LOOKS AT HIS NAILS.) And you've been stabbing again, haven't you? They're scabby. Put some iodine on them... Are you really that nervous?

Chris: I'm not nervous. I'm not.

Rosy: (SIGHS) I'm tired. (SHORT PAUSE) Why do you pick at yourself?

Chris: I don't know. (PAUSE)

Rossy: Do you remember when we first moved in together? You didn't bite your nails then, did you? (PAUSE. CHRIS TAKES A DRAG ON HIS CIGARETTE.) And you didn't smoke either. You held me tight.

Chris: I am holding you tight.

Rossy: If any man looked at me, I saw your eyes turn sharp and thin like razors. You had a mean smile like -

Chris: Rosalie, Rosalie -

Rossy: You were jealous then.

Chris: Rosalie -

Rossy: You were!

Chris: So were you.

Rossy: Jealous of each other?

Chris: Yes. Every little move. It was incredible.

(THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. PAUSE. ROSSY SEEMS TO BREAK DOWN. GOES TO CHRIS.)

Rossy: I want to go, Chris. Oh, Christopher, I have to go... somewhere hot, somewhere hot and blue.

Chris: (HOLDING HER. SINCERELY.) I love... you, Rosalie.

Rossy: No so tight. You're hurting. Ow - your buttons scrape. (LOOKS AT HIM ANGRILY.)

Chris: What are you thinking? (PAUSE) What do you think?

Rossy: Christ, it's dark already. I never know where the cat is. (CHRIS STROKES ROSSY'S HAIR.) You should phone John before he kills himself. (ROSSY TAKES HIS HAND, KISSES AND SCRATCHES IT SOFTLY.)

Chris: He never kills himself.

Rossy:—Why don't you stay home tonight? You don't have to work. I get lost... in these rooms. I hate these rooms. We could have a bath. We can open a bottle and fill the tub. I have some oil, we could put it on the water and lie in the steam and pretend we're in Crete, on the beach. (PAUSE) I'd like that. Just us. (SIGHS) We used to have baths all the time, remember? It would always be much too cold everywhere else. (PAUSE)

Chris: I should get ready. I have to go. (KISSES HER HAND.) Can you put some cereal in pussy's cup?

THEY FREEZE FOR A SECOND. ROSSY EXITS. JOHN ENTERS, BRINGS CHRIS ANOTHER SWEATER. CHRIS CHANGES SWEATERS, SITS AND WATCHES WHILE JOHN PICKS UP SEVERAL TANGERINES, JUGGLES. JOHN WEARS BLACK, AN EARRING AND MASCARA.

## Scene II

A few days later.

John drops a tangerine, looks for it.

Chris: How are you thinking of doing it? (PAUSE)

John: There you are. (FINDS IT) I don't know.  
Gas is very nice. Apparently. You know  
about it only after it's happened.

Chris: (SMILING) Only after it's happened?

John: Apparently.

Chris: No headaches. That's thoughtful.

John: That's what I said... Think I bruised your  
tangerine. (PAUSE)

Chris: Did you see Rossy yesterday?

John: We had coffee. We had a little chat.

Chris: About what?

John: Nothing really - the world. We had a  
giggle.

Chris: What did she say?

John: She said South Africa should drop the bomb  
on Angola. She's a destructive little  
fascist. She's adorable.

Chris: Is that all?

John: She enjoyed the movie.



Chris: Anything else?

John: She bought some new blouses.

Chris: Anything about me?

John: No, well, I mean, I can't say, can I?  
Nothing important. Why is there something...?  
(SCRATCHES HIS HEAD.)

Chris: Stop it! Got lice?

John: What?

Chris: In your hair? Lice? (PAUSE)

John: (FORMAL) No, do you? Do you have  
creatures in your hair?

Chris: Cobras.

John: Crawling through your brain, eh? 'Course  
that depends just where one rests one's  
skull, doesn't it?

Chris: Are you saying something, or just drooling  
as usual?

John: I'm saying something.

Chris: What? (JOHN SCRATCHES HIS HEAD.) What?

John: Gilles and his boyfriend are splitting.  
Funny the way these things happen, isn't  
it? They always seem to take you by  
surprise.

Chris: They must have had some idea.

John: Apparently not. Everybody else knew.  
(PAUSE)

Chris: So, how's Nelson?

John: Wonderful. I love him. He's gorgeous.

Chris: And where did this love begin?

John: I told you - at the baths. He let me buy him a tonic. You should come over. You can swim together. Nelson won the crawl last year, you know. Says he's going to teach me. (SMILES) He calls me his dolphin. His dolphin. You should come for dinner. He knows about you. Mother and I talk.

Chris: The old claw.

John: Don't worry, we never say anything. He says you sound like his type of person. (YAWNS)

Chris: But you're bored shitless. Why don't you go?

John: The gracious host. (PAUSE) I want to talk to you. I want to share our experiences. How are you?

Chris: Dandy.

John: Rossy says you've been weird lately.

Chris: She says the same about you.

John: Well, perhaps she's right. The most bizarre thing happened at Deford's yesterday. I was picking up this watch for Nelson, he had to have a new watch, anyway,

there was a woman and she had two gorgeous Pekes, one pure black, one pure white on leashes and I said - "Oh, what beautiful dogs you have" - and this deep man's voice comes out of her body somewhere - "Thank you very much" - and then I realize she's got a tube growing out of her throat and a sound box. I mean, she had throat cancer! I was so embarrassed I almost vomited right there at Deford's. And she had the worst breath in the world, the worst, worse than father...

Chris: What a day.

John: Exactly. Actually, I felt sorry for her.

Chris: I'm sure she appreciates that.

John: Charity begins at home, they say.

Chris: And Nelson has a new watch.

John: Of course. Very expensive, too. A gift from his dolphin. I had it inscribed.

Chris: Now see him take off. (SMILES)

John: Do you think so?

Chris: It's possible.

John: He won't. I mean, he couldn't very well wear a 'Timex', could he?

Chris: Guess not.

John: Nelson is not trash. Not everybody fools around. You don't fool around. Rossy trusts you, doesn't she? He's just like you - loyalty is important to him.

Chris: What do you know about it? Your heart is between your legs.

John: It's different for me.

Chris: Is it?

John: Yes. (PAUSE) Rossy's worried, Chris.

(CHRIS LIGHTS UP A CIGARETTE.)

Chris: I saw a German movie last night. It was stupid. They're bathing in their guilt these days. I hate guilt, don't you?

John: It's free. (YAWNS) I'm sorry, I apologize. Really, I'm tired, très fatigué.

Chris: How many did you caress last night?

John: (ADMONISHING) Christopher. Actually, I was lonely last night.

Chris: Who with?

John: Nelson was busy modelling in Old Montreal; bathing suits if you can believe it, in the fucking ice. Anyway, so I went with Nora for a drink. Did you hear about his fight? Did you quit before that? Anyway, his fist is swollen like a kumquat. No one was at

the club, just the same old faces.

Chris: Why didn't you go to the park? Or go to the mountain, you wouldn't have to look at the faces.

John: It's freézing out there.

Chris: That's never stopped you before.

John: I have my morals, Chris.

Chris: No, you don't.

John: Oh, leave me alone. Shit. Everybody's hassling me. Can't wait till I get to Mexico. Montreal's driving me bananas. And Father says he's coughing because of the "dog-biggies" in the park. He's mad.

Chris: Is he drinking?

John: Do fish swim? Poor Mother, poor old claw, she can barely handle him. It's really getting a bit much. And he's not a healthy man. He's got these red blotches, looks like a psychedelic dalmation. Sometimes he forgets to shave. And he eats like a fucking pig, a fucking pig, then he falls asleep on the throne, stinking up the top floor like rancid paté. He stinks. I wash his face, I even wipe his ass and he tells me to get lost. (SIGHS) I hate the guy. I remember

once I was singing opera, Maria Callas or something, along, you know, with the record - la, la, la - and he comes up and smashes me in the mouth. I was twelve years old, for Christ's sake, Jesus. (PAUSE) I guess I've told everybody that story. Oh, God. "These lies they tell." I'm exhausted. I need a complete rest. I've gotta get outta this town, climb into a sack of peyote and just lie on the beach and forget, forget, forget. Everything. Maybe the old asshole'll die while I'm gone. Wouldn't that be fun?

(SHORT PAUSE). Wish Nelson could come, wish you could come but.... At least I'd have someone to chat with.

Chris: You'll meet someone. You always do.

John: I was younger then. I feel like a dinosaur.

Chris: Is that true?

John: Definitely. Don't you think Nelson's gorgeous?

Chris: I've never met him.

John: Never? He's at the pool enough.

Chris: Probably doesn't go the same time I do. I go in the mornings, there's no one there, usually.

John: (AFFECTIONATELY) You're a strange bird,  
aren't you? You look tired.

Chris: Hmmm?

John: Do you remember when we'd masterbate in  
your father's garage?

Chris: No.

John: We did.

Chris: I can't remember.

John: You don't want to remember (PAUSE)

Chris: (IRRITATED) Do you meet all your 'loves'  
in the baths?

John: Why not?

Chris: All you feel is your fucking cock. (MOVING  
INTO DARKNESS.)

John: How do you know? You don't... Chris?  
Where the hell are you? Chris? You don't  
know what time it is, do you? I'm supposed  
to meet Nelson. He wants to swim with you.  
He won't embarrass you. He's serious. Like  
you. You'd like him. While I'm in Mexico.  
You swim better with somebody. (CHRIS  
EMERGES FROM DARKNESS.)

Chris: Maybe I'll call him. (PICKS UP SCISSORS.)

John: Christ, you scared me. (LOOKS INTO CHRIS'  
EYES.) Do you have something in your eye?

Chris: Chlorine, probably.

John: You should wear goggles, Chris. We always wear goggles.

Chris: (CUTTING HIMSELF WITH THE SCISSORS.)

Christ.

John: Fool. I told you they were dangerous.

Chris: Do you think I'm a fool? (PAUSE. JOHN LAUGHS, HANDS CHRIS A HANDKERCHIEF.) Yes.

Here... It's clean, don't worry. God, I am an angel, aren't I? (CHRIS DOESN'T MOVE, HOLDING HIS WOUND WITH HIS OTHER HAND.)

It's clean. It's clean.

THEY FREEZE FOR A MOMENT. JOHN EXITS AS NELSON ENTERS. HE IS FAIRLY GOOD-LOOKING, WEARS A BRIGHT MULTI-COLOURED SWEATER WHICH HE CAREFULLY REMOVES WITHOUT MISPLACING A HAIR.



## Scene III

A month later.

Nelson: My mother made it.

Chris: There. (TAKING SWEATER)

Nelson: Thanks. Phew... That's better. I was boiling.

Chris: The colours -

Nelson: Oh, yes, I know. They are rather loud.

Chris: Très spécial.

Nelson: They make me feel like a clown.

Chris: I'd've thought you'd enjoy costumes.

Nelson: (SIGHS) Only for Mother.

Chris: You have a 'thing' with Mother?

Nelson: A 'thing'? What's a 'thing'?

Chris: A neurotic attachment.

Nelson: I don't know.

Chris: Forget it. (PAUSE. NEITHER MOVES.) I'm sorry. (SHORT PAUSE)

Nelson: What for? (SHORT PAUSE)

Chris: I don't make much sense these days.

Nelson: You are under no obligation. (SMILES SOFTLY)

Chris: (APPEARS NERVOUS) I hear things at night. Odd things - Rossy laughing in the other room. Laughing. I mean, I know she's not there but.... (PAUSE) Then the phone rang. I was smoking, away on some tangent, and the phone rang. Thought it was her. Forgot who was on the line.

Nelson: Maybe it was me.

Chris: How did you get my number?

Nelson: It was taped to my locker. Don't you remember? You smiled.

Chris: Smiled? I was kicked out of my place once. Just thrown right out on the street. The other fellow had signed the lease, you see. He had the legal right but I had been living there for two years. I thought I knew him but I had misjudged him. I thought he was my friend. I mean, I trusted him.

Nelson: Well.... (TOUCHES CHRIS.)

Chris: (MOVES AWAY.) I didn't know you were John's friend, you see. I thought you were....

Nelson: Yes, it's funny. I practically know you. I've seen your picture. Mother and John adore you. They talk.

Chris: ✓ Yes, they do.

Nelson: Has he had his nose plucked yet? (LAUGHS)

He told me what you said about his hair.

Chris: We got a card the other day. From Valaquez, still looking for drugs, apparently.

Nelson: He's crazy. I mean, I liked John very much. I almost loved him but -

Chris: Almost?

Nelson: Almost. He's got imagination. I'd like to be in love, at least he was in love. Or that's what he says.

Chris: I thought you owed him something.

Nelson: I owe him nothing. (PAUSE. DRINKS.) I put everything back in his box. (SHORT PAUSE) And if anything was ripped he could send me the bill, that's all. With him everybody else's the heavy.

Chris: (SLIGHT SMILE) And you are perfect.

Nelson: Yes, I am. Haven't you noticed? (SMILES AT CHRIS, WHO SHIFTS UNCOMFORTABLY.) Hello, my name is Nelson.

Chris: Would you like another liqueur, Nelson?

Nelson: No, I don't think so. I don't drink. Only rarely. On special occasions.

Chris: Well.

Nelson: No, no thanks. (CHRIS STANDS. NELSON SMILES.)

Chris: Nervous?

Nelson: (LAUGHING) Terrified. Oh, Christopher, I am terrified.

Chris: Good. Have a drink.

Nelson: Do you want me to? Are you trying to get me stuffed?

Chris: (SMILES) It's your decision.

Nelson: Bless you. Do you often tape your number to a stranger's locker?

Chris: Oh, I don't know. Do you want a drink or not?

Nelson: Are you offering?

Chris: No.

Nelson: Cointreau, please. (GIVES CHRIS HIS GLASS.)

Chris: You've been drinking Drambuie. The bottle's under the sink, next to the Ajax. (RETURNS THE GLASS. PAUSE.) Do you expect me to do everything?

Nelson: No, but it's your place. I could get it. If you want. (CHRIS TAKES GLASS.) Thank you, Christopher. (CHRIS EXITS. NELSON QUICKLY DRAWS A COMB THROUGH HIS HAIR. CHRIS RETURNS WITH BOTTLE AND CRACKERS.)

Cereal?

Nelson: Perfect. Merci. (TAKES GLASS, PAUSE.)

You don't work tomorrow, do you?

Chris: I don't work anymore.

Nelson: Oh, that's right. What do you artists do all day?

Chris: (TIRED) Oh, Christ.

Nelson: You want me to go?

Chris: It wouldn't make any difference to you. You'd just find somebody else.

Nelson: Probably. I could always tape my number to somebody's tree. (HE BLOWS AT THE MOBILE.) You sell them, don't you? Didn't you just sell one to Texaco?

Chris: Ummmm. (PAUSE) Mr. Texaco has the biggest bar-b-que in the world.

Nelson: Classy guy.

Chris: It is an artistic world, they say.

Nelson: Oh, I know. (LOOKS AT WATCH.)

Chris: What time is it?

Nelson: (SHAKING IT.) Bloody thing's stopped. Do you know?

Chris: It's past ten.

Nelson: Really? Oh, God, I'll never make that flight. (SIGHS) I should go. I really should. (PICKS UP SWEATER.)

So you used to swim professionally. I could tell. Nobody knows how to crawl properly. Is there a pool in this building? You must visit me in T.O. I have a pool -

Chris: "T.O."? Jesus.... (SITS DOWN)

Nelson: It's quite a nice town, actually. The beach on the island is marvelous.

Chris: Beaches, beaches. Do you adore the beaches?

Nelson: When I'm tired they're alright.

Chris: Rossy will be on the beach every day. An ambitious woman - she wanted to go to Greece and landed in Toronto. Says she grew tired of the cold in this city.

Nelson: Rossy is that woman who lived with you, right?

Chris: That wonderful woman, yes.

Nelson: Sounds like you're bitter.

Chris: Is that what it sounds like?

Nelson: Just what I heard.

Chris: She's still paying rent.

Nelson: Doesn't live here and pays rent. (SMILES)  
That's rather suspicious.

Chris: (SHRUGS) It's an arrangement. She might return. She wants a place in Montreal. Meanwhile she's staying with my brother.

They love the same view of the tower,  
the wonderful C.N. tower. (PAUSE)

Christ, I'm getting as bitchy as everyone  
else.

Nelson: Is it likely she'll return tonight?

Chris: Tonight? (PAUSE. CHRIS STUDIES NELSON.)

No. (NELSON DROPS SWEATER ON THE BACK OF A  
CHAIR. SITS.)

Nelson: It's a large flat for one man.

Chris: I have room.

Nelson: It's quiet, very quiet, isn't it? (PAUSE)

Chris: Do you want anything?

Nelson: Are you offering?

Chris: I suppose.

Nelson: I could go. Are you sure you want me to  
stay?

Chris: I'm not sure of anything.

Nelson: Should I go? (PAUSE)

Chris: No. (NELSON TAKES OFF HIS TIE, UNBUTTONS  
HIS SHIRT.) What are you doing? (NELSON  
LAUGHS, REMOVES ALL HIS CLOTHES, GOES TO  
CHRIS.)

Nelson: (SIGHS) It's all over. Forget about it all,  
forget about Rossy, forget about John, forget  
about the time you were thrown out into the

streets, forget it all. It doesn't matter anymore.

Chris: You sound like some Christ.

Nelson: It's you who's been playing that game.

Chris: Well, maybe I should have healed you. What do you think?

Nelson: (TOUCHES HIM SOFTLY.) Save me, heal me, anything you want.

Chris: Shall I forgive you?

Nelson: If you like.

Chris: Who shall forgive me?

Nelson: (PAUSES. PUTS ARMS AROUND CHRIS. LAUGHS.)  
Oh, Chris, you are a barrel of monkeys.

THEY FREEZE FOR A SECOND, THEN EXIT TOGETHER AS ROSSY ENTERS. SHE IS DRESSED IN CHARACTERISTIC STYLE, HER HAIR SLIGHTLY ALTERED. SHE CARRIES A LARGE PURSE AND A TINY WRAPPED PLANT. SHE PUTS THE PLANT ON THE COFFEE-TABLE AND SITS. CHRIS ENTERS, LOOKING HAGGARD, HE HAS CHANGED SWEATERS, WEARING ONE WITH A HOLE IN THE ELBOW. HE SITS AND PICKS AT HIS NAILS WITH THE TIP OF A PAIR OF SCISSORS.



## Scene IV

Two weeks later.

Rossy: Well, you know, sometimes I felt like I was pimping for you.

Chris: Pimping?

Rossy: Then sometimes I would even feel jealous.

Chris: While you were screwing my brother you were feeling jealous? How do you think I felt?

Rossy: Were you jealous of Michael? (SMILES) Anyway, that's why I haven't sent you any money. I had the check all made out and everything, it's in the envelope.

Chris: (STANDS. ANGRY.) What the fuck you talking about? "Pimping"? Do you know what that means? We were lovers, for Christ's sake! I was never your fucking whore.

Rossy: Don't walk around with those scissors. Christ, it smells like a motel in here.

Chris: So you've been sending me a hundred and fifty every month -

Rossy: Put the scissors down.

Chris: And every time you're in town you sleep here -

Rossy: I should obviously call first.

Chris: Obviously. (SHORT PAUSE) It doesn't mean I'm a whore. It doesn't mean you can spit in my face.

Rossy: I guess not. Are you going to throw those things? (SHORT PAUSE) Are you? Because if you're going to throw them I want to be prepared.

Chris: (OFFERS THEM TO HER.) Here.

Rossy: It's alright. (IRONIC) I just wanted you to be aware of what you're doing.

Chris: I know what I'm doing. (PAUSE. NEITHER MOVES.)

Rossy: Why should I give you money if the model's living here?

Chris: I thought you wanted a place available in case you came back. I thought that was the arrangement.

Rossy: You just thought it'd be easier to string Rossy and her feeble conscience along for a hundred and fifty a month.

Chris: But you didn't offer a month's notice. You owe me a hundred and fifty bucks.

Rossy: You're nuts. The beauty's already moved in. (PAUSE) Hasn't he? Isn't he paying his

share? (SHORT PAUSE) I mean his clothes are in my drawers. He spilt skin bronzer over my pants. He's a bit beautiful, isn't he? Actually, he's probably very good for you. Does he have money?

Chris: Fuck money.

Rossy: Is that the slogan for today? He dresses well at least. I enjoy his sweaters; did he work for a circus?

Chris: Keep it up, Rossy, just keep it up.

Rossy: What about John? Did he find his mescaline?

Chris: His father died while he was in Mexico.

Rossy: That whale? Did he really? Oh, God, that's awful, that's terrible.

Chris: Awful, awful, awful. Anyway, they couldn't reach him.

Rossy: How did he die?

Chris: Heart attack. (PAUSE)

Rossy: While John was in Mexico his father died. That's sad. That's very sad. Does he know about Nelson and you?

Chris: I think so. By now. He's dropping in later this week, he said.

Rossy: One can't abandon one's friends. I'd like to meet Nelson.

Chris: Yes, I'm sorry....

Rossy: I hope and pray I don't embarrass him.

(SHORT PAUSE) You probably have no money.

Chris: I have money.

Rossy: I bet you don't.

Chris: I'm alright.

Rossy: I'll send seventy-five but that would be it.

(CHECKS WATCH.)

Chris: I don't want the beast's money.

Rossy: He's got qualities, Chris.

Chris: He's a jerk. He'll jerk you.

Rossy: (SLOWLY, SURELY) No. (PAUSE) Michael and I are getting married. (PAUSE. HE LAUGHS AND STOPS.) Is that an official comment?

Chris: "Why don't we have a bath and lie in the warmth and watch the waves?"

Rossy: No thanks. The tub's filthy. The toilet's filthy -

Chris: Plenty of clean towels.

Rossy: Everything's filthy.

Chris: It's a question of attitude.

Rossy: I suppose. Where are the valiums?

Chris: The valium. I thought you were here for something; the valium, the valuable valium.

Rossy: Where is it?

Chris: I sent them.

Rossy: We've checked everyday.

Chris: He has a private postal box.

Rossy: I know that.

Chris: He has two private postal boxes.

Rossy: He does?

Chris: You must watch Michael. Yes, I sent them already. (PAUSE) Why are you shaking?

Rossy: It's cold in here. Can't you afford heat?

Chris: It's stuffy. Stuffy-stuffy. What did you come here for?

Rossy: (SOFTLY) We're still friends.

Chris: (SMIRKS) Friends of Jesus. (PAUSE) Do you want some valium?

Rossy: No.

Chris: I have Drambuie....

Rossy: We just didn't want you to do them.

Chris: Valium? Warm valium? Who needs it? Certainly for inspiration. I lack no inspiration. I was out last night, some bar, somewhere. I met an old artist who made mobiles in the Wars. Once he was stuck in no man's land, in a burial trench. He tore a hand from a boy and constructed a mobile out of the fingers with boot laces and wire. It

would hang from the tip of his bayonet,  
sometimes the fingers would open and close,  
become entangled, terribly entangled....  
then separate and heave with the breeze.  
(SHORT PAUSE) No, I don't need inspiration,  
not at this particular matter.

Rossy: (NUMB, DISGUSTED) God.

Chris: He had scars on his neck, and a glass eye  
which he would remove and drop into his gin  
for a laugh. (SHORT PAUSE) I'm making a  
mobile with John's eyes.

Rossy: Your eyes are slits. (SHORT PAUSE) What's  
wrong? Isn't life gay? Probably just a  
phase.

Chris: (ANGRY) Don't project your silly little life  
on top of mine. Ambitious little cow. (PAUSE.  
HE LOOKS AT HER, DISGUSTED.)

Rossy: The cat's fine. I found homes for the kittens.

Chris: Rossy? (PAUSE)

Rossy: What? (PAUSE)

Chris: I could use the seventy-five if you have it.  
(SHORT PAUSE. ROSSY SMILES, SHAKES HER HEAD.)  
I won't use it for drugs. I need it, that's  
all, for supplies, if you have it.

Rossy: Oh, I have it. I have it all right.

(LAUGHS) It's interesting, very interesting.

Chris: I'll let you stay any time you come to Montreal. You can sleep in my room, if you want. I'll clean it up.

Rossy: And share the old tramp with Nelson Miracle Mart? No, I'll stay at the Regency. (PAUSE) You should shave. Have you stopped running?

Chris: It's too cold.

Rossy: Not for you. Not for the champ.

Chris: I'm starting soon, I need some shoes.

Rossy: I found pieces of mobile in my suitcase. You can use them, for wings....I'll send them....I heard you sold a mobile to the city. I'm glad I taught you something.

(PICKS UP SCISSORS, CUTS THE PLANT'S WRAPPING REVEALING A TINY PALM TREE.)

It's very luxuriant here, isn't it?

Chris: Luxurious. Thank you.

Rossy: Michael has a huge palm tree in the office just like that. Huge. I could get you another. It's no problem. (PAUSE) Do you

love Nelson? (HE LOOKS AT HER.) Don't squint. I hate it when you squint.

C'mon, you can tell Rossy, Rosalie.

Chris: Mind your own business.

Rossy: I was just being -

Chris: Nosey, as usual.

Rossy: I wasn't being nosey. I'm your friend. Friends aren't nosey.

Chris: You're right. (CONTINUES TO PICK NAILS. PAUSE.)

Rossy: You don't know where he is, do you?

Chris: He can do what he wants. We don't own each other. We're not husband and wife.

Rossy: As long as there aren't any vows. You weren't good with vows. (PAUSE) I knew you'd leave. I knew the first day.

Chris: At the bar?

Rossy: What bar? You never remember anything. You need a mother, you know that?

Chris: Where did we meet, Rossy?

Rossy: At the movies, Chris, at the movies. (THEY LAUGH)

Chris: At the movies, yes....

Rossy: No one can say we never laughed. We did have a few laughs. (PAUSE) Didn't we?



(PAUSE, ROSSY GOES TO HIM, PUTS HER FINGERS AROUND HIS FOREHEAD, HALF-GENTLY, HALF-MECHANICALLY.) Are you O.K.?

Chris: I'm still here, aren't I? (IN PAIN)  
I don't sleep anymore. I don't sleep -  
I throb. (SOFTLY) Jesus.

Rossy: I'd like to see more of you.

Chris: Why?

Rossy: I'd like to see more of you, that's why.

Chris: When you began to see more of me you left.

(CRIES. ROSSY KISSES HIM.) Some nights...

I see your body... all split up... naked...

hanging, floating, like.... (BLOWS THE

MOBILE.) I have your mouth. You're

smiling. Like it's all a joke. I hear

laughter. Every, everybody's laughing.

You're laughing, John's laughing, Michael,

Nora, Nelson, my sisters, my father,

mother, even my grandparents who I barely

even remember. Everybody's laughing.

Everybody's having a good old time. (PAUSE)

I don't know much, do I, Rosalie? I don't

know much. (PAUSE)

Rossy: I never laughed at you. Never. Not once,  
darling. (HE TURNS FROM HER. THEY SEPARATE.)

PAUSE. TRYING TO BE CHEERFUL.) Say  
hello to John. Tell him I'm sorry,  
shocked and sorry, will you?

Chris: Of course. (SARCASTIC) Do you want me to  
say it in that order? Shocked and sorry?  
Or sorry and shocked? Or awful and terrible?  
Hmmm?

Rossy: You decide, love. (PICKS UP HER THINGS,  
LEAVES AN ENVELOPE.) I've got to go.  
(CHECKS WATCH) Late, as usual.

Chris: What about Michael's wife? What about  
their baby? (SHORT PAUSE)

Rossy: Phone me. (QUICKLY KISSES HIM, TURNS,  
EXITS. CHRIS PICKS UP THE SCISSORS,  
APPROACHES THE MOBILE. THE PHONE RINGS.  
CHRIS EAGERLY PICKS UP THE RECEIVER. PAUSE.)  
He's not here....He's dodging the cat.  
(SLAMS RECEIVER INTO PLACE.)

HE FREEZES FOR A SECOND. HE PLACES THE SCISSORS ON  
THE TABLE. LIGHTS A CIGARETTE. JOHN ENTERS. HAIR  
COMBED. ARM IN A SLING. HE LOOKS SCRUBBED AND SOBER.

## Scene V

A few weeks later.

John: He delivered mother and then he drove mother's brother home, drives all the way back, eats a box of Wheaties, has a few drinks, turns into his bedroom, shuts the door and the next thing you know he's dead, sliding right down the door. It's as if he had it all planned. Maybe he did. I mean he must have known. His doctors told him all the time to stop doing so much but he couldn't turn into a bloody vegetable. He didn't want to be a pathetic old man. He ate, he drank, he lived life to the fullest and all that -  
(PAUSE, SOFTLY - ) crap, bloody crap.  
(WITH SLIGHT BITTERNESS - ) What did he care if he survived another eight years or something? He made a joke of it.  
(SARCASTIC) Ha. Ha. Ha. (PAUSE) I felt something was wrong when I got into the water in Mexico. I picked up this conch shell and this black octopus fell out of it on my feet and shot purple ink at me.... That night I

got the phone call.

Chris: Did you get any peyote?

John: No, that's why I rented the bloody motor-bike but the first day I fell off the machine, avoiding a fucking chihuahua. I couldn't even move my mouth. If I coughed I thought I'd die. I had five stitches on my tongue. I got a scar. (PUTS HIS FINGERS IN HIS MOUTH.) You can't see it but it's there.

Chris: But you're looking healthy.

John: Thanks anyway. I was pretty out of it. Still am. I had to get a haircut in the hospital.

Chris: It's nice.

John: (ANGRY) Shut up. Don't patronize me. Just because my father died and I broke my arm doesn't mean I'm on the edge of a nervous breakdown. My hair is ugly, my bones are fractured, my boyfriend's taken off with you, of all people, my oldest friend.

Chris: I'm sorry.

John: (SMILES QUICKLY) Don't be ridiculous, darling. All's fair, as they say. (PAUSE)

I'm learning to sleep all over again.

I don't want to go out anymore. I don't know how to dance, hardly stand up with this cast... I'm off drugs now. That's something, I guess.

Chris: You didn't bring me anything, did you?

John: No, Chris. You don't need drugs, really.

Chris: "Don't patronize me."

John: What are friends for? You should have thought of that line. (PAUSE) Where is he?

Chris: He's at the "Y".

John: (CHECKING WATCH.) The pool closes at eight. It's almost eleven.

Chris: He goes to the club afterwards.

John: Then you have an open relationship.

Chris: We keep in touch.

John: Jesus.

Chris: It's getting late.

John: Exactly. It's getting on, isn't it? On and on and so on. Shit.

Chris: I have to do some work.

John: Another mobile?

Chris: (BLOWS AT IT. IT NODS AND TURNS SLOWLY.)  
A wedding gift for Michael and Rossy.

(PAUSE) Are you painting?

John: I could never paint and you know it I don't do anything anymore. Neither does mother. We lie in father's bed and watch old movies. Jerry Lewis is a genius. You should come over. Share the thrill.

Chris: How is she?

John: Limp. (SHORT PAUSE) How are your tits? Are you in shape? Are you running?

Chris: It's too cold. It's freezing in this country. Nelson says we'll go away in the spring. He says he has friends in Florida.

John: He told me he had friends in California.

(SHORT PAUSE)

Chris: I hate him.

John: You love him. You're hooked. Like a fish on a line. Poor Chris. (PAUSE) He still hasn't paid me back. Not that I really need it.

Chris: I'll say something.

John: (IRONIC) Will you? Don't bother. That's the type of person he is. (SHORT PAUSE) Sorry. I'm sure your love is sweet. I'm sure he'll take you somewhere hot where you can swim and smile and do everything. I'm

sure he means whatever he says.

STANDS, MOVES AWAY, RESUMES PICKING AT HIS NAILS WITH THE SCISSORS. JOHN APPROACHES HIM. TAKES THE SCISSORS.)

Look, if you do want to come over.... mother's on a cooking spree, she's even fired the maid.

Chris: I'm O.K.

John: Seriously, you could come. I know how it gets, sometimes it gets.... Chris? She'd like to see you. It'd just be us, the three of us.

Chris: (DISTRACTED) He said he'd call if he was going to be late.

John: He probably can't find a phone.

Chris: Probably.

John: I should go. I'm talking to father's lawyers tomorrow. They want me to sell some stocks. (PAUSE. NEITHER MOVES.) I should sell everything.

Chris: Did he... (PAUSE)

John: What?

Chris: Did he ever laugh at you? (PAUSE. JOHN LOOKS AT CHRIS. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SMILE... )