

My Apartment

A Play in Seventeen Scenes

The Stage

The setting is Apartment Number 9, on the second floor of the Bunch Building. The apartment is large and roomy. It is divided into two rooms which can be lit individually. On the left is a bedroom with an entrance to the bathroom. In the middle is a living room, with an entrance to a kitchen, which remains unseen. As for furnishings, they can be used or not. Chairs and maybe a table or two will do. A couch figures prominently in a scene or two. Lighting and sound will be important to suggest mood and the passing of time.

The Characters

There are thirty-one roles. Twelve women and nineteen men. A group of six to eight actors should be able to portray all the roles.

MEN

GLENN...The Maintenance man.
 ALLAN...A young husband.
 DARWIN...Pest Control.
 CURTIS...A gentleman caller.
 A TENANT
 BUDDY...Rock and roll star.
 TOMMY...His guitar player.
 CHRIS... Hipster Promoter.
 HUGH...A drunken fool.
 MATT...A young husband.
 3 CLOWNS
 3 WALLS (Voice Only)
 LEONARD...Jedi Trainer.
 SCOTT...A moron painter.
 JAMES...Another moron painter.
 DOUG...A concerned father.

WOMEN

SUSAN...A young wife
 RUTH...An old woman.
 SUZY...Her middle-aged daughter.
 LYNDA...A lost soul.
 JANET...A lonely woman.
 DOROTHY...Curious store proprietor.
 VIOLET...The werewolf's intended victim.
 AMY...A young wife.
 2 CLOWNS
 GEMA...Musician.
 PEGGY...A busybody with a secret.

PROLOGUE

Apartment Number 9 And The Nature of Time

(The stage is dark. A single light comes up as GLENN the maintenance man/NARRATOR enters. He is a large man who walks with a noticeable limp. His demeanor is sullen and suspicious. He wears a tool belt and is pushing a broom. He sees the audience and stops. He stares them down and then starts talking. As he talks his demeanor doesn't change but what he's saying and how he's saying it seems incongruous.)

We can start with the land if you want.

Yeah let's start with the land.

At one time, all of this here was prairie as far as the eye could see. Imagine those tall musky weeds you yank and kill every summer growing to their full height. An ocean of them. As far as you could see. Imagine this yellow green mass slowly swaying like a gospel choir backlit by a brilliant orange sun ball and accentuated by rolling thunderclouds and strobing flashes of lightning. It was here, right on this spot that the Bunch Building was erected, a breezy late 1940's brick apartment house.

But let's not go there just yet. First there were the pioneers.

This spot of land was close to one of many trails which headed like a spider web from St Louis to California back when James K. Polk was president. Remember he was a sour man, a man who never smiled because he was ashamed to show his rotten teeth.

In time, this spot became a campsite for the wagon trains. Then Eaton VanBurger, a former Dutch wind merchant, got the idea to build a huge log and adobe tavern and *charge* people money for sleeping here. By 1889, there was a tidy collection of

mortgaged wooden buildings clustered and huddled against the vastness of the ground beneath them.

Now let's go into that mode they use in the movies where they set up a camera and adjust it so that it shoots a frame every few minutes or so. The result is a speedy fast motion erection of a city; people swarming like ants, edifices arising like tweeky temples from ancient times. Suddenly it is 1919, the year after the Great War. And this former campsite along the Maguey Trail is now a quaint town of ten thousand. It is called Eaton because nobody wants to live in a town called VanBuger.

Our spot of land, the one with the swaying weeds and fast motion time lapse is now a street, prosaically called Sixth Avenue. The spot where the campfires were in olden times is now a corner lot currently housing a three-story frame structure called "Shorty's Trading Post."

Shorty was very short, so short that he was required to stand on a metal chamber pot to address his customers. When his wife's brother went away to prison for forging hall passes and being an anarchist, he made Shorty a wicker step ladder, which was less humiliating than an upturned chamber pot; don't you think? It was said that Shorty had bad dreams where he attacked the Liberty Bell, dreams which disturbed him very much.

Shorty died when his heart exploded on the day Lindbergh landed in Paris, though the two events were apparently unrelated. His son Rodger tried to keep the Trading Post business going but his head wasn't in it. What Rodger loved was beer and he married it and they lived happily ever after; except that he lost the store in the depression, was sued into indingency and killed himself with a table saw.

The small, now leaning building stood empty until the Second Great War when it housed various patriotic groups like the USO and the USAFO and the War Bonds offices and a few distraught Republican campaigns. After the war it was bought up for a song by local real estate tycoon Johnny LaSile.

Now Johnny LaSile had visions of being Eaton's first multimillionaire. He made it too, with reptilian deals like this one. Johnny's first big deal concerned some shady business about Hitler's hubcaps, and he was proud of the fact that he once won a champagne drinking contest with a monkey. He bought the lot and the building which he promptly tore down, in the windy fall of 1946.

Johnny LaSile sold the lot for a huge profit to Garen Bunch, a contractor who wanted to get out of the construction business. So he built himself a two-story apartment building that he could take care of as a sort of handyman/landlord/philosopher who people could turn to in their troubles. Garen had an idealized view of the world and he was tired and preferred not have to oversee a huge prefabrication empire anymore. It would be his legacy, his one proud achievement, and as such he named it for himself.

The Bunch Building.

He never realized his dream, however, because he disappeared mysteriously in 1949 just before the building was completed and was never seen or heard from again. He was last spotted outside his beloved building, leaning into a car full of clowns.

There were small businesses on the ground level of the Bunch Building; a men's clothing store, an ashtray emporium, a beaver pelt market. These businesses will change and morph throughout the years into a Mexican Bird dairy, a Tahitian thrift store, a coffee copy shop, a used tattoo parlor, and a shoe warehouse among others

The twenty apartments in the Bunch Building are spacious, high ceilinged and bright, with skylights and big windows. We could go into number 3 or number 7. But no, let's go into Apartment Number 9.

(He waves his beefy arm and the lights come up on the apartment set.)

Here is Apartment is Number 9. This is signified by a brass numeral nine attached to the door. The doorknob is glass. It resonates with every touch it has felt. Glass is not really a solid but a liquid that is *v e r y* slow. It absorbs things.

This apartment opens up into a tiny alcove. To the right is the bathroom, raised up a step, with tiny white ceramic octagonal tiles making the floor a cold puzzle and impenetrable to water. The tub, sink, and fixtures all gleam with old porcelain and chrome cool. A skylight like a tunnel looms over the spot where you rest your head on the end of the big bathtub. At the other end of the skylight tunnel two tiny windows of meshed glass allow in the starlight.

Into the main room, a wooden floor waxed and re-waxed, a universe of scratches, splashes and stains. To the left a kitchen with ancient appliances, a pink Cadillac of a refrigerator, a scorched and crusty stove and a built-in cupboard painted glossy black. To the right a bedroom, with an ancient stain on the ceiling and an inexplicable window in the middle of the wall looking into the small balcony room.

About the windows.

At the end of the main room two large sheets of glass look out over the southern part of Semeant County. They expose bright rectangles of rooftops and sky. It is easy to trace the seasons and years with such windows. It is easy to see the clouds drift by in slow motion across the moon at night. It is easy to watch thunderstorms be born and die, dissipating like smoke. Imagine the windows as large dirty eyes smudged with fingerprints and the ghosts of raindrops. They have been there, unmoved, since the Bunch Building was born. Now imagine what they have seen, in any order you like. Since we are jumping around inside of Time, we should discuss its nature as it applies to Apartment Number 9. There is no such thing as Time for window glass. Time has swept over it like a big dry ocean.

It's September 1998. It starts with a feather.

(GLENN wanders off and the scene begins.)

SCENE ONE

Feather

(As GLENN walks off the lights focus on the bedroom. A young married couple, ALLAN and SUSAN are in bed. ALLAN is on his side and SUSAN is staring straight up. An alarm goes off and SUSAN mechanically shuts it off. A feather drifts down onto SUSAN's face. We hear a soft flapping above her head. She comes fully awake.)

SUSAN

Allan there's a bird in here.

ALLAN

(Sleepily)

Yeah I had one too. I was dreaming about a man slapping spoons on his thighs..

(More flapping.)

ALLAN

(Coming awake)

That's the sound.

SUSAN

(Matter of factly)

There's a bird in here.

ALLAN

(Uncomprehendingly)

What?

SUSAN

Something hit my face.

(She holds up the feather for him to see. The flapping continues, but he is still half asleep. They both look up. ALLAN immediately reacts as if something went into his eye. SUSAN shrieks. ALLAN wipes whatever it was from his face.)

ALLAN

(Angrily)

Do you have to scream? Why do women have to scream? Why can't they just keep their fear in their mouths like men do!

(SUSAN covers herself, looking upwards.)

SUSAN

(Urgently)

Get it out of here!

ALLAN

(Patiently)

I'm a binder in a print shop Susan, not a bird wrangler. I never even touched a bird before.

SUSAN

Allan! Get it out of here!

(ALLAN angrily gets up, retrieves a broom. He chases the bird around the apartment, swinging the broom wildly each time with much crash and bang. Finally after a particularly frustrated swing, the "bird" flies straight upwards slamming into the "ceiling" with a sound so hard it stops both ALLAN and SUSAN cold. They look as the "bird" falls to the floor with a thud. They are frozen in fear and awe. Suddenly they react as if the "bird" shoots upward again and, from their glance, it appears the bird is settled on an overhead light fixture.)

SUSAN

Do something Allan!

ALLAN

(Turning on her)

You do something! I hate it when you say that to me! What do you think I'm doing?

(SUSAN starts to cry.)

SUSAN

You don't have to yell at me!

*(The bird suddenly lets out a noise halfway between a song and a shriek. They both stare up. **The lights go down.** The bird's song is heard again and the **lights come back up.** ALLAN is now at the light switch on the wall and SUSAN is standing opposite. They are both watching the overhead light fixture intently. ALLAN is maniacally turning the light on and of in jagged strobe-like fashion.)*

SUSAN

He's almost had enough I think.

ALLAN

No..he's not moving..Maybe he's sick.

*(ALLAN flicks the light off and the stage is momentarily dark. We hear muffled voices, a key in the lock. A bird's whistle. **The lights come up again** with ALLAN and SUSAN coming through the door. They take off their coats. Their glances go right to the light fixture.)*

ALLAN

(Continuing a conversation)

He had to come in through the door when one of us walked in.

SUSAN

But why didn't we notice him that night?

ALLAN

Maybe he was hiding.

SUSAN

The screens are all tight and unbroken.

ALLAN

Maybe he got in some other way.

SUSAN

Like how?

ALLAN

I don't know. Maybe that crack in the bedroom wall leads to outside. Maybe one of the skylights has a hole in it that he squeezed through. Maybe he came up through the toilet. Think I heard of that sometime. I mean if you really think about it Susan, there are hundreds of ways..It's just a mystery. Like who wrote "evermore 1959" on the back of the medicine cabinet mirror..we'll just never know some things.

SUSAN

(Suddenly)

Wait a minute! Hear that?

ALLAN

I don't hear anything.

SUSAN

That's what I mean. I don't see him.

ALLAN

(Hope creeping into his voice)

Me either..

SUSAN

(Also)

Maybe he went out the way he came..

(ALLAN claps his hands loudly looking for a reaction of some kind.. SUSAN puts her fingers in her mouth and whistles. Nothing.)

ALLAN

I don't like this.

SUSAN

Something's not right.

(Cautiously, they look around the apartment. Nothing. Slowly, they begin to relax. To joke a little.)

ALLAN

Maybe it left the way it came. Like you said. I can't believe..

SUSAN

Let's just keep our fingers crossed.

ALLAN

But it's too good to be true..

SUSAN

Maybe there never was a bird. Maybe we just imagined it.

ALLAN

Like a bad dream.

SUSAN

(Still looking around)

I think it's really gone Allan.

ALLAN

Thank God. We should really try to find out how he got in though so it won't happen again.

SUSAN

I'm sure it was a freak thing. Like ball lightning.

*(They look up and around. Nothing. They listen. **The lights go down again.** In the dark we hear the flapping and fluttering again. **Lights come up on the bedroom.** ALLAN and SUSAN are in bed. SUSAN wakes up with a feather on her face. The flapping is heard. She sits up, staring upward. **The lights go down again.** We hear the bird's whistling. **The lights come up** on ALLAN and SUSAN talking in the living room.)*

ALLAN

(Resigned)

It's fifty dollars for a visit, not including trapping and disposal.

SUSAN

That's outrageous! For a little bird?

(The bird is singing throughout.)

ALLAN

Susan these people are professionals.

SUSAN

(Determined)

We can do this.

ALLAN

No we can't. It's been four days..

(More fluttering. They look up apprehensively, like Londoners during the blitz. The lights go down. A knock. The lights come back up again. DARWIN from SEMEANT PEST CONTROL enters and looks dubiously around.)

DARWIN

(Suspicious and on guard)

I don't see any bird. Fellow on the phone said there was a bird trapped in here.

ALLAN

He was just here. Sometimes he flies away.

(ALLAN waves his arms around trying in vain to flush out the bird. This act looks a lot like some kind of half assed seduction dance.)

SUSAN

(With a desperate edge to her voice which DARWIN is woefully misinterpreting)
It was just here a minute ago. Let's go check the bedroom..

DARWIN

Hey I don't think so. I don't go for that.

ALLAN

Go for what? The bird's in the bedroom. C'mon..

SUSAN

(Pleading, rubbing her torso unconsciously)
Please..

DARWIN

(Coolly)
I seen this kind of thing before.

ALLAN

What kind of thing?

DARWIN

Sex thing. I read about it one time. You lure me into your home and try to have a three way with me. No sir. I don't think so.

(He stalks out slamming the door. The bird flutters around, tweeting. ALLAN and SUSAN are open mouthed. ALLAN suddenly goes berserk and chases the bird again in a blind rage with a broom. After missing a few times, he collapses on the bed, weeping.)

ALLAN

(Brokenly)
I can't take it anymore..

SUSAN

(In a flat voice full of contempt)
Quit crying.

*(The bird flutters above them. **Lights go down.** Bird whistling. **The lights come up on ALLAN and SUSAN, in a series of silent blackout tableaux. The only sounds should be of the bird fluttering or singing.***

The first tableau is ALLAN and SUSAN eating dinner. SUSAN throws some breadcrumbs down for the bird.

The second tableau is ALLAN and SUSAN sitting, watching the bird cavort, smiling and pointing and laughing like they would at a new kitten.

The third tableau is SUSAN putting trash bags over the bed.

The fourth tableau is ALLAN pouring some birdseed into a bowl and arranging it along with a bowl of water on the floor.

*Finally the **lights go down** after the last tableau and the fluttering and singing abruptly stops. **The lights rise** on ALLAN and SUSAN in bed. ALLAN awakes and listens. He hears nothing. He gets up, careful not to wake SUSAN. He looks up at the light fixture. Nothing. He sees something on the floor. He bends down and picks up the "bird." We can tell from his expression that the bird is dead. He holds it for a long moment. Then he goes into the bathroom. We hear the toilet flush. ALLAN walks back into the bedroom and gets into bed. His face is a stony mask.)*

SUSAN

(Sleepily)

Where is it? I don't hear it.

ALLAN

(Getting on with his life)

Where is what?

(The lights fade slowly, as SUSAN wakes up and looks at ALLAN closely.)

Lights Down

Interlude Number 1

The entry

(In the darkness we hear GLENN's prerecorded voice.)

As you enter Apartment Number 9, you find yourself in a small alcove. This is just a six-foot by six-foot space that opens to all four sides. It is very brown. There is the brown carpeting, the only carpeting in Apartment Number 9. There is the brown and white wallpaper with a pattern not unlike an art deco version of Keith Haring characters. There are burnished wood doorframes smudged with decades of oily handprints. To the right, is the bathroom. To the left is a closet. Straight ahead is the living room. The alcove is unremarkable except for the fact that it has a glorious late night ambience. Many tenants of Apartment Number 9 have spent their late nights in the alcove for no other reason that it just seems to be a late night kind of place. There was the night when Derek Minerich sat in the alcove dialing prerecorded bible stories because they made him feel better. There was Sonny James, who slept in the alcove every time he got drunk. There was Linda Stephens who didn't like the alcove because she thought it was a portal of some kind to the spirit world. This of course, was nonsense, the portal to the spirit world being under the bed in Apartment Number 17.

SCENE TWO

An Interview With The Walls

(GLENN comes out onto the set, carrying a ladder. He casually addresses the walls.)

GLENN

Now which one of you is load bearing?

WALL #1

That'd be me.

WALL #2

The hell you say. Who holds the bedroom and living room joists? Huh? Me. That's who.

WALL #3

You don't do such a good job of it then . What about that crack in the bedroom ceiling?

WALL #2

(Stung)

Talk to the roof.

GLENN

I understand you're not just ordinary walls.

WALL #1

(Defensive)

What do you mean by that?

WALL #2

It's the wallpaper. We used to be painted a manly shade of green.

GLENN

No, no. I meant that you're so thick and soundproof.

WALL #3

Oh that. Yes. We're sturdy because the man who built us, Mr. Bunch, filled us with the dirt he excavated when he built this place.

GLENN

That was smart.

WALL #1

Well he really did it as part of The Plan. He was a clown you know.

GLENN

Whatever happened to him?

WALL #2

You know we can't talk about that Glenn. Let's just say two things. World domination and he owed a lot of money and leave it at that okay?

GLENN

Fair enough.

WALL #2

I remember when you first came to work here Glenn. How everybody hated you.

GLENN

It's because I was so surly. I was unhappy then. I was cursed. I bore the mark of the werewolf.

WALL #2

We know.

GLENN

What are your earliest memories of this place?

WALL #1

I remember how stuck up the beams were. The plaster's breath..

WALL #3

He chewed tobacco.

GLENN

What about tenants. Who was the first tenant of apartment number nine?

WALL #1

Short man. Very quiet. He'd go to bed every night and pretend he was on top of Mount Everest. He would pile up seven pillows around him..

WALL #3

Every pillow had it's special position..

WALL #1

..yes and he would turn on this fan, even in the winter. He would throw open the windows and rant about being Mallory freezing to death at the top. He would shiver and moan on Mt Everest every night when he went to bed. Nice man.

WALL #2

I remember the old woman with cats and her daughter.

WALL #1

The poor crazy woman who wanted to be a bird.

WALL #2

The drunk who killed himself.

WALL #1

And the sex!

WALL #3

A parade of freaks.

WALL #1

And you Glenn. The werewolf.

WALL #2

Glenn the werewolf.

(The lights dim to half with a spot remaining on GLENN.)

GLENN

It's different now. I'm no longer a werewolf of tears. I've been a werewolf of tears all my life and I only came to fully embrace it in my senior year of high school when I was hurt playing football. As soon as I felt my kneecap pop I realized I would be doomed to a life of menial jobs and disappointments. This crushing wave of realization swept over me with the implacability and speed of an ocean wave and in the dog pile, I cried. When the tears hit my mouth I was reborn. Someone above me was laughing at me so, like all good werewolves, I lashed out and bit a hairy arm or calf or something. Somebody screamed and the laughing stopped. Above me someone else cried and I tasted their tears too.

(He waits. Then resumes.)

Thirty years later and I'm angry and fat, barely able to walk on my rotting knees. Now I manage and maintain the apartments in the Bunch Building. I talk to walls. I watch ghosts.

(A TENANT walks up and approaches GLENN apprehensively.)

TENANT

(Bumblingly)

Hey Glenn, how's it going? Uh, say man, there's sewer water in my sink..I'm in number eleven there and..

(A huge change has come over GLENN. He is staring intently at the TENANT with such hatred and rage that the TENANT winds down fast. He starts backing away.)

TENANT

Hey yeah..I can see you're busy talking to the walls right now..Yeah..of course..right..

(The TENANT disappears back into the shadows.)

GLENN

(Resuming his NARRATOR role)

Oh yes I was universally despised by everyone in the Bunch Building for my surliness and bad attitude. Inside my werewolf skin my feelings get hurt. Being around people irritate me because of their chaotic fears and feelings that fly at me unbidden, mercilessly and I can't protect myself from them. .

(He abruptly shift gears. He looks around the apartment, sniffing the air.)

GLENN

I can still smell the cats. And the cigarettes. That was in 1983..

LIGHTS DOWN

Interlude #2

The Living Room

(In the darkness we hear Glenn's prerecorded voice.)

The living room occupies the same space as the pioneer campfires a hundred years before it. Deep beneath the basement of the Bunch Building, right below the living room are the black coal deposits of 21,137 roaring, reassuring campfires warming and comforting frightened families stuck between a fading past and an unknowable future.

Scene Three

The Ash Menagerie

(We hear a cat meow. Then another. And another. Suddenly a sharp knock at the door. The lights come up to reveal an ancient woman, RUTH, dressed in polyester finery attached to a clear tube of oxygen pronged in her nose. A cigarette smolders between her fingers. She opens the door and CURTIS, a man of about thirty enters. RUTH is very suspicious.)

RUTH

(Suspiciously)

Are you the one Shirley called about?

CURTIS

(Dubiously)

Yeah..I'm Curtis.

RUTH
Suzy's in her room.

CURTIS
(Nervously)
Okay..

RUTH
She's working on her act. I'm Ruth. Suzy's mother. But you don't need to know that.

(She opens the door and the smell of cat piss hits CURTIS hard; which he registers with the usual facial expression. RUTH is croaking for SUZY.)

CURTIS
Nice apartment. I like the high ceilings.

RUTH
(Shrieking)
SUZY! Your date's here!

(A burst of cat yowling.)

CURTIS
Uh no, there's been a mix-up I think.

RUTH
(Yelling)
Jesus Christ why don't you feed these goddamned cats!

(SUZY rushes into the living room from the small balcony room. She is a woman about fifty, with long gray hair, glasses and a not unpleasant demeanor. It is obvious that she still lives like a teenager despite her age, and she is at this very moment, nervously looking to her infirm mother for approval.)

SUZY
Are you Curtis?

CURTIS
(Quickly)
Shirley sent me. She said you might be able to help me out..

SUZY
Let's go in my room..

RUTH

If you go in there leave the door open!

SUZY

Okay okay. Why don't you feed the cats mom? *(To CURTIS)* Don't mind the cats. They just like to smell things. We call it going through customs. This one here is Amos; he's fourteen. He lost that eye to a bungee cord hook. That one hiding there is Clazion. He's twelve and has epilepsy. We have to give him drugs. Sometimes he has seizures and his intestines come out of his butt and mama has to shove them back up there. The one eating is Tennessee, he's seventeen. I think he's got Alzheimer's because all he does all night is roam around and holler. Mama shuts him in a drawer at night so we can all get some rest. And there's Moss, he's nineteen. He was my grandma's cat but she died choking on a bottle cap so we took him in. Tawny is still a baby. She likes to stand on top of doors. Her teeth are liquefying. Poor thing. Then there's Little Major. He tries to mate with Mama's wigs.

RUTH

Did he bring something? Because a man shouldn't come calling without a gift. That's how we did it in my day. Make sure he buys you dinner before you put out for him. Order the most expensive thing on the menu.

(CURTIS looks around. He is obviously repulsed by what he sees but he tries to keep his expressions to himself)

CURTIS

I don't want to take up much of your time. Shirley said I could just come in and out..

RUTH

So where are you two going tonight? To the pictures? Don't let him get you drunk baby! You can go to the ballrooms. You could go dancing.

SUZY

We're just going to my room. *(Pause)* Curtis is thinking of buying my waterbed.

RUTH

My beaus used to take me dancing. We'd trip the light fantastic.. THEN we'd go to my room. After they spent a little money on me. What do you do for a living Tom? Suzy wants to know..

CURTIS

I do the little lettering you see on golf balls over at the Titelist factory.

RUTH

A lot of Mexicans work there I bet.

SUZY

(Nervously)

We had this one cat, Leon, and he had a broken tail and one day I found it inside one of my gloves.

CURTIS

You know I'm half-Mexican.

RUTH

Lord has mercy!

CURTIS

What's wrong with that? Are you prejudiced?

(CATS keep meowing.)

RUTH

Why don't you feed those fucking cats?

SUZY

(Screaming)

I did! Puncheon keeps wee-weeing on the couch and I can't keep up with it!

(Curtis looks in horror at the couch he is sitting on.)

RUTH

(Screaming back)

Well you better!

(SUZY stalks off into the balcony room and slams the door shut, leaving CURTIS alone with RUTH.)

RUTH

(Sweetly)

I know what you're really here for. Suzy doesn't fool me. You think I'm stupid or something?

CURTIS

What do you mean?

RUTH

I mean that I'm on to you! You're coming in here in the dead of night with money clenched in your fist asking for my daughter and wanting to go down into her room.

CURTIS

Oh shit.

RUTH

(Scornfully)

A date! Ha! Oh shit is right. *(Demanding)* How much!

CURTIS

(Guiltyly)

I was hoping for at least, you know, two. It's been dry.

RUTH

For how much money!

CURTIS

I got twenty bucks.

RUTH

(Impressed)

Jeez. In my day a twofer would've only cost you two dollars. You mean Suzy can make that kind of money just like that?

CURTIS

I guess so.

(It is apparent that they are talking about two different things. CURTIS just smiles. He doesn't know what else to do.)

RUTH

(Confidentially)

I taught her everything I know about being a woman.

(RUTH coughs violently and takes a deep drag off her cigarette, and turns her oxygen up. SUZY re-enters.)

SUZY

(Hands on hips; accusingly)

The dish is empty.

RUTH

(Too defensively)

Well don't look at me!

SUZY

I am looking at you! Mama we've had this conversation before. You can have whatever's left over, but not before!

RUTH

Well I don't like it when you close the door to your bedroom when a boy's here. It isn't proper!

SUZY

That was thirty years ago! I was showing him my glass ashtray collection!

RUTH

What about me? I have collections too! See?

(She thrusts a small box into Curtis's face and he opens it. He's not too sure if he recognizes what's in it or not.)

RUTH

It's cat whiskers! I collect those. Some of them in there are fifty years old. *(Regretfully)*
Poor old Ginger.

SUZY

(To CURTIS)

C'mon. Let's go in my room. *(To RUTH)* You always have to ruin everything.

CURTIS

No. Please. Let's stay here. So your mom won't be upset.

SUZY

She'll get over it.

(RUTH leaves, and the chorus of cat meows rises, and then falls.)

SUZY

(In a gush)

Sorry about my mom. You know how moms are. Mama used to be much harder. "Suzy come here and let me smell your hands, "Suzy let me see your wallet." Now she's kind of mellowed out a bit after her heart attack. She's had a really hard life. My father deserted us. He was a fruit oiler. Had the wanderlust. He wanted to climb Mt Everest. It made mama mean. I have to take care of her. Her health's not too good. I could've moved out after high school but then her and grandma would've been alone. Grandma died last year. She choked on a bottle cap. She was only 103. I thought she'd have another ten years left. Really I did. You know what I mean?

CURTIS

Did Shirley tell you why I was coming over?

SUZY

Oh yeah. She said you wanted some poetry.

CURTIS

Oh shit.

SUZY

That's just a code word. There's a bad drought you know.

CURTIS

(Bitterly)

Tell me about it.

SUZY

I get it from my cousin Jack. His colon exploded when they were doing a colonoscopy on him. He got five hundred thousand dollars from their insurance but he spent it on a book shredding business. He lives in Elko. Sends it to me in the mail.

CURTIS

What about your mom?

SUZY

(Shrugging)

I have my room. It's pretty self-contained. I got my waterbed and my stereo and my LP records and headphones and my little fridge and my VCR and my books and magazines and my collections. She has no idea. I lock my bedroom door. She thinks I'm burning incense. *(Pause)* You're married aren't you?

CURTIS

Yeah. How'd you know?

SUZY

I can tell. You wear a ring. You have to ignore my mother. She thinks you're here on a date.

CURTIS

Makes her own assumptions huh.

SUZY

No it's what I told her. *(Pause)* I was hoping.

CURTIS

Sorry.

SUZY

(With false bravado)

I don't need that kind of hassle at this point in my life.

CURTIS

What do you do?

SUZY

Well, mama and me are living off her disability and from the rent of grandma's duplex next door. So that's freed me up to work on my act.

CURTIS

Your act?

SUZY

Yeah. I'm hoping to go into stand up comedy. I write all my own material.

CURTIS

(Surprised)

Really. I didn't figure you for the stand-up type.

SUZY

(Coldly)

What type did you figure me for Curtis? Lonely old virgin who lives with her mom? Something like that? What if I told you I knew plenty.

CURTIS

(Horrorified)

No..No..I..

SUZY

You just come here into my home to buy pot from me? I'm a person you know. I have feelings. I have dreams. I'm only doing this because Shirley is my friend. My special FRIEND and she asked me for a favor. Who are you to judge me?

CURTIS

I'm not judging you Suzy.

SUZY

Oh come on. I can see it all over your face. Like my home stinks or something. What does your home smell like Curtis? *(Pause; calmly)* We don't have many people over. I'm not used to talking to people. Just cats.

CURTIS

So tell me one of your jokes.

SUZY

You really want to hear one? I'll tell you one I wrote today. You really want to hear it?

CURTIS

(Unconvincingly)

Sure.

SUZY

(Reciting in a deadpan monotone)

My boyfriend's idea of good manners is handing me the Kleenex box after he cums on my face.

(She stares impassively at CURTIS, who looks stricken. A cat meows.)

RUTH

(Sticking her head into the room, shaking a box of cat food at SUZY)

No no! Stress Kleenex not cum. Kleenex is a funnier word!

(She disappears back into a chorus of meows.)

SUZY

Ok. Yeah. You're right. *(To CURTIS)* Someday I'm going to go on tour and I can get ashtrays from motels and all the comedy clubs.

(She goes to a shelf, covered with ashtrays, and selects one, returning to CURTIS.)

SUZY

This one is my favorite. See? It's a green glass ashtray that we found when we moved in here. See? It was broken in half and someone glued it back together. It's like a broken heart that's been mended but it still has a scar. At least that's what I like to project onto it, you know?

(CURTIS takes the ashtray and withdraws three fat joints from it. He smiles.)

CURTIS

It's beautiful. Um.. How much.

SUZY

(Returning to her ashtrays; distracted)

I'll let you have all three for thirty.

(CURTIS's face freezes. A cat meows.)

CURTIS

Are you serious? I mean, it's three joints. That's, maybe five bucks tops.

SUZY

Like I said, there's a drought on. See this one? It's a blue glass ashtray. I don't remember where I got it. I love to look through it on a hot day thought. Something about looking through blue glass on a hot day is cooling. Don't you think?

CURTIS

Hang on. You telling me that you want thirty bucks for three joints?

SUZY
It's real good weed.

CURTIS
Is it kind bud or what?

SUZY
Ok. Yeah.

CURTIS
So it is kind bud?

SUZY
Yeah.

CURTIS
(Looking at the joints hungrily)
Suzy, twenty bucks is all I got. I can't spend it on three joints. That's like spending a hundred bucks for a six-pack of Pepsi..

SUZY
Well, would you pay a hundred bucks for a six-pack of Pepsi if you were in a desert and dying of thirst?

(CURTIS thinks this over. She has a point. He looks at the joints in his hand. He dips into his pocket and pulls out his money. He thinks hard about it. Cats meow in the background. Suzy is anticipating the money. We can see that Curtis feels he has no other choice. RUTH suddenly enters. As SUZY turns her head, CURTIS jumps, knocking the green glass ashtray out of her hand.)

CURTIS
Oh My God I'm so sorry!

RUTH
Well we're out of cat litter.

(Stunned, Suzy drops to her knees and tries dully to reassemble the shattered ashtray. CURTIS joins her, stricken. Silently her hands her the twenty dollars. She gives him one joint. He doesn't protest.)

RUTH
(Hysterical)
What did you do? WHAT DID YOU DO!

CURTIS

I guess under the circumstances I should go.

(SUZY is silent. She is collecting the pieces of her broken ashtray.)

RUTH

You come back sometime when it's not so late. We'll fix you dinner.

(RUTH pulls a clump of cat hair from the corner of her mouth.)

CURTIS

It was an accident.

RUTH

(Sarcastically)

It always is.

(CURTIS is gone. RUTH lights another cigarette.)

RUTH

Hurry up and get another ashtray. Shirley said the next one would be by at seven.

SUZY

(Slowly, not looking up)

Do you really think I should emphasize Kleenex over cum? Cum's a funny word too, isn't it mama?

(RUTH doesn't answer. She is coughing and the cats are howling. There is a knock at the door.)

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene Four

Psychic Pillow Talk

(Another knock in the dark. Focus shifts to the bedroom, where a blue light rises on the silhouette of a couple in bed. They respond to the sound of the knock.)

WOMAN
What was that?

MAN
(Sleepily)
Just the radiator knocking.

WOMAN
Are you awake?

MAN
Yeah. How did you know?

WOMAN
I'm psychic. I can tell.

MAN
Yeah right. You heard my breathing.

WOMAN
Okay then. Think of a color.

MAN
Blue.

WOMAN
Don't tell me! Think it in your head and send it to me and I'll tell you what it is.

MAN
Okay. I'm thinking of a color.

WOMAN
Blue.

MAN
No.

WOMAN
Red

MAN
No.

WOMAN
Green.

MAN
Uh-uh.

WOMAN

Are you really, truly concentrating?

MAN

Yes. I am.

WOMAN

Pink!

MAN

Nope.

WOMAN

Purple!

MAN

Sorry.

WOMAN

Yellow?

MAN

No.

WOMAN

Um..Oh! Orange?

MAN

Yep. It was orange.

WOMAN

See! I told you I was psychic!

LIGHTS DOWN

Interlude #3

The Bathroom

(In the dark we hear GLENN's prerecorded voice.)

Ah the bathroom! It is the kind of room you want to read in. It is the kind of room that stays cool in the summer while the rest of the apartment bakes. It is the kind of room that stays perpetually blue in the darkness of night because of the high skylight above the bathtub. It is the kind of room that you can puke in and fall asleep on the floor without worrying about bugs. It is the kind of room that flickers in candlelight while the candle's flame stands still.

Scene five

An Interview with the Walls Part 2 : The Conclusion Of The Species

(The lights rise on GLENN who is in the apartment. He comes from the bathroom, a shirtsleeve rolled up past his elbow and his arm covered with some sort of slime. Wordlessly he walks into the kitchen and reemerges with a glass jar. He goes back into the bathroom and we hear sounds. A toilet flushes. Finally he comes out with...something..in the jar, floating in murky water.)

GLENN

Fuckin' people. Makes you despair of the human race. Look at this. It's a sin.

WALL #1

One time I saw a guy flush a pizza down that toilet.

WALL #2

I remember that.

WALL #1

The pizza?

WALL #2

No, the..object Glenn just pulled out. Bad business.

GLENN

(Wistfully)

Plenty of tears..

WALL #3

You should have seen what I seen. Some of them shove their beds right up against me. You can't help but watch. I try to think of other things. Like England. My woodline goes back to England. My forespores were brought out here by Lewis and Clark..

WALL #1

Please spare us your pedigree lecture. We're all descended from fine stock and let's just leave it at that.

GLENN

Still, this was wrong. (pause) How many people died in here?

WALL# 2

It's not just people Glenn. There are deaths here everyday. Entire extinctions. There's also been births and rebirths.

WALL #1

Among the many tenants of Apartment Number 9 there were millions who never paid any rent. One of these, the very last Northwestern Bing Tick Flea, took his final walk among the deep and splintery grooves of the wooden floor during the windy fall of 1954. The living room of the apartment was his universe.

WALL #3

The very last Northwestern Bing Tick Flea was the ultimate product of several millennia of Tick Flea history. It was a rich and glorious history full of risings and fallings, wars, beauty and its own sublime mythology. The Tick Fleas, one of the most intelligent species ever to walk the earth, (they were the first species to recognize and study pandimensional sound holes and the troubling humor of dirt) had built up their civilization to the point of utter invisibility when a ferocious war broke out against the Rocky Mountain Spider Mites.

WALL #1

The Tick Fleas, ordinarily a noble and peaceable race warred with the Spider Mites, a surly and presumptuous species, over custody of a secondhand velveteen couch owned by Mike Arnold, a typewriter repairman who lived briefly here in Apartment Number 9.

WALL #2

After a terrible battle inside the middle cushion, the Tick Fleas were wiped out in one fell swoop by the big butt of Mike Arnold's girlfriend Dedrie. The Spider Mites rejoiced with epic celebrations which Mike and Dedrie mistook for radiator sounds, while the lone surviving Tick Flea staggered away from the scene of battle, defeated, but not yet broken.

WALL #1

As he made his way through the sharp canyons and the dust grain boulders of the wooden floor, the lone Northwestern Bing Tick Flea did not realize that he was the very last of his species. He assumed there were other survivors, just like him, who were even now rallying to the mattress in the bedroom, where new, unseen territory awaited. He and the others would be pioneers and initiate a new era of the proud Tick Flea history. Perhaps he would on day be hailed as a hero; he would find a new mate and replenish their numbers until the day of reckoning came against the detested Spider Mites.

WALL #3

But he was wrong.
There was only him.

WALL #2

And just before the hard, scaly foot of Dedrie made his species extinct, he wondered about the bedroom and what the future had in store for him and for the first time he could see out the windows into the sky which to him was just an abstract thing without any clouds.

GLENN

Wow.

WALL #1

That jar stinks Glenn.

GLENN

I know. Ghosts always stink.

WALL #3

Don't get me started on those fuckin' ghosts.

WALL #2

Always whining and moaning. They need to get a life.

WALL #1

Look, let's not talk about the ghosts. It only encourages them..

(The toilet flushes. GLENN looks toward it, a little surprised. A group of clowns emerges and sits in a circle)

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE FIVE

and what exactly is the dream And What exactly is the joke

(The lights come up on the living room of apartment number nine revealing a circle of clowns.)

GALE

I'm thinking of changing my nose size. It's something that's been on my mind for a while. I realize it's a serious step for a clown. The nose I have now is a fine red one that I made myself out of a ping-pong ball..

NATHAN

Get a Schnozmeister. Those Germans know their clown noses.

GINCHIE

The new Japanese ones are wired to keep your nose warm on cold days. I even saw one that had a little miniature door open and a hologram of a bird comes out. Four hundred bucks.

MISSY

I just want to say how refreshing it is to talk this way to people who actually understand you. Ginchie, thank you for letting us use your apartment for our clown support group.

MERLIN

It's hard to be a clown in a world full of non-clowns. It's hard to live a life so misunderstood.

NATHAN

No use feeling sorry for ourselves. Our subtle art is unappreciated by the masses, but our core following is loyal. That's the important thing.

GALE

(Unironically)

I'm just sick and tired of people laughing at me.

GINCHIE

Last week, I had this gig where they expected me to do summersaults and pratfalls! I said “Whoa man,” I’m an Auguste clown. We don’t do physical comedy. They looked at me like they didn’t know what the hell I was talking about..

NATHAN

They don’t realize hat we specialize.

GINCHIE

I mean, who’s going to pay my insurance? President Nixon? Hardly.

MISSY

You could learn yoga. That would help you take a fall.

MERLIN

Amateur night! Pratfalls are for silent movies! Pantomime is where it’s at now. It’s universal. You can tour other countries..

GALE

Do you guys like me new shoes?

NATHAN

Very fine.

MISSY

Nice red leather.

GALE

They cost me three hundred and seventy-five but they’re worth it.

GINCHIE

Are they Italian?

GALE

(Proudly)

Swiss.

NATHAN

Listen. I have to get to a dogfight. Can we please just read the minutes?

GINCHIE

Gale, do you have anything?

GALE

(Putting on a pair of oversized garish reading glasses and reading from a paper)

Well let's see. Clown Support Meeting was called to order on March 12, 1973..all present were Ginchie, Gale, Merlin, Missy and Nathan..Well I think everything is going according to plan. If we continue to subtly infiltrate our values on a child level our indoctrinate rate will double..

GINCHIE

I find kids who want to be clowns but heir parents talk them out of it. It's like they don't trust us. It's like clowning is not an honorable and important profession. It's as if..

NATHAN

They know.

MISSY

We need to turn that around. We need to pull in younger and younger members. We need them ready for the Senate and congress twenty years down the road. Remember what Garen Bunch wrote..

MERLIN

Let's not get ahead of ourselves here. Garen Bunch started all this thirty years ago with the idea that it would always move at a snail's pace. He recognized that the public would resist clown rule at first. We may not even live to see it, but we'll be remembered forever. And this building that he erected will become a shrine to clowns everywhere..

GINCHIE

The thing is we have to do it exactly the way Garen Bunch laid it out. Geometric. Like the bricks in this building. Remember, he was a builder.

(There is a thoughtful pause.)

GALE

I feel like Thomas Jefferson.

MISSY

(Looking around)

I still can't believe you actually got an apartment here Ginchie.

GINCHIE

Yes, I feel so honored. It's a strange place though. A lot of room though to practice summersaults. The toilet flushes on it's own..

(At this very moment, the toilet flushes. The clowns fall silent.)

MERLIN

(Whispering)
The prophecy..

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE SIX

My Apartment

(From the darkness, the toilet flushes again and a spotlight comes up with LYNDA inside it. She is ragged and ethereal. A lost soul. Throughout this scene the apartment remains in half-light, with light radiating around LYNDA.)

LYNDA

Just a second. Let me light my candle.

They took all my stuff and they threw it out into the hall. Then they arrested me. Said I hadn't paid rent in two years, but I know I did. I can prove it too. They stuck me in a psyche ward because I hear the voices. They persecuted Joan of Arc too. So I came back.

I came back. My name is Linda and this is my apartment. It was my sanctuary. They told me I shouldn't even be here at all. But it's mine. What they did to me was unfair. I have a receipt. I have to stay here until I find a place for my things. My whole life is in here. No one can listen to my thoughts while I'm in here. The walls are thick and filled with dirt from when they built the building. So the transmit ions can't get through.

There's mice here. And spiders. And fleas. Big ones. I don't kill them though. That's wrong. But I wonder if they're real mice and spiders and fleas or... something else.

You wouldn't have known me a year ago. But things changed and I can't figure out why. Like everything just shifted and left me here stranded. I don't recognize anything in this world anymore. I don't know who I am. I just don't understand. I'm ready to forsake my human form. I'm ready to transform myself into a spider or flea. Or a bird. Yes! A bird. I can fly away then. I can build a nest. I'll be a bird.

I started out as one thing and then all of a sudden I'm trapped in an alternate world where everything looks the same but it's all different. It's all different. You're looking at me. I don't know if you're robots or if I'm in a zoo or what. When did it all suddenly turn into this? Can someone please tell me? It isn't fair what they did to me. I paid. I have a receipt.

I was a teacher for a year until I went to England. I was assaulted in England. So we're not talking about that.

My apartment is my spiritual center. The vibes were very chaotic here before I came. Someone was born in this apartment and someone died in this apartment. I don't know who. That's just what the old woman who used to live here told me when I moved in. She lived here with her husband. He died here. I had a little purification ceremony with some candles and some wild sage I found growing through the asphalt in the Safeway parking lot. It was a cleansing ritual and do you know that right in the middle of it, this little bird flew into my window. It was so spiritual.

I'm a very self-sufficient person. I enjoy benefiting from the fruits of my existence rather than the labor of strangers. Walden by Thoreau is my bible. It's so hard in this world. But I try. I try to keep my life as simple as possible. It's not because I can't handle it, it's because.. Well I don't know really... I grow my own vegetables on the windowsill. Right now I have a bell pepper. I raised it from a single seed. It's green with a red spot. When I eat it I will mourn. I really like bell peppers. And I make my own bread. See?

I put all my love and my soul into my baking. It's a special thing. A heart thing. Do you know what that is? It's something, a thought or a feeling or even a gesture that is pure. From the heart. One year for Christmas I dressed up as Raggedy Ann and I went around to all the people I felt needed an awakening. It took me three months to make the costume. I went to the Goodwill and bought some clothes and altered them. I had a denim jumper and..and..I painted my face and had a dyed red mop head of hair and I went out and I presented them, heart people, with a loaf of my bread. Some accepted it in the spirit it was given but others were confused and afraid. They didn't know how to react. I never said a word. Raggedy Ann is silent. It was the giving of the bread that healed.

I wrote it all into a little book which Steve printed for me down at the print shop. I work there sometimes collating and stapling chiropractic tests. You have to pay five hundred dollars to take the tests to become a chiropractor. They're easy tests to pass. Believe me. We used to quiz each other. But Steve put a stop to it. Steve locked me in a room without windows because the tests are very high security. Some desperate chiropractic student could come and take us all hostage. Don't laugh. It's happened. I don't let it affect my spirit. I see it as a soul challenge. My mind is able to fly above the small locked room.

I was a teacher.

I want to talk to you class about the importance of poetry. I know what a drag it is to read poems three hundred years old because you think to yourself, what does a three hundred year old poem have to do with me. Well the answer is, nothing. It has nothing to do with you. But look at it this way. When you read a three hundred year old poem you are bringing back to life a poet's deepest felt emotions and beliefs. By reading that three hundred year old poem you resurrect the dead. The only true way for the dead to speak to the living is not through writing. But through reading.

It was in this apartment though that I started to realize the truth about everything. When the people next door moved in. They brought a color television and I could hear it, surging through the walls, its tendrils trying to pierce the secrets of everyone who it

touched. I believe color televisions are evil. I believe that **they** watch **you**; they follow you wherever you go. They hypnotize you into another state of consciousness. It happened to me. When those people moved in.

Ignore that. They knock on my door all the time. I never answer it. They'll kill me. For my apartment. I don't know why they want my apartment. I can't figure it out. I've lived here longer than any of them. But they all discuss me. I never go out so I deprive them of their opportunity to harass me to my face. They try to drive me away. Just yesterday I found a newspaper at my door.

I don't subscribe to the newspaper! Why would one be by my door? Someone must have put it there. But why? I never touched it. It's just another mind game. A challenge from the universe. A test of my strength and faith. But I'm strong. I never touched it and after it had been there for seven weeks it suddenly was gone one morning. What does that tell you? What if it was a bomb? Anything can happen in this alternate world we're in now. Look at me. You're all staring at me. But I live here. This is my apartment.

Just ignore it. They'll go away. I hope it's not Jim. Remember Jim? He told everyone he was my boyfriend but we were..we..I never really..He was just too insensitive and his glass eye was very disconcerting. He would tap it with a pen sometimes. And when he drank beer, his good eye got redder and redder but the glass eye stayed white..I don't see Jim anymore except when I need something from him. He's too physical. I told him that because of..

He just pushed me and pushed me. His eyes got red and white red and white and he would hypnotize me until he got what he...we went to the reservoir so I could read him some Haikus about our relationship. It was my birthday and he gave me two red balloons. I told him how symbolic I thought that was because red represented anger so I released the balloons over the reservoir and Jim just threw rocks at them. He wouldn't even acknowledge the symbolism. Sometimes I..I think about throwing rocks out my window at people.

With everyone here listening in to my brain, I have discovered a whole new way of projecting my poetry. If they can read my mind then what they will be reading are my poems. Thousands of them. I call it mind publishing. See I thought if they were going to invade me, my mind and soul then maybe it would work both ways and I could use my poems to invade them. To help them to the light.

Jim you shouldn't have taken that liberty with me. You abused our relationship unspeakably and I have a Haiku to read you about my feelings..What? You don't care about my feelings? How can you say that Jim? What? How can you say **I** don't care about **your** feelings? You never **tell** me any of your feelings! Why don't you put it in a Haiku? Don't worry about the syllable count..

Just ignore that knocking. It's probably someone come to kill me. To kill my spirit. But I'm still here! They can send all the police and Gestapo they want to try and get me out.

Hello Steve.. I don't need anyone checking up on me.. I'm just fine by myself. Why are you really here? No, I don't need anything. No, it's dark because I don't have electricity anymore. I don't need it. I have kerosene lamps and candles and they do just fine thank you.

No you can't come in, the place is a mess. Sorry. My stuff? You know why it's out there Steve. But I have a receipt. What? No, you can't see it. No, it's in a safe place.

No, I'm fine. Just a bloody nose.

I don't think I've been acting any different lately. It's you. All of you. Why did they do this to me Steve? Why would they put that microchip in my teeth? Why do I listen when they try to tell me what to do?

I don't want to come back.

A doctor? What kind of doctor?

What for.

I see.

I see.

No, I don't think I've changed. You're the one who changed. What about the people who really need help Steve?

I don't recognize this world anymore. They want to take my apartment, but I live here.

I can't come back to work for you. I can't go back into that little room with no window. You're the one Steve. You're the one who locks me in there. Do they make you do it? We've known each other for twenty years Steve. Since right after I went to England. Do they pay you to let them observe me like that? Is that why you come over here with poison food and fake money? Yes it is fake money! You think I don't know? It doesn't even look like a ten-dollar bill! I know what a ten-dollar bill looks like... Redesigned them?

Is that what they told you to say Steve?

No Steve, it's just a bloody nose. I got it from the people next door. They beat me. I don't know why. I can't call the police. They'll take me away from here. I can turn into a bird though. I can come back as a bird. Then I'll lose my apartment...No, I'm fine. Really. I mean, I'm not fine. But what can I do? You can't help me. You're trying to destroy me.

But I'm strong and I'm resolute. My life has taught me how to deal with hardship and loss. I rely on the universe to protect me, Steve, not you. You made your deal with the devil, but they can't have me.

Because I'm still here.

(The spotlight goes out leaving LYNDA standing alone in the blue light, diminished and spent.)

Lights Down

Interlude #3

The Bedroom room

(In the dark we hear GLENN's prerecorded voice.)

There is in existence an oil painting of one corner of the bedroom. It is dark with greens and blues and shows just a corner of the room right by the doorway to the bathroom, and it shows the corner of an art deco dresser with round mirror and atop it is a green glass wine bottle with a candle in it and the candle is burning and the flame is reflected on the round mirror on the dresser illuminating the corner of the bedroom; its blue white and green striped wallpaper, the wood trim shiny with night. It is a pedestrian painting except for its use of color to evoke mood. What is interesting about it is the fact that it shows the water stain on the ceiling; it shows the door to the entryway closet, it shows a moment and a mood in a room where generations have dreamed in their sleep. The name of the painting is "Portrait of a Man Smiling."

Scene Seven

The Werewolf Of Tears

(GLENN is sweeping the floor, readying it for a new occupant. The TENANT from before walks in, nervously. GLENN ignores him.)

GLENN

Hey Glenn, the door was open..ah..I see your getting ready for a new renter..

(GLENN does not respond. We don't know if he even hears the guy.)

TENANT

(Nervously)

..uh yeah..anyway..uh..

GLENN

(Not looking up)

I know all about it. I have to order a part. Be here next week.

TENANT

Great. Great. That's great. Well thanks Glenn. Thanks a lot man. Hey stop by for a beer or something sometime..

(GLENN stops and looks at the man finally. His stare is blank but ominous. He holds the stare and the TENANT's confused eyes for longer than is comfortable. The TENANT shrinks from it, and skulks out the door without another word. GLENN's manner shifts and he becomes his NARRATOR persona. He casually talks to the audience as he works around the room.)

GLENN

I'm attuned to the comings and goings of my tenants. I sit in my rent-free apartment and I watch them through my peephole. Like say, Janna, from number eleven leaves for work. I am not only a werewolf of tears but I am the keeper of the keys. I watch her drive away and I walk down the hallway, my keys jingling and I go into her apartment. Number 11. I check it out, make sure everything is working properly. Then I immerse myself. I sit on her couch. I pet her cat. I touch her things. I lie on her bed. I imagine myself living there with her and my heart blooms. What could she say? I'm here to fix things, but no one knows what I'm really trying to fix..

(He wrings out his mop.)

GLENN

Some apartments I won't go into. There was a man with epilepsy in number nineteen who I found one day having a foaming seizure at the top of the stairs. I cradled his head in my lap and spoke softly to him until the ambulance arrived, but he never says anything to me when we pass in the hall. There were no tears either. No one sees my good deeds..

(A girl, VIOLET carrying a vacuum enters and stops short when she sees GLENN.)

VIOLET

Oh..Hi. I'm moving in here..

(GLENN tries to stare her down, but it doesn't work with her. She smiles and extends her hand. He returns the smile in a tight little way and takes her hand.)

GLENN

I'm Glenn. I'm the custodian here. In the strictest sense of the word. I care for the building. I'm not a janitor. I'm not a handyman. I'm a ..

VIOLET

Custodian. Right. Nice to meet you Glenn.

(She smiles again and GLENN seems flustered. An older man, DOUG enters, carrying boxes. He seems mad at the VIOLET.)

DOUG

Goddamnit Violet! I told you not to leave the car door open like that. Why the hell don't you think for a change..

(He sees GLENN.)

GLENN

I'm Glenn. I'm the..

VIOLET

He's the custodian.

DOUG

You mean the janitor?

(DOUG brushes by with his load and goes into the bedroom. GLENN gathers up his things. He walks out but a light is still on him. The light is also on DOUG and VIOLET, who start to arrange things in their new home.)

VIOLET

You shouldn't have called him a janitor. He doesn't like it.

DOUG

I don't give a goddamn what he likes. He's a fucking janitor. Give me that box.

(VIOLET hands him a box.)

VIOLET

He seems so sad..

DOUG

Yeah..well he is. You stay away from him, hear me? I know all about guys like him.

VIOLET

I bet he's okay.

DOUG

(Sharply)

I said stay away from him!

VIOLET

(Stung)

Okay. Okay. Where's the sheets?

DOUG

How should I know. Find them.

(Silently she obeys. As they continue to unpack, the lights go down on them until they are lit only in a low blue. The light on GLENN intensifies.)

GLENN

(To Audience)

There was something in the way she looked at me. Like there was no fear in her. Like she knew that I would give her no reason for fear. She looked right into me. She looks so young. I catch hold of myself in a mirror sometimes. Fat and bald and gray..it's not really me. I wonder how that guy got such a young wife. What does she see in him? I'm as good as he is. She should see me. I would take her tears..

(The lights start to fade on VIOLET and the MAN.)

GLENN

At night sometimes I flip through my past like a person reading an old magazine. I think about my ex-wife, who claimed she understood why I needed to lick her tears, but in the end she called me a freak and ran away from me. She ran away because she knew with my bad knees I could never follow. .

(The lights are completely down on everything but GLENN, on the edge of the stage.)

GLENN

It's been six years since I've tasted tears. It isn't a sexual thing or a fetish. It's about completeness. It's about Life..

(The light goes down on GLENN and comes up on the apartment.)

GLENN

Apartment number nine is always playing several different lives at the same time. The past and the present and the future. They run concurrently with one another. Time has no meaning there.

(He snaps his finger.)

GLENN

(Voice only)

It is 1959, one of the coldest winters in Semeant's history, but that didn't prevent the people from Eaton County from rocking. The Winter Dance Party shook the rafters of the Beaver Convention Center even though the performers were miserable and flu laden..

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE EIGHT

It Doesn't Matter Anymore

(Three men enter apartment number nine. They are dressed in the styles of the 1950's. One of them looks just like Buddy Holly. They make themselves comfortable.)

CHRIS

Hey I want to thank you guys again. It was a great show. Probably the best show I ever promoted.

BUDDY

Thanks for having us over to your apartment Chris. Where's that reefer?

TOMMY

I ain't smoking no reefer.

BUDDY

Pussy. Hey man, where's that reefer?

(They stalk around nervously, looking out the window, opening drawers. Especially Buddy.)

CHRIS

I got it here somewhere..

(He's looking. TOMMY pulls out a bottle and takes a pull. He offers it to BUDDY.)

BUDDY

No thanks. I want to enjoy the reefer. My ulcer..

(TOMMY shrugs.)

BUDDY

C'mon Tommy! You got to try it man! It's way out! Me and Little Richard smoked it all through England man..

TOMMY

I'll stick to the rotgut Junior.

BUDDY

(Menacingly)

Who you calling Junior?

(CHRIS emerges with a bottle but no reefer. He hands the bottle to TOMMY who takes a drink. TOMMY offers his bottle to CHRIS who takes a drink. BUDDY is impatient.)

BUDDY

Didn't you find it yet?

CHRIS

I can't remember my stash. Don't worry. It's here somewhere. Dynamite reefer man. I got it last year in New York City.

BUDDY

I live there now you know. I love it.

TOMMY

You should come back to Texas.

BUDDY

Fuck Texas. *(Pause)* I didn't mean that Tommy. I'm just riled.

(He finally accepts a drink of the booze. CHRIS walks around, looking for reefer.)

CHRIS

I really appreciate you all playing in this weather. I know it wasn't completely full but it's pretty good for January. Where you all headed next?

BUDDY

Iowa.

CHRIS

Jesus.

BUDDY

I know.

TOMMY

Nope. No reefer for me.

BUDDY

I bet Waylon would smoke it with me. If he hadn't took off with that chick.

TOMMY

(Annoyed)

What's with you man? You got all strange on us. Ever since you got a little taste you changed. You're more hyper now, smoking reefers and dressing weird. And your teeth are all white..it unnerves a man..

BUDDY

(Smugly)

So what.

TOMMY

(Drinking)

I know. Okay. I'll smoke some reefers.

CHRIS

Maybe it's in the bedroom..

(He goes into the bedroom. As he looks for reefer he talks loudly to TOMMY and BUDDY. TOMMY sits drinking, while BUDDY flips through a pile of records.)

BUDDY

Hey this is a good one. Nelson Olmstead reads Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven and Other Selections..let's play this one when we get stoned..

CHRIS

(From the other room)

..sorry the place is in such a state of bachelor disrepair. I only lived here for three months. I ran for city council last November and I lost. I was the youngest person..well anyway being new to the area I haven't really sorted out my living arrangements. Actually I prefer apartment living. Especially when I'm promoting shows like this. It's a 24-hour a day job. I know the locals think I'm weird; a forty-year-old jive talking stranger from St Louis running for city council and wearing sunglasses at night..

(He finds the reefer!)

CHRIS

Got it! Three reefers in my green glass ashtray from the Meridian Ballroom in New Orleans!

(He re enters. They sit around and CHRIS lights the reefer. He takes a drag and hands it to BUDDY. BUDDY takes a deep hit like a seasoned pro. He hands it to TOMMY who also takes a deep hit like a seasoned pro. BUDDY is surprised but knowing.)

BUDDY

(Exhaling)

I did this ever night at the Paramount. Me and Jerry Lee Lewis.

TOMMY

(Sagging)

That fuckin' bus is about to kill me.

BUDDY

Don't worry I got something in mind..

CHRIS

Did you find a record?

BUDDY

Yeah. This.

(He hands CHRIS the Poe album. CHRIS makes a face.)

CHRIS

That one is all scratched.

BUDDY

I don't care son. Play it. Let's hear that poem. The Raven. I dig that line. Nevermore.

TOMMY

(Sarcastically)

Why don't you put it in a song?

BUDDY

Maybe I might.

CHRIS

Well it won't play. It's too scratched.

(Without another word BUDDY stands up and strides into the bathroom, taking the reefer with him.)

CHRIS

What's the matter with him?

TOMMY

He'll get over it. *(Awkward Pause)* Good reefer.

CHRIS

Yeah.. *(Notices TOMMY looking around)* What you looking at?

TOMMY

Oh the walls and ceiling. You know. Ever since I was a little kid I've memorized every room I ever been in. It's just something I do.

CHRIS

Not me. I want to forget some of the rooms I been in.

TOMMY

Yeah, well like this room here. It's a nice room I'm sure, but to me it represents a kind of strange time. It evokes an emotion, you follow? So I memorize what it looked like so later on, say maybe a few years from now, I can think of this room and the memory will be vivid and I can call that emotion right back up. It's useful for an artist.

CHRIS

Holy shit. I never thought about it like that.

(CHRIS looks around his, seeing the apartment or the first time.)

CHRIS

Kind of makes you think. Don't it.

TOMMY

Yeah. Like what all has happened in this very room?

CHRIS

Kind of makes you think. *(Pause)* What's he doing in there?

(Before TOMMY can answer, BUDDY comes striding out, capping a pen.)

BUDDY

Let's go Tommy.

TOMMY

That fuckin' bus is killin' me.

BUDDY

Well maybe we'll rent us a plane. How about that?

TOMMY

Shit then. Now you're talking.

CHRIS

Here I'll drive you boys back to the Convention Center so you can get the bus. Let me find my keys..Hey Buddy? Can I get your autograph before you leave?

BUDDY

I got my gloves on Chris. I got to protect my hands. I'm a guitar player.

TOMMY

You can have my autograph.

BUDDY

I'll send you something better. And I'll sign your Edgar Allan Poe record next time I come out.

CHRIS

Okay. Let's go. Jesus it's cold.

BUDDY

(Looking around)

Hey you know this is a pretty big place. Sturdy walls. I'm getting to where I know apartments now..

(They exit.)

LIGHTS DOWN

Interlude #4

The Kitchen

The kitchen is a place of resonances. It houses the entire residue, both physical and emotional, and it is the heart of Apartment Number 9. The walls are oily and seasoned with years of spicy cooking. Another skylight tunnel shaft pours down a hazy light above the stove, but the wire mesh windows are grease coated and the quality of the light they allow in is like dirty varnish on an old painting. The colors of the kitchen are muted and tame, where once they have been bold. The refrigerator is forty years old, a large pink monstrosity that hums and whines and leaves puddles of its piss on the floor like any senior citizen with a leaky condenser. The stove is carbon filled with flakes of burnings past. The cabinets are all painted glossy black, done by a man named Tim Haddican in honor of his finding a glob of sperm that wasn't his dripped on the floor by his wife Gina. At night, lit only by the suety glow of the full moon through the skylight, the kitchen becomes a place of mood and smell.

And mice.

Scene Nine

An Interview With The Walls Part 3: The Stain

(The LIGHTS remain down for a moment and rise on GLENN, sitting with his jar. In the jar floats a sickly white blob in what looks like root beer.)

GLENN

(Looking in the jar with the light shining through it)

What about all the screwing you guys have seen?

WALL #1

After a while you get numb to it.

WALL #3

I used to get turned on, but what am I going to do about it? I already got leakage problems. No, now it's just another thing.

WALL #2

Yeah. Like watching the spider or feeling the worms burrowing into the dirt that fills us.

WALL #1

It's not really our nature to be judgmental Glenn. You know that. We're really more about structure.

WALL #2

Keeping the roof one. Stuff like that.

GLENN

So the things you've witness haven't made that much impression on you?

WALL #1

Listen, you have to understand. We're porous. Our sensory apparatus is different than yours. We absorb a lot of things. Humidity. Smoke. Breath. Emotion. Sometimes it takes a while to air that shit out of us.

WALL #3

We don't pay attention so much to the people here as much as their emissions. The thing you don't realize is that we don't deal with the life spans of people.

WALL #2

We deal with the life spans of emotions.

GLENN

(Rubbing the floor with his shoe)

How did this stain get here?

WALL #1

(Adopting a scholarly tone)

An interesting fact about Apartment Number 9 is that no babies were ever conceived here. This was not due to any one thing, but rather a convergence of things which made the creation and conception of life impossible in that particular place. All over earth there are small vortexes of negativity which prevent the acts of positivism taking place. Sexual energy is a fluid, living writhing thing which can only successfully thrive in the most hospitable of places.

WALL #3

Apartment Number 9 is not one of those places.

WALL #2

(Taking up the narrative)

But be assured that there was a lot of sex there throughout the years. It was mostly of the lonely, solitary kind, the kind that required hours and hours of images and imaginings, longings and yearnings that hung like a miasma between the walls. Fantasies which start out strong and vivid and fade with each use into indistinct shadows and silhouettes collecting like condensing droplets of water in the space occupied by the high ceilinged rooms of Apartment Number 9.

GLENN

All I asked about was this stain..

WALL #1
Context Glenn.

(The lights dim. A couple, lit only in silhouette take up position in the bedroom. All we can make out is their backlit shapes as the walls continue to tell their story. The couple perform a series of tableaux synchronized with the wall's narrative.)

WALL #3

The two-person kind of sex was also represented, but it was a different kind of residue; more like a sweet lingering smell than a vague troubled feeling. Oh yes, the walls were drenched with sex throughout the years, both good and bad, some of it celestial, some of it common. The emotion is what lingered, like the echo of a big bang.

WALL #2

There was Ben and Jean who enjoyed sex as if it were their favorite buffet restaurant meal. They always began hungrily and ended sated.

WALL #1

There was Alan and Susan who liked to experiment with positions around the apartment. It was they who broke the door hinge on the bedroom. Alan once broke a chair he was sitting on while Susan rode him. He broke it by the flexing of his legs. As Susan bucked, he tensed and released his legs around the feet of the chair until all three of them because fused on motion and something had to give and the chair gave first.

WALL #3

There was Jimmy and Tanna whose lovemaking grew ferocious after Tanna was shocked by a fizzing Christmas tree light bulb. The jolt did something to her libido which Jimmy didn't understand and halfway feared. Her quests for orgasms frightened him, especially when she demanded that he put her finger in a light socket as she came.

GLENN

Jesus. What a bunch of freaks.

WALL #1

The sex that left the most disturbed vestiges was the sex that broke apart a marriage and blew its fragments all over Apartment Number 9. Tim and Gina were young marrieds who had just begun to take each other for granted when Gina became fixated on Tim's friend Jerry. Gina's overactive imagination and her overblown sense of entitlement led her down a dark path, where she flirted and rubbed against Jerry until one day she found herself alone with him; at her own devising. She had dressed to seduce but told herself it was just a tingly, harmless game. Just flirting.

WALL #2

It was still all a tingly harmless flirting game when Jerry bent her over the table and fucked her. She felt like her head was about to explode into flowers but the game ended

when Jerry came inside her without a rubber and she ran into the bathroom crying, not being able to take it all back, holding her crotch so the sperm would not drop out.

WALL #3

The sperm did drop out, in a small puddle which was slipped on a half-hour later by Tim. It was a terrible scene in Apartment Number 9 and the raw feelings of betrayal and shame were soaked into the walls and the floors like a poison gas. Gina could never bring herself to tell Tim that the glob of sperm belonged to his best friend, so she created an encounter to save what was left of his ego, hoping that this one little detail would enable her to escape his abandonment.

WALL #1

In his grief Tim watched as every day the stain on the floor grew more pronounced and obvious. Finally he left Gina with no message other than to paint the kitchen cabinets glossy black, thinking Gina would understand, but she didn't, and Tim went on to live with his best friend Jerry, both men doing their best to forget about the mysterious and painful ways of women.

(The lights come back up full. The couple goes off.)

GLENN

Wait a minute. How do you know he moved in with Jerry?

WALL #3

We don't. We just made that part up.

WALL #2

It brings it around to a better completeness, don't you think?

GLENN

(Thoughtfully)

Yeah..

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene Ten

I Will

(A grating, sawing type sound can be heard. Not loudly but as if through a few walls or floors. The lights come up on a counter in front of the stage, off of the apartment set. A sign on the counter says, "Welcome To The Nearly New Shoppe." Behind the counter is a lady of a certain age, heavily made up, almost clown-like, with a helmet of fake hair. She addresses the audience as if it were a customer.)

DOROTHY

This new building scares me. It's so big compared to my last consignment store. I don't like being next to Padre's House of Popcorn and The Syrup Hut. Those people never come in.. What's your name honey?

(She listens.)

Violet? Like the color or the flower. They are? I thought it was different. Anyway look around. See if there's anything you like..

(Pause.)

I'm still not used to the noises from upstairs either. Hear that? Like a saw or something. Apartments up there. My last store was in a one-story building. But then I had leaks to contend with. It's always something.

(She listens.)

What? Ashtrays? Yeah I have a few. Over there by the window. I have curtain rings in them. Real nice glass ashtrays. Cut glass..

(The sound, which has been in the background, suddenly stops.)

Shh! Hear that? It stopped! I wonder what that sound is. I wonder what they do up there? Hear that? Someone's walking around..

(She examines something.)

That's a candy dish honey. Not an ashtray. Try over in the corner there..

(Wistfully)

When things get slack here in the store I find myself listening to the ceiling, waiting for the next strange sound. The sound of strangers living their lives. It thrills me in a way. Sometimes I can see their comings and goings and I have faces to speculate about. Oh, it's grand. It's like having my own soap opera.

(The sound starts up again.)

That sound started the first day I was n here. The same time every day. What could they be doing up there? What does it sound like to you? A saw? Some kind of power tool? Anyway, the first few weeks here I started listening for this sound every day. It was the regularity of it that bothered me the most. I know there's no reason to be nervous. It's just a sound. It usually only lasts about ten minutes r so.

(She imitates the sound.)

RrrrRrrRR. Doesn't that sound like something? Is it some kind of saw? If so what are they sawing? Wood? Cheese? Other people? Is it some kind of machinery? If so what is its purpose? Is there something illegal going on? Are they dope fiends? Counterfeiters? White slavers?

(Conspiratorially.)

I admit my curiosity got the better of me. One day I closed the store and ventured into the apartment side of the building. I walked up the large staircase, something not easy for me. I have hip problems you know. The hallway had just been painted a mint green. Looked like a battleship. I could still smell the paint. I oriented myself with where I knew my

store was. I went to the apartment that was right above my store. It was Apartment Number Nine. There was no name on the mailbox. What if a maniac lived there?

(She pauses.)

Then one day the sound did not come. Nor did it come the next day. Or the one after that. For five full days the sound did not come. I was beside myself. I ventured up the stairs again and stood in front of Apartment Number 9 again. I listened. I knew someone was in there because I heard the toilet flush..

(The sound stops.)

Anyway today I'm going back up and I'm going to knock on the door. I'm just going to knock on the door and blurt it all out. Then we'll have a good laugh. But this is really starting to get to me. I've never been a curious person. But this is something I', going to have to know..for myself..I'm going to go up there and just knock..

(She stops.)

Yes that's an ashtray hon. It's green glass..Oh wait. You don't want that one hon. It's broken..

(The sound starts up. DOROTHY's resolve thickens.)

Listen Hon, can you watch the store for me? Just for a minute or two? I'll let you have that candy dish you was looking at for free. Okay? Thanks hon..

(DOROTHY comes from behind the counter. The sound grows louder and somehow more familiar. The lights go down on the counter and come up on the apartment, where a short stubby woman with short hair is vacuuming her floor. She has a cigarette dangling from her mouth and a drink in her hand. She hears a knock at her door. She turns the vacuum off and goes to answer the door.)

Scene Eleven

The Chance Encounter (A Love Story)

(The woman, JANET answers the knock at her door. A drunken middle-aged man, HUGH reels in. JANET is not alarmed by this man coming into her apartment. She blocks his way and he stops, facing her.)

HUGH

This is a fine door and a fine glass doorknob you have and when I saw such a fine door with such a nice big brass number 9 on it I says to myself Hugh, there's some fine understanding people in there who are forgiving and helpful and oh yes, I'm sure of it. I know because I carefully vibed out each door and I know on some level it's wrong to go from door to door asking for money but it also seemed like such a fine idea and that glass doorknob is like a giant diamond jewel and I'm just out celebrating the fact that president Nixon just resigned and...it's my birthday. I'm celebrating my birthday which no one in the world cares about. Not even me. I'm forty-five today but I feel seventy. Bet I look it too..

(All of this is said in a rush, in one breath it seems until HUGH winds down. JANET still stares at him, and takes a sip of her drink and a drag from her cigarette.)

HUGH

Now lets just get one thing straight here. I don't make it a habit of going around into apartment buildings and asking tenants for spare change. But right now I need the money. I need it bad. The beer I drank a couple of hours ago is wearing off and only at thin tissue of drunkenness remains between me and myself. This is intolerable. Especially on my birthday..

(JANET still stares silently at him. She takes another long sip of her drink and turns away, walking into the apartment and sitting on a couch which faces the audience. Since she has left the door open HUGH follows her, sort of sheepishly, but eager for hr t understand him. This seems promising. He sits on the couch beside her and smiles a

terrible maniacal smile at her. She stares him down and he retreats like a spanked dog. She stares into the audience, smoking and watching her "TV". We can hear it.)

TV

It's the Mike Douglas Show with Mike's guests, Ron Palillo, Heavyweight contender Chuck Wepner, Lyricist Bernie Taupin and Musical Guests The Hughes Corporation.

HUGH

Gosh it's nice in here. That golden yellow after noon light. You wouldn't know it was all hot and sticky out there. Feels like..October. Instead of August. Know what I mean honey?

JANET

(Piercing him with a look)

Shh.

HUGH

I just need ten dollars or so because I left my little daughter in a..

JANET

(Suddenly snapping to)

You want money?

(HUGH recoils. This was not the kind of voice he expected from her.)

HUGH

I'm..I'm..I'm..Can you please spare me..I need to get home..I'm stranded..

(JANET returns her attention to the "TV.")

TV

Well Mike I'm looking to break out of the Horshack role and I'm hoping to get more theatrical experience under my belt. Currently I'm rehearsing Strindberg in the Park..

HUGH

(Looking around)

I'm looking at everything. I'm printing it in my mind..Somehow I feel it's important to remember everything about this apartment. It's going to be an important place in my life..

JANET

(Distracted)

Shut the door.

(HUGH obeys. He sniffs the air like a dog. JANET sips her drink.)

HUGH

Ah the sweet reek of Jack Daniels. It makes my stomach ache. It makes my mouth water..
(JANET absently holds out her glass to him. He accepts as if it is a holy libation and drinks greedily from it. He wipes his mouth in satisfaction while handing JANET back the glass.)

HUGH

It's like pouring molten gold down my throat. My toes are tingling. The room's vibrating. It's August. It's my birthday..Oh okay. I know. You want something in return right? Okay I get it. Okay babay. Let's get it on. Ingot what you want right here in my pants..

JANET

I'll give you five dollars.

HUGH

(Stunned)

Five dollars? Okay..

JANET

(Lighting another cigarette)

I'll give you five dollars if you kill yourself.

TV

Well Mike playing Horshack was fun but I feel the need to go back to being a dancing mime..

HUGH

Kill myself!

JANET

(Not taking her eyes off the TV)

I have some pills.

TV

If you think it's butter but it's not! It's Chiffon..

(JANET holds up a five-dollar bill.)

HUGH

(Confused)

Kill myself? It my birthday.

JANET

Seeing you reminds me there's all kinds of weakness in the world.

(She smiles at him for the first time. HUGH laughs nervously and swigs the drink even though the glass is empty. He greedily drinks her whiskey spit down and rubs his finger inside the glass. He looks around, blinking.)

HUGH

How do you like that. All of a sudden I'm sober..

TV

So Chuck they call you the Bayonne Bleeder because in every one of your fights you've been cut and bled so profusely..

"Well Mike I guess I just like the color red haw haw!"

HUGH

Are you serious?

JANET

Yes. Of course.

HUGH

Why do you want me to kill myself?

JANET

I told you. *(Pause)* I would like to see you die.

HUGH

But why? Do you hate me?

JANET

No.

HUGH

But why me? What did I ever do to you?

JANET

Nothing.

HUGH

(Whining)

But why?

JANET

It isn't what you expected, is it. Not what you expected at all.

HUGH

But you don't even know me.

JANET

It doesn't matter. It isn't necessary. All you have to do is die.

HUGH

(Anguished)

I don't understand.

(JANET pours another drink and silently hands it to HUGH who gulps it down. He winces and grabs his throat.)

HUGH

Burns. Feels like I'm drinking hot lava. This room. Is full of spider webs. I hate spiders. Is that what you do? Command the spiders? Do you have a whole spider army?

JANET

Something like that.

HUGH

This room smells like soup.

TV

HoHoHo Green Giant..

HUGH

(Anguished)

But you don't even know me! Maybe maybe you might like me.

(Muttering piteously he takes the five dollars from her hand.)

HUGH

Surely this is some kind of joke. Some kind of humiliation game. Okay. I'll play. What the fuck. It's just a game. Right? Right. *(Brightening)* Five bucks will buy me a gallon of wine. Hell yeah.

JANET

Here's the pills.

(She hands him a copper colored plastic pill bottle full of little white pills. HUGH recoils, then smiles smugly and accepts the pills. After all it's just some kind of game. He examines a pill.)

HUGH

What are they?

JANET

(Distractedly)

Just take them. Take them all.

TV

“Well Mike when I fought Ali he was a real class act. I tried not to get his white trunks all bloody.”

(HUGH timidly licks at the little pill.)

HUGH

Sugary! *(Pops it in his mouth.)* A game! All right. I’ll play your game. And I will win. Maybe even get an extra five bucks for being a good sport! Yeah!

(He gobbles the pills and chews them lustily. JANET doesn’t even look at him. She continues to watch the Mike Douglas Show. Hugh washes the pills down with the glass of whiskey.)

TV

“Tell me Bernie how do you get the words for those groovy songs?”

“Well Mike I just take what I see all around me and I make it into a verse a chorus and a verse. I make it rhyme and give it to Elton who plays it on the piano and voila! Big checks.”

JANET

(In a steady monotonous voice)

The light is getting stern and steely now. It’s past the warm twilight and into the flat hardness of evening. You feel alone in this strange place because you are.

(JANET suddenly grows friendly and puts her arm around HUGH. She motions for him to lay his head on her lap. Confused, HUGH allows himself to be led.)

JANET

(In a friendly tone)

Are you hungry? I have some dog food.

HUGH

(Shrilling)

Nothing wrong with dog food..it’s delicious..

JANET

Those pills are good. They’re the best.

HUGH

(Dimly)

Won’t you miss me? Wouldn’t you miss me at all?

JANET

(Like a mother quieting a baby)

Shh. Shh..

HUGH

If I die how am I going to spend my money?

TV

“Rock the boat! Ah don’t rock the boat ababy! Rock the boat! Ah don’t tip the boat over!”

(HUGH chuckles drunkenly and JANET laughs with him.)

HUGH

We don’t even know each other’s names..

JANET

Go ahead.

(She strokes his forehead.)

JANET

Go ahead and die.

(He does.)

TV

“We’ll be right back!”

Lights Down

Scene Twelve

The Werewolf Of Tears (Part Two)

(VIOLET is getting ready to leave the apartment when there is a knock. She opens the door and GLENN is standing there.)

VIOLET

Hi Glenn. More today?

GLENN

Have to find that drain clog. Have to snake the toilet.

VIOLET

Well I have to go, be sure you lock it up okay?

GLENN

(Fiercely)

Of course. You can trust me. I'm a professional.

(Violet leaves. GLENN addresses the audience.)

GLENN

I have approximately thirty-five minutes before she returns. I've timed her for three days in a row and averaged it out. Anyway that's plenty of time.

(He looks around.)

GLENN

I don't like to spend a lot of time in this apartment. Number nine. It's haunted as hell. Werewolves aren't supposed to be afraid of ghosts but I am. I know the power of hauntings.

(He looks around.)

This apartment is very messy. Piles of clothes everywhere. I can see her dirty bra. A pair of jeans that still have her shape slung across a chair. The room smells like sour milk. She's not much of a housewife yet.

(Looks into the bedroom.)

There's their bedroom. Where they sleep together. Why did she pick him? He'd so much older than her. About my age. Hell yeah. Hold on. All the man's stuff is in here and all her clothes are in the living room.

(He goes back to the living room.)

She's sleeping on the couch!

(Painfully he kneels down and inhales the couch.)

She does. She sleeps here. I know.

(He pulls himself down onto the couch and sits where she sleeps.)

I know her. They do not sleep together. I can tell by the way she looks right through me that she is abused, possibly even beaten. I'm deciding right here and now that I'm, going to take her away. I will treasure her. All I want in return is one thing.

(Painfully he gets to his feet.)

She's young. I will teach her in time. I will rescue her. I will love her like she deserves to be loved and in return I will have her tears.

(The lights dim.)

Because they're just being wasted around here.

LIGHTS DOWN

Interlude #5

The Balcony room

(In the dark we hear GLENN's prerecorded voice.)

In many ways the balcony room is the most interesting room in Apartment Number 9. It is small, eight foot by five foot with a window that opens into the bedroom and another huge window that looks down on Sixth Avenue. The outside window is supported by a nice wide ledge, perfect for sitting and staring or pressing an overheated cheek against on a snowy night. It is called the balcony room because at one time it was an open balcony. Garen Bunch had thought to name the building Balcony Suites, but changed his mind at the last minute. They were enclosed in 1949 at the insistence of his widow Sharon, who believed the building was haunted and sought to make amends.

SCENE Thirteen

Take A Moment

(Lights come up in the “balcony room” just upstage, lit from beyond the windows, so that the light is striking GEMA full in the front. She faces the audience in profile. She is holding a guitar, or any other instrument she happens to be proficient in. Without any ado she commences to play, hopefully a composition of her own making. She plays it flawlessly and enough so that we are captured by its spell. Suddenly she hits a sour note and starts all over again. The lights fade.)

Lights Down

SCENE FOURTEEN

Defense

(Before the lights come up we hear the distinctive sound of a light saber. Shuffling and scuffling. Then a voice.)

LEONARD

How the hell do you turn this thing on..

(Lights up all at once to reveal a large frame dead center in front of the stage. The frame should be large enough to encompass a view of 1/3 of the stage. Within this frame a man, LEONARD, is staring at the audience. He is carrying a toy light saber and a remote control. He points the remote at the audience then he stands at rigid attention, still facing the audience, as if waiting for something. Then he strikes some retarded sword fighting

poses and oafishly swings his weapon around. After a few moments of clumsily attempting some martial arts moves, LEONARD stops and looks out into the audience. He is well past the age where one should be playing with light sabers. He seems ordinary enough, until he starts talking.)

LEONARD

(With a mirthless chuckle)

Well now I'm back after attending to certain technical difficulties...allow me to introduce myself. I am master Leonard Saterlee, Self defense expert trainer and martial arts master and I'm making this instructional videotape for use in schools, offices, colleges, boardrooms and such. This video will show you all you need to know about the ancient arts of Jedi self defense training. I have been certified by the Milwaukee Jedi Council and the American Bureau of Martial Arts but I do not instruct in person, only via VHS long form videotape. My location, as you may understand is secret and well guarded because anyone of my knowledge and experience is a natural target for agents of the dark side.

(He resumes some energetic swordplay along with a few shaky kicks. When he's done, he's obviously winded.)

LEONARD

(Panting but smug)

Now you know what I'm talking about. You too can be a murderous killing machine to wreak vengeance on your enemies in Alaska...But let's not go into that. That's my business, not yours.

(He idly swings the light saber around to show he means business.)

LEONARD

If you take my home video course, I can guarantee that you will be able to kill, maim, or disable any attacker or stalker. You will learn the seven death spots on the human body. You will see the effects of the Wind Kick, a kick so fast it cannot be measured by human scientific apparatus. You will also be instructed in the spiritual side of kick fighting and finger gouging, based on the ancient arts of the Jedi.

(He suddenly pops off a jerky series of moves which are like a cross between a disco dance and an epileptic seizure. When he stops he is sweating and panting. He faces the "camera" defiantly.)

LEONARD

Upon completion of my course you will receive a dot matrix certificate which warrants you as having been under the tutelage of a Master Expert Jedi Self Defense Trainer. The cost of this training is not cheap. Money cannot buy knowledge, but it can buy my videotape. My knowledge is unique based upon my experience as an undercover warrior

for the Alliance. My secret operations have brought entire governments to a grinding halt. For this knowledge and instruction I charge \$100 per session. What your hundred dollars buys in addition to my videotape is a mature and thoughtful look at defending yourself from all intruders and living in harmony with love in nature.

(He trails off mesmerized by his own light saber. Suddenly he shrieks and starts stamping the floor, jumping around like a madman. This frenzy continues until we hear a piercing squeak, then LEONARD suddenly stops, going slack, like a marionette whose strings have just been cut.)

LEONARD

(Winded)

I hate mice. Too bad I had my sandals on. Boots are a better tool for stomping mice than sandals are. There's no worse feeling than being barefoot around a mouse.

(He is regaining his composure.)

LEONARD

Better go flush him. I have it on good authority that mice didn't exist on planet earth until the mid 1600's. They were created by a Flemish alchemist to do his bidding as an unholy army and their numbers reproduced so rapidly that the alchemist was powerless to stop their proliferation.

(He bends over and picks up the squashed blob, holding it up proudly to the "camera.")

LEONARD

(Addressing the camera solemnly)

"I am become death, the shatterer of worlds.." *(More cheerfully)* Well now.. I think that speaks for itself. For enrollment information you can call the number at the conclusion of this video presentation and your training will commence. Like me, you will soon be living in a hyper intense state of all ready alertness. The world we live in is a dangerous place. It pays to defend yourself.

(He reaches toward the audience with a remote he uses to operate his camera and pushes the STOP button. The lights go black, except for the lazy trail his weak light saber leaves.)

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE FIFTEEN

ABSOLUTE FORGIVENESS

(The lights slowly rise to reveal a young doofus named JAMES dragging a large trash can into the middle of the room and starting to clean the apartment. From off stage we hear another man call to him. This is his brother, SCOTT.)

SCOTT

(From off)

..maybe it won't work. I don't know. ALL RIGHT! JACKPOT! See I told you I was psychic!

(He enters carrying a wet twelve pack of beer. SCOTT and JAMES are brothers. Their hair is perfectly gelled and glossed. They are dressed incongruously, as if they were going out on a night on the town.)

SCOTT

Check out what I found in the fridge!

JAMES

(Morosely)

You know I can't drink beer because of my medication.

SCOTT

(Cheerfully)

More for me then dude.

JAMES

(Thinking it over)

Fuck it. Give me one.

(They drink.)

SCOTT

Should we call Peggy in here?

JAMES

Fuck that fat bitch. She'll just tell her uncle on us.

SCOTT

Yeah there's barely enough here for us. *(Drinks)* Man I wish we didn't have to baby-sit her ass. It's a real drag. *(Drinks)* Got a nice taste to it. It's old though.

JAMES

(Annoyed)

You think you know everything Scott. You don't know shit. You don't be telling me about beer.

SCOTT

What're you in such a bad mood for? You depressed again? James, you just got to bliss it out, man.

JAMES

This apartment gives me the creeps. I shouldn't be drinking this beer on top of my medication.

SCOTT

Well if you ask me your Internet herbal Prozac isn't working all that good. *(Drinks)* This apartment isn't too scary. One time, before you started working, me and Patrick had to clean out this apartment someone had been murdered in. I felt like people were watching me from the windows and shit. I had to close the curtains. That place was haunted as fuck. We had to clean up all the blood and shit.

JAMES
You believe that crap?

SCOTT
Dude, I saw the blood.

JAMES
Naw man, that bullshit about ghosts.

SCOTT
Fuck yeah I do.

JAMES
(Gloomily)
Well just remember one thing about ghosts. People lie.

SCOTT
You calling me a liar?

JAMES
Dude, I KNOW you're a liar.

SCOTT
(Slyly)
Well there's lying and then there's being a liar.

(PEGGY enters. She is lumpen and mannish, wearing unflattering glasses and clothes that are too tight where they should be loose and too loose where they should be tight. She is wearing rubber gloves and is carrying a bucket full of bathroom cleaning materials. She waddles in, like she is saddle sore.)

PEGGY
Man I'm hurting today.

(SCOTT and JAMES pointedly ignore her.)

PEGGY
(Aggressively)

Hey! You guys should come and see what's in the bathroom. *(Pause)* What are you guys doing? Sitting on your asses? What're you drinking? Does my Uncle Andy know you guys drink beer on the job? I don't drink beer. Especially at ten o'clock in the morning.

JAMES

Mind your own business you stupid dyke.

PEGGY

(Hotly)

Don't call me a dyke you little turd. I'll have your job!

JAMES

You can have my job Peggy. Tell your uncle Andy to come and get it.

PEGGY

(Struggling to sit down)

You're just lucky I'm in a good mood today. I got rid of some very serious problems. But I'm not going to share them with you two because you're losers and I don't have time for losers.

(No reaction from SCOTT or JAMES.)

PEGGY

Yep. I got rid of some..

JAMES

No one cares about your problems.

PEGGY

(Amused)

What's with him?

SCOTT

He's depressed.

PEGGY

(Taunting)

Going to try to kill yourself again?

JAMES

(Matter of factly)

Maybe.

PEGGY

Well what's there to be depressed about? Trust in the lord and all will be well. If you two weren't such godless pricks maybe I could help you. *(Sarcastically)* You have your beer. Look at me. If anyone has a right to be depressed, it's old Peggy. See, I wanted to be a sheriff's deputy. I took the test and all. But God saw fit to put a hole in my heart so here I am. I'm not bitter.

JAMES

(Patronizingly)

My depression is based on the hopelessness of it all. I mean me and Scott were both born on the same day; we're brothers, but it's like we're two different people. The defense mechanisms other people have and take for granted I don't.

SCOTT

Yeah, he's all sensitive and shit.

JAMES

Like I don't believe in God because I know there is no God, only a random series of chaotic events which in retrospect look like some sort of half assed destiny. I have no illusions about anything at all; therefore I have no hopes or dreams.

(PEGGY launches herself at JAMES wrestling him into a headlock. JAMES is red faced and helpless.)

PEGGY

(Furious)

You dickless freak! You say there is a God! Say It!

JAMES

(Strangled)

Let me up Peggy!

PEGGY

(Furious)

SAY IT! SAY THERE IS A GOD! I'll kill you! I'll make you write it out in your own blood!

SCOTT

(Mildly)

Lay off him Peggy. His asthma will kick in. I don't want to listen to him bitch all day.

(PEGGY releases him and retreats, glowering. She takes the new package of rubber gloves and puts them on, all the while glaring at JAMES.)

PEGGY

Good thing for you I'm not feeling too good today. Good thing for you I'm too sore to kick your worthless ass.

(SCOTT rises and goes to the window.)

SCOTT

How come it looks so weird outside? All orange and shit. Do you think it's the beer? Maybe it fucks with your optic nerve.

PEGGY

No, it's forest fires. The smoke is coloring the sun.

JAMES

No man, it's like an eclipse. You only get that eerie quality of light with an eclipse.

PEGGY

You guys don't know what you're talking about. You're both so drunk you probably can't even tell what day it is. I bet you're all stoned too. (Sweetly) You can tell me. I won't say anything. You are. Aren't you.

(This last remark was a statement not a question. SCOTT and JAMES respond by draining their beers and opening more. Peggy paints some trim.)

PEGGY

My uncle Andy said we had to be done by noon. I don't know what I'm going to tell him. What do you guys think I should tell him?

SCOTT

(Seeing something she is about to throw away)

Hey what is that?

PEGGY

What?

SCOTT

That videotape. You throwing it away? Let me have it! I can tape over it. Shit, you don't throw a perfectly good tape away. What is it? Porno?

PEGGY

Sorry to disappoint you. It says on the label it's a self-defense tape.

SCOTT

(Setting the tape aside)

Well I can tape over it..

PEGGY

Seems like you guys would want to at least get a little work done around here. Seems like I'm the only one working around here. You know my Uncle Andy told me to keep an eye on you guys. He wants me to tell him what you guys really do, but I won't say anything.

SCOTT

Kind of makes you wonder, man. I found some weird shit cleaning apartments. False teeth, used rubbers, money, weed, all kinds of crazy writing and art. That's personal shit.

PEGGY

That reminds me. You guys should go check out what's in the toilet.

SCOTT

(Suddenly)

Hey Peggy can I ask you a serious question? If we can arrange for a payment of say, twenty dollars would you be willing to fight our dog?

PEGGY

(Taken aback)

What? That mean little wiener dog you guys have?

JAMES

They're dachshunds. Wiener dog is a derogatory term.

SCOTT

C'mon, twenty bucks. Will you fight him for twenty bucks?

JAMES

(Tauntingly)

I think he'd rip your throat out.

PEGGY

(Relishing the thought)

I'd crush his little skull. I'd crush it like chalk. Chalk is a flaky thing and flaky things break off in cleves. That is how God designed the world, in the light of your mind. Your mind is the sky and the stars are your thoughts and God is everywhere except where he's not. His limousine has eight wheels because the axels are too light to bear the weight of his golden robes.

(There is a long pause and SCOTT and JAMES look at each other as if to say, "Is it just me or..") A sound from outside. SCOTT jumps and goes to the window, looking out.)

SCOTT

I thought I heard a diesel engine. Thought Andy was here checking up on us.

PEGGY

(Smugly)

You guys better watch it.

JAMES

(Testily)

We can handle it in here. Why don't you go start the bedroom?

PEGGY

(Stung)

Go ahead and drink all the beer you want. Tell each other secrets about me. I don't care. You can't hurt me. Jesus Christ loves me but he hates you. I don't want to be around you guys anyway.

JAMES

(Wearily)

We just want to get done.

SCOTT

Yeah take your head out of your ass.

(She gathers her rubber gloves, brushes, bucket, etc and with as much dignity as she can muster she exits.)

JAMES

(Looking after her)

We need to make some money fast. I don't know how much more of this I can take.

SCOTT

Wait a minute; did you leave anything in the toilet for her?

JAMES

No, did you?

SCOTT

No.

(Pause.)

JAMES

What about my ideas? To make money. There was the pussyhead.

SCOTT

No you never told me that one. I would have remembered the name.

JAMES

See a pussyhead would be an alternative cure for baldness. You take dead chicks and you graft their bushes on top of bald guys heads.

SCOTT

Dude that's a whole different kind of hair. It wouldn't take.

JAMES

Well at least it would be hair.

SCOTT

How the fuck we supposed to make money on that dude?

JAMES

Well you like copyright it and shit.

SCOTT

(Dubiously)

What else you got?

JAMES

What about autoerotic insurance. That's pretty self-explanatory.

SCOTT

What would you cover?

JAMES

Well shit like incompetence.

SCOTT

You mean incontinence.

JAMES

Yeah that's what I said.

(SCOTT wanders around, halfheartedly doing his job. He wanders into the bathroom.)

SCOTT

(From bathroom)

James! You gotta come and see this!

(The tone of his voice makes JAMES jump up and run offstage. He and SCOTT soon reappear.)

JAMES

Holy Fuck.

SCOTT

(Anxiously)

Is that what I think it is?

JAMES

Goddamn dude, that is some hardcore shit.

SCOTT

Yeah but you can't be sure what it is.

JAMES

Then how come the hairs on the back of my hand are standing up?

SCOTT

(Uneasily)

Man, I want to wash my hands. I feel all dirty.

(JAMES gets up and goes back into the bathroom. SCOTT watches after him but does not follow. SCOTT soon returns.)

JAMES

I don't know man..

SCOTT

Did you get a good look?

(PEGGY reenters.)

SCOTT

(To PEGGY)

What the fuck?

PEGGY

(Innocent)

What?

JAMES

What is that?

PEGGY

What is what? *(Pause)* Oh. That. *(Mockingly)* What do you think it is?

JAMES

You know what I think it is.

PEGGY

Then that's what it is.

SCOTT

(Confused)

What do you guys think it is?

(He goes back into the bathroom and comes back immediately. He opens another beer.)

JAMES

Fuck it. Flush it.

PEGGY

(Arms crossed)

I'm not flushing it.

SCOTT

Maybe we should call Andy.

PEGGY

With all this beer? Call him if you want. You guys reek.

JAMES

We don't even know for sure what it is.

PEGGY

You guys are drunk. What if we had to talk to the police now?

JAMES

Jesus Christ flush it and let's get out of here.

SCOTT

Go ahead man. You do it.

JAMES

I will.

(He exits. PEGGY looks at SCOTT and smirks. JAMES returns.)

JAMES

I couldn't do it.

(A diesel engine is heard outside the window accompanied by the blast of a horn.)

SCOTT

Shit! It's Andy!

PEGGY

(Smirking)

Now what're you going to do smart guy?

(JAMES stands up, facing her. He takes a long, steady pull on his beer and then he sprays it on PEGGY. She reacts with slow motion horror.)

PEGGY

(Incredulous)

You spit beer on me!

(Impatient truck horn.)

JAMES

(Calmly)

Now you smell like beer. Now I want you to go downstairs and talk to your uncle and keep him from coming up here until we can stash the beer.

SCOTT

(Mocking)

You don't believe us Andy? Just go take a look in the toilet and see what a good Christian niece you have. Wonder why she's sore?

(Truck horn. Peggy faces them both open mouthed with shock and desperation. For the first time we see her with her shields down.)

PEGGY

I'm not going down there. *(Desperately)* He'll smell the beer on me!

JAMES

(Patiently)

Peggy. You're his niece. He isn't ever going to fire you. Even if he catches you with a beer in your hand and a gun in your mouth you're always going to be his little niece.

PEGGY

(Coldly)

What's in it for me? What do I care if you lose your jobs? You're just a pair of Godless assholes anyway. I'll just tell my uncle the truth, how you spit that beer on me. How you guys don't ever work hard, how you guys drive around all day pretending to be lost. Isn't it strange how that word keeps cropping up? Lost. Lose. Loser.

(Truck horn. Smirking, PEGGY heads for the door. She sprays some Lysol on her to cover the beer smell and exits.)

SCOTT
Motherfucker.

(JAMES pulls on a rubber glove and goes to the bathroom. He returns carrying a dripping fishy white blob that, while indistinguishable, nevertheless should fill the audience with dread. He goes to a lunchbox and slaps the object into it. They gather their painting equipment together. JAMES returns. His grin is without mirth. PEGGY reenters, all smiles.)

PEGGY
Hey! He's going over to Brighton for the rest of the day. He didn't even suspect anything! Man! Let's eat lunch. I'm starved! You guys should've packed your lunch like me. I don't throw my money away on fast food. I for one, work hard for my money so I'm very careful about how I spend it.

(She goes for her lunchbox, the same lunchbox JAMES just placed the object into. She starts to open it, then stops.)

PEGGY
(Conspiratorially)
Hey you guys know that thing in the toilet?

(She now has the full attention of SCOTT and JAMES.)

PEGGY
(Slyly)
I know what it is.

(PEGGY opens her lunchbox. The lights BLACKOUT immediately.)

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE SIXTEEN

THE WEREWOLF OF TEARS (PART THREE)

(There is a scream in the dark. Then the sound of a toilet flushing. We hear a man's voice.)

MAN

(Fearfully)

Who's that? Who's there?

GLENN

(Flatly)

It's just me. Glenn.

(The lights come up on GLENN, VIOLET, and DOUG. Violet and DOUG have just been awakened. GLENN is standing unconcerned in full regalia, including tool belt.)

DOUG

What the hell are you doing in my apartment at two in the morning!

GLENN

Easy Tiger. The Incense Pit downstairs had a flood. I had to check it out. Came from right around here..

DOUG

What the hell were you doing in the dark?

GLENN

Well I didn't want to disturb you two. I'm just doing my job Tiger.

DOUG

Stop calling me Tiger you fucking moron! And get the hell out of my apartment!

(GLENN flashes at DOUG while Violet remains mute and hiding behind DOUG. It seems as if GLENN is about to pounce, but he doesn't. He backs down.)

GLENN

Didn't mean to scare anyone. Lots of incense down there getting wet. Had to check it out.

DOUG

Well I'll check it out all right. I'll check it out with Intermountain western Building Management! We'll see about this! Now please leave my apartment!

(VIOLET is crying. GLENN tenderly hands her a handkerchief.)

DOUG

Get out!

(VIOLET hands GLENN back his handkerchief, which he reverently folds and places carefully in his pocket.)

GLENN

No need to get huffy Tiger. Sorry to disturb you.

(His voice is tragic and full of menace. He looks meaningfully at VIOLET then he leaves.)

DOUG

(Outraged)

Goddamn idiot. I'll have his ass for this.

VIOLET

I don't want to stay here anymore.

DOUG

By God this is too much. Go to bed Violet.

VIOLET

(Kissing him)

Good night daddy.

DOUG

(Tenderly)

Night baby. Don't worry. Tomorrow I'm going out to buy a deadbolt. *(Pause)*

Why are you crying Violet?

VIOLET

I..don't..know..

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE EIGHTEEN

MY APARTMENT (Part Two)

(VIOLET's crying can still be heard but it changes in the dark to a woman laughing. The lights come up on boxes, once again, being carried into Apartment Number 9. Carrying them are MATT and AMY a young married couple. They are moving in.)

AMY

(Laughing)

You know I'm seeing all kinds of things in here that we didn't notice before when we first looked at this place.

MATT

It's called renter's remorse.

AMY

Well that bedroom ceiling worries me.

MATT

That water stain is so old. Tell the maintenance guy..

AMY

Bud. His name is Bud.

(They crack up laughing.)

AMY

They haven't painted this place in a while either. I was putting stuff away in the medicine cabinet and there as graffiti on the inside of the door. Someone had actually written save by it.

MATT

So you saved it right?

AMY

Hell no! What do I want to save someone else's graffiti for? This is my apartment now.

MATT

What did it say? Was it dirty?

AMY

Sorry to disappoint you. It said evermore.

MATT

Evermore? That's pretty enigmatic. You should have saved it.

AMY

(Airily)

Nothing lasts forever..

(The words hang in the air.)

MATT

Let's paint over those black cabinets.

AMY

And I want to sand the floor. It's all stained. Looks like someone dropped a glob of molten lava right here.

(She kicks at the stain on the floor.)

MATT

Why would someone do that? Paint the kitchen cabinets black. Devil worshippers?

AMY

We probably don't want to know. Just thank God the walls are solid.

(She rubs and hugs the wall.)

AMY

I like these walls. Think of what they've seen.

MATT

The walls are solid and there's brass clowns on the mailboxes.

AMY

I know. That is so cool..

MATT

Man I'd like to know that story.

AMY

You can research it.

MATT

Maybe I will.

AMY

Kind of smells in here too.

MATT

Yeah.. kind of a cross between cats and cigarettes with a hint of..

AMY

Campfires beneath it.

MATT

Exactly. How did you know that?

AMY

I'm psychic, remember?

MATT
Oh yeah. I forgot.

(A faint, grating sound starts up.)

AMY
There's that sound again.

MATT
Probably just someone vacuuming the floor. Where did you pack the bong?

AMY
Ooh! Good idea.

(She produces a nice glass bong from one of the boxes. They sit and fire it up.)

AMY
I like this apartment. It has good vibes.

MATT
(Stoned)
I had a dream last night. I dreams this guy with a hammer was trying to talk to me in sign language. He had make up on.

AMY
Like the clowns on our mailbox?

MATT
No..like a woman.

AMY
I had a weird dream last night to. I dreamt the toilet was overflowing and I couldn't stop it. What a mess . Chunks were coming up and..

MATT
That's a common anxiety dream. I mean after all you were moving the next day.

AMY
I guess so. Then I had the mountain dream.

MATT
That's a good sign then. You like that dream.

AMY

It's so vivid being on top of that mountain. All the colors and senses. It's my favorite dream.

MATT

One more hit and let's get back to work. I can't stand to live out of these boxes.

(They stand up, as they do, AMY sees something on the floor. She stoops and picks it up.)

AMY

Hey! A feather!

(Instinctively, MATT and AMY look upward. The lights go down.)

CURTAIN