

# AVE MARIA

*At Rise: The nude EVELYN stands alone in a black box, centerstage. Spotlight on her; darkness, all around. Possibly a multimedia screen projecting her facial expression, making it evident that she speaks the first line absolutely emotionlessly. (See Stage Notes.)*

## Scene 0: The Lost One I

### **EVELYN**

My name is Evelyn, and I have been imprisoned in a black box for all eternity.

*Instant Blackout.*

~ ~ ~

## ACT 1: Divine Fate

### Scene 1: Exordium

*Lights slowly fade on. But, have a spotlight focused on EVELYN in the dying twilight. EVELYN stands alone, eyes closed, statue-like unmoving, in a black box that seems to blend into the walls of the set. As the lights become bright enough to light the whole stage, MARILYN, sleeping at first, begins stirring in her grungy tenement bed. The other salient features of the dilapidated room include pieces of torn paper scattered across the floor, a wire-hatched trash can filled to the brim with crumpled pieces of paper, and a scratched window. The walls should look stained from years of neglect—except the half of the back set wall furthest away from MARILYN's bed should remain pristinely blank (for the multimedia projector screen).*

*MARILYN wakes up, sits on the side of her bed, feet on floor, on top of scraps of paper.*

### **MARILYN**

*(In a haunted tone.)* Last night, I had a dream...

*(Pauses to look off into the audience, eyes glazed, as if she's not totally present. After a few seconds, a noticeable pause, her eyes begin focusing until she makes hauntingly direct eye contact with a front-row audience member.)*

I... I was at a poetry reading.

*Multimedia projector on, shows MARILYN dressed formally, standing on a stage bare except for a solo microphone. The projected MARILYN looks off into the darkness; projector is hooked onto a live camera that shows a sweeping view of the audience.*

**MARILYN**

*(Bewildered voice.)* I... I was about to give a reading. Of poems—my *own*... To utter the words of existence, of life, divine. To deliver my soul to... An audience of hundreds, thousands... An audience of legion—uncountable... *the world*.

*Projector shows MARILYN on poetry stage again, syncs projected image with her words:*

*(Dream-like tone.)* My hands were trembling, and I didn't believe it was real. But, it *felt* real. As real as life... No, *more* real than... than mere life. I gazed off into the audience, the millions of people waiting to hear my words. I wanted, at that moment—more than anything in the world—to disappear. Not to die, but to vanish—to de-materialize, melt into thin air, as if I were never there. As if I'd never been born, never existed. Never was.

But, there was something too tantalizing in the air. And, soon I found myself accepting my existence, my presence on the fateful stage. I found myself smiling—genuinely happy.

*Projector shows a silent film of the audience clapping, the masses standing up to cheer for her. Projector shows MARILYN on poetry stage again, syncs projected image with her words:*

I waved at the audience, as the millions applauded. I looked forward to the reading to come at the end of their clapping.

I looked down at the piece I held in my hands. I opened my mouth.

I was about to read the first word. I was on the fine twilight between word and silence... when my throat started tightening.

*Projector shows projected MARILYN choking.*

It felt as if the air was being sucked out of me... No, it was *more* than that. I felt as if... as if my *essence* were being torn out of me, that there were bleeding ligaments clutching onto my core, even as it was being pulled out by a force greater than life, greater than fate.

I couldn't breathe. I couldn't draw forth that fateful breath required to utter that first word. I couldn't... couldn't do anything but choke. I looked to the audience for help.

*Projector shows the masses of audience sitting still, unmoving, apathetic. Projector shows MARILYN choking, then falling.*

I fell to the floor, its bare wooden panes as frozen as the coldest winter ice. I looked into the darkness... I looked... to the audience for help.

*Projector shows the masses still unmoving. Shows projected MARILYN suffering, dying on poetry stage.*

I felt myself slowly fading away. I died.

*Projector shows the masses getting up to leave with no apparent alarm. As if nothing's happened. Shows an unmoving projected MARILYN on poetry stage.*

They left as if nothing's happened. My dead body was alone on-stage... and beyond, there was just this darkness, neverending. I had these weird flashbacks of my life, and then I saw this bright, pure, white light—it was all too cliché, the stereotypical death.

I felt myself going towards the light, about to disappear forever. But, there was this screaming agony inside of my head—there was a part of me that wasn't ready to die.

The screaming got to a point where I thought my head would blow up... and then I woke up. I kept my eyes closed—a part of me didn't want to come back.

I knew that the first thing I'd see when I wake up would be *this*. (*Waves her hand, gesturing deprecatingly to the room.*) My room, my home... but not much of one.

But, even as I was dying, there was a part of me that wanted—more than anything in the world—to live. I... *I* wanted to exist, to be. I wanted...

*Long silence. Then, stage lights dim down a few shades. A spotlight focuses on MARILYN's feet, and especially, the scraps of paper scattered across the floor next to her bed. MARILYN bends down to pick up a particular piece. Spotlights on MARILYN and EVELYN (eyes-closed), as they solemnly read:*

**MARILYN**

**EVELYN**

“A WORD is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.  
I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.” (*Credit: Emily Dickinson.*)

Of sonorous echoes, through and through.  
Here, there, everywhere. Now,  
The words: the depths of their kismet  
Rings true unto the moment.  
(*Crosses out the line. Takes the pen worn  
around her neck, as if a pendant and rewrites.*)  
Pulled forth from the void,  
Forced into life:  
(*Crosses out line. Rewrites.*)  
Of uncaring grunge poverty—  
The acid rain that slices its own  
Marks upon the masterpiece statue.  
Of life lived in vain—

Rings true unto the said word,  
Verbalized unto existence,

The world of reality:

**MARILYN (cont'd)**

The lost blossom that clings

To scattered dirt atop the dull grey  
Roof of a tenement tower;

But growing unto the precipice,  
The edge, the slab-of-cement-balcony;  
Unto its growth, too stilted,  
It falls.

Into the colorless world,  
Its petals, vibrant,

A brand new shade in  
The spring of existence.

And then the words form,  
To carry it aloft, a breeze,

It flies, higher and higher,  
Unto the shining sun.

The words carry it aloft,  
A flower in the sky,  
High, above,  
For all to see.  
(Crosses out a giant block of text.)

The secret battle of WORDS:  
The words alone slew and slew  
Until naught remained of drudgery in the world.  
They knew that they could,  
They knew that they would,  
They knew, they knew...  
Of Divine Fate, of mine eine—(Crosses out the  
line in wide sweeping motion. Then, in a rush,  
crumples the paper. Slight shriek, uncrumples  
paper. Tears it to pieces.)

*MARILYN bursts into tears, as she throws the  
piece into the overfilled garbage can. The piece  
bounces out. She shrieks, then takes the whole  
trash can out to the window. She dumps the  
contents out. When it's emptied, she takes it  
back to where it was, then throws the piece in.*

*(She screams.)*

**EVELYN (cont'd)**

With tenacity insurmountable

Flowering towards the sunlight

Of colors exotic,  
A brand new shade in  
The spring of existence.

A zephyr, sweet, uplifting.

Unto the shining sun;  
It is no Icarus; it ascends.

*(Cringes, shrinks back in horror.)*

*EVELYN cries, while standing still. The  
multimedia projector shows a close-up of her  
face, showing a single drop of tear falling from  
the edges of her closed eyes.*

*(Her eyes pop open. She screams.)*

*Lights fade out.*

Scene 2: About to Enter the Bar

*Dilapidated alleyway, the pits of the inner city. Rotten corpuscles of food and garbage dripping here and there, having missed the unfaithful garbage cans lining one wall. Stench of urine in the air. The runned-down atmosphere of the alley should convey a sense of rampant danger. People have been killed down this end.*

*EVELYN's box looks vaguely like an out-of-place black-graffiti-painted telephone box mis-located in the center of the set's back wall. (This relative location to the front of the stage is the same as that for the other half of the rotating set, the bar in the next few scenes.)*

*The side-entrance to the Strip Bar is on the other end of the stage from which Marilyn enters. There is an old-fashioned vintage wooden sign jutting out of the wall on top of the door. The hand-carved letters read, "The Styx." Smaller letters meticulously painted below the name of the bar reads, "137 Stygian Avenue." But, the sign is old and stained by time, the carving faded and un-tended-to. Once, perhaps, the strip bar might have been a reputable establishment; the sign is a relic from the olden days.*

*MARILYN enters the alley, climbing down towards one side of the stage from a narrow wire-frame staircase—the kind used for both stair-way and emergency-exit-way in urban apartments.*

**MARILYN**

*(mutters, barely audible, as she walks slowly across the alley stage)*

But, the tragedy is that I am of the world...

*On the other side of the stage, two hobos suddenly pop out from Oscar-metal trash cans.*

**HOBO 1**

If thou art piss and thy piss art thou, then  
The fact that thy piss stinketh my box  
Means thou art trespassing my terri'try.

The pride of my tattered rags I must keep,  
Thus, thy wanton pissful soul, I must reap.

**HOBO 2**

Never, that ye shall take mine, for—

*A SHADY DRUG DEALER suddenly jumps out from a giant trash bin.*

**SHADY DRUG DEALER**

Ah, two hobos of fair talent, now,  
What say ye spend thy beggings on my wares?

*Without waiting for a response, SHADY DRUG DEALER opens up the front side of his trench coat, both flaps of which are filled with stapled zip-loc bags of multi-colored powders, pills, or leafy-looking stuff.*

**HOBO 1**

Hero, MJ, cheap coke, meth, ex, ... , puuureee stardust...

**HOBO 2**

*(in the drooling-with-lust-for-stardust tone)*  
Ahhhhh *(beat)*

**HOBO 1**

We take all—but most especially the purreee...  
Oh, let hero show us what dreams may come!

**HOBO 2**

We take all—but most especially the purreee...  
Oh, let hero show us what dreams may come!

*The two hobos of fair talent, now, fall and sink back into Oscar-metal trash cans, disappearing from the scene.*

*MARILYN has been walking from one end of the stage to the other. The hobos disappear before she gets to the other end. She is oblivious to the odd bantering.*

*As she nears the vintage wooden sign hanging above the wall of the bar, "The Styx," MARILYN looks up into the night sky, or what little of it can be seen in the narrow wedge of the alley.*

*A strong wind blows from stage right, sending MARILYN's hair astray. Pieces of torn paper flutter down, as if lost snowflakes in the autumn evening. For a moment, the scene looks vintage classy—the pieces of torn poetry and the wooden sign stand out against the dilapidated alley.*

*MARILYN brushes the pieces of paper off her hair and nose with shocking apathy. She opens the door to the*

*bar. Loud music and multi-colored lights stream out from the other side of the stage set. (See Stage Notes.)*

*An OLD LADY suddenly pops out from stage right. She momentarily stops MARILYN from entering. MARILYN lets the bar door close, and the scene is again the darkness of the night.*

**OLD LADY**

A rose for ye spirit, my young flounder.  
(*She hands MARILYN a wilted rose.*)

**EVELYN**

(*Recites with eyes closed.*)  
“How many Flowers fail in the Wood—  
Or perish from the Hill—  
Without the privilege to know  
That they are Beautiful.” (*Credit: Emily Dickinson.*)

*OLD LADY disappears as suddenly as she'd appeared. Simultaneously, MARILYN throws the rose away, as if she hadn't heard EVELYN.*

*MARILYN opens the door to the bar, enters, then lets the door close behind her.*

*Lights fade.*

Scene 3: Strip Bar I

*Inhabitants of strip bar frozen in a tableau. A smoke-screen blurs the scene; as the smoke-screen rises and the scene clears, the people burst into their usual motion, i.e., men wave money at strippers, strippers dance around stereotypical poles, the multi-colored lights flash, etc. (See Stage Notes for details!)*

*MARILYN looks distinctly different from everyone else—she looks as if the only person in the bar who's alive. This effect can be induced by having everyone else look less vibrant. Perhaps Marilyn is the only person with red cheeks, color on her face. To further dramatize this, the other strippers might be wearing grey-lipstick and pallid-vampire foundation. (They all wear similar gaudy showy stripper outfits, of course.)*

*MARILYN dances around a pole. Dejected-looking MAN, in an expensive business suit stands in front of her. Unlike the others, he's not mindlessly raving or waving dollar bills in his hand. MAN merely looks at her, with a lost look in his eyes:*

**MAN:**

I kill people.

**MARILYN:**

Excuse me?

**MAN:**

I kill people. It's what I do.

**MARILYN:**

Uh... *(continues dancing)* We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, occupation—

**MAN:**

It's not that. No, no you have me wrong. *(Bitter laugh.)*

I don't actually kill people. Not literally, at least. No... *(Trails off with a bitter gaze.)*

Everything I do is perfectly legal—albeit warped, in a sense. Yes, yes... that'd have to be the case. You can make more money making the illegal look legal.

But, I don't like what I do. I hate it. God, oh how I hate it.

**MARILYN:**

Why? Don't you make enough money?

**MAN:**

*(Long sigh.)* It's not money. *(Pauses, reconsiders.)*

Well, it *is* about money. It's just that I don't care about it—I don't care about the money anymore. I used to care. I guess that's why I chose to do this. That's why I killed...

My wife tells me that I shouldn't see my actions as murders...

**MARILYN:**

Wife? *(Rather surprised, since men do not come to the bar talking about their wives.)*

Don't let your wife weigh you down—she's not here, is she? *(Looks around, slightly alarmed.)*

Men—men don't come here with their wives on their mind. They come to enjoy the *pleasures* of life, to see and experience all that their wives can't *offer* them. *(Makes provocative moves.)*

**MAN:**

*(Ignores her provocative moves; continues absent-mindedly.)* Yes, she tells me that if it weren't for me, others would have done it. It's... it's like a jungle. Survival of the fittest. I had to do it, or else... or else I wouldn't have succeeded.

I-I hunted talent. I scoured the world for flashes of intelligence, of brilliant ideas—potential threats. My job was to destroy the potential competitors before they even gained sense of their own potentials. To buy a budding company before it grows to rival mine. To end it before it started. To kill a living messiah before it's ever been born.

I-I had to kill them to succeed. B-but, what have I done?

**MARILYN:**

You've succeeded doing what you had to do. You're now rich and powerful, and they aren't.  
*(Casually sways her neck about the bar, as if making a reference to her surrounding. Casually and without much thought, despite the ironic profundity of her words:)*  
We do what we do, and... we are *wont* to do what we do.

**MAN:**

But, how did I become like this? H-how could I h-have...

Each time that I destroy a potential competitor, I feel as if I'm really killing myself...

I was once the person whom I've killed. I-I mean... It's—I don't know why. It must be just some inherent bout of arrogance. I feel as if I could have been the bright-eyed youth with potential, about to embark on a great enterprise. To start the first honest corporation, to be rich because I'm good at what I do—not because I know whom to destroy.

I was once like that. But, I figured out that such innocence would never survive in the world. It's a dog-eat-dog-world. And, I had to kill. I had to kill to eat—there were other dogs, bigger dogs doing the same thing, and I had to fight to keep my own place.

There was no way. No possible way... *(Moans, then covers face in hands. Cries.)*

*The whole bar is suddenly silent. There is only the sound of a man crying, whimpering. Everyone is frozen in suspended animation—the other girls, the bidders waving money in the air, raving for MARILYN to come over to dance for them. The moment is literally at a standstill.*

*Lights in bar are already bar-light-dim, but dim a bit lower. Spotlight on MARILYN and MAN.*

**MARILYN:**

Why are you here?

**MAN:**

*(Looks directly at her.)*

I-I am looking for tal... *(Trails off with the look of uncertainty in his eyes.)*

I don't know. *(He gets up and leaves.)*

*After MAN exits, MARILYN walks over to the next highest bidder. A man in a distinctly white suit. As she bends down, he offers her a wad of cash, and a whisper in the ear. She nods and laughs coyly, but with a fakeness befitting a showgirl. She commences dancing around the pole, while simultaneously the music suddenly comes back on, at exactly the same place it stopped. Everyone's in motion, again.*

*Lights fade out.*

Scene 4: Marilyn “Conjures” Evelyn

*Lights fade on in the bar-scene. It’s after closing time, and most customers have left. The strippers go to little cubby-holes hidden beneath a bar-counter to take out their clothes. Ignoring the few remaining bar customers, all hopelessly drunk and unable to move, the strippers change out of their “outfits,” back to their regular clothes. Some are putting on a greayer shade of foundation—making even more pallid their already unnaturally ghastly complexion. MARILYN stands out in the middle of a bunch of strippers; her rosy cheeks make her look as if she is the only person alive. She appears to stare off into space. The strippers are all ignoring each other, either staring off into thoughtless space or mindlessly putting on bad ghastly makeover.*

*EVELYN still stands in her black box, as described in the previous bar scene. Her eyes are still closed.*

*MARILYN suddenly breaks out of her daze. She looks around her at her fellow stripper sisters. She looks bewildered, as if she’d woken up from some dream and can’t figure out why she’s here.*

**MAN**

*(Not present on-stage. Echoes from LEFT.)*

But, how did I become like this?

**MARILYN**

*(In an absent-minded voice.)*

But, how did I become like this?

*MARILYN looks around at the others, again with a look of bewildered surprise. The strippers continue doing what they were before with no break. No one seems to have heard her.*

**MARILYN**

What if someone like me *wasn’t* someone like me? What if my life were different...

*The lights suddenly go out. Emergency lights turn on. The girls do not react. BAR BOSS comes out from a door behind the bar counter marked “BOSS.”*

**BAR BOSS**

Gotta save on the E-bill. Metro City G&E fees ain’t gettin’ any lower, an’ there’s only gonna be more o’yous workin’ here—which is like payin’ another hiked up Basin City sham bill. From now on, lights off quarter of an’ hour af’er closing—the lights are fer the customers, an’ usually the ones that matter are gone by now. The rest o’y’all. Well, y’all don’t matter.

*MARILYN gets up to walk away from the gathered strippers. No one appears to notice her walking away. The other strippers continue doing what they were before, unperturbed by BAR BOSS's comment. Some drunken customers might be loudly snoring by now. A few girls have started smoking.*

**MARILYN**

What if I didn't work for that miserly old fool? What if I had the perfect boss?

*No one hears her.*

**BAR BOSS**

An' y'all newbies, listen' up, 'cos I gotta tell you the shitload behind the long contract y'all gotta sign. *(He hands out a few piles of stapled paper filled with copious lines of text.)* Naw don both'r to read it, 'cos it ain't gonna do you no good. You jus' gotta know that it's six dolla's per hour, four fifty af'er union fees an' taxes. *(No reaction from the girls. He pretends as if there is the usual groaning and complaining associate with the announcing of such impossibly low wages.)*

Hey, I gotta be legit, a'ite. Now, this'd give y'all an incenti'tive t'show yer talent. Imma kinda like a records company, and y'all my artists. I ain't payin' you much, but hey, Imma givin' you the chance to broadcast yer'self. Publicity, aite. Gold shit. Imma like the gallery fer you to show yer art to the world, aite? That good'ol good'ol natural beauty o'yers. An' if the world likes yer stuff, ye'get a buyer-bonus fer da'night. *(Raises bushy eyebrows suggestively)*

Talent, aite? *(He slaps a smoking girl's ass, as he exits. She apathetically blows a puff of smoke in his face. He doesn't react to it, as he lets the door marked "BOSS" slam shut behind him.)*

**MARILYN**

*(Monologue, aside.)* What if I never signed that blasted contract? Would I still be here? Where else would I be? What would I be doing?

*(She ambles towards EVELYN's box as she ponders the possibilities. In this scene, EVELYN's box serves as a mirror. As she makes eye contact with EVELYN, EVELYN's eyes suddenly pop open, so that the box shows a "real" reflection.)*

Would I be showcasing *this* as art? *(She gives a bitter laugh, as she gestures at her body, while looking at herself in the "mirror," i.e., EVELYN's box.)*

**MARILYN**

Would I be selling my body for...

*MARILYN looks at the bunch of strippers gathered together on one side of the stage, the side she'd walked*

*away from. Some of them have pulled off their long arm-length Cinderella-ball-gloves. Ugly syringe marks brand the niche in the left arm of several girls—the stigma of the heroin addict:*

**STRIPPER 1**

Hero's gonna make mah night. (*Injects herself.*)

**STRIPPER 2**

*This is the meaning of life. (Injects herself.)*

**MARILYN**

Ephemeral pleasures... (*She looks at her "reflection," i.e., Evelyn.*)  
But, what *else* is there to life? We live and then we die, we go from—

**STRIPPER 3**

Hero to hero. (*Injects herself.*)

**STRIPPER 4**

Mortal coil, no longer. (*Injects herself.*)

**MARILYN**

What if I could live as myself—my true self?

*Lights suddenly go out in the bar. MARILYN stands in the middle of the stage. A faint eerie surreal spotlight on EVELYN; a solid spotlight on MARILYN. Darkness, all around.*

**MARILYN**

Who am I? (*Trails off...*) I was born an orphan...

To no home, to no one... The lone child of the world...

*A pale ghastly spotlight suddenly on the strippers.*

**STRIPPER 2**

Well I was born to a broken crate,  
All splintered up, not much like a box.

**STRIPPER 3**

And I, to a broken bottle—of drink neverending.

**MARILYN**

I thought I was doing a monologue.

**STRIPPER 2**

So you are.

*Light on strippers suddenly blackouts.*

**STRIPPER 4**

*(Voice from the darkness.)* We listen, and we are always here—we just don't always appear so.

**MARILYN**

Well, I was born an orphan.

**STRIPPER 4**

And, I was born out of thin air—foooP!

**MARILYN**

*(Blatantly ignores voice by speaking away from it, towards the front of the stage—the audience.)*  
My mother died before I was born—her heart stopped, a prenatal complication, a second later, and I would have gone with her. My father, no one knows.

*MARILYN pauses for a moment, uncertain, as if waiting for a stripper to interrupt her. It appears that she is alone, truly alone. MARILYN closes her eyes. She begins her tale in darkness:*

**MARILYN**

The day I was born...

The Sisters at the orphanage envisioned a halo around my head. They saw a holiness I, myself, can't see. A divine birth, they called it. A miraculous conception. A miracle delivered. It was a miracle that I survived. A miracle that I continued doing so---a miracle that I continued surviving.

You see, my mother was a chronic alcoholic, and among other things, she held the same profession as my own. She was a stripper and a prostitute. According to the doctors, she contracted HIV prior to her death. But, my blood test remained negative, always. It was as if the disease had died with her, and... as if I was born to a new life, freed of her sins.

Sister Anne raised me. She was the librarian—or “The Guardian of the Scriptures,” as she preferred to be known. She read to me. She showed me the beauty and subtlety of language, and she asked me to echo back to her what I had heard. The first words I spoke was a complete line from scripture:

**MARILYN**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

**EVELYN**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

**MARILYN**

John 3:16. *(Long contemplating pause.)*

She gave me my first pen when I was three. And, I wrote. And wrote, and wrote.

It was Sister Fatima who first announced my talent to the world—the only world I knew at the age of three. She planned my first poetry recital. It was to an audience of orphans.

I painted the world through words. I invented new colors, new sensations. I made music out of mere

syllables. Through words, I wove a tapestry of existence... I finished my poems. They clapped, politely. But, I was left with an emptiness. That they didn't hear, didn't care. That they weren't there. That it was to a dark oblivion that I spoke to. A nothingness bereft of consciousness...

I would never get to recite my words again. Was it the Fate's cruel response to the arrogance and incisive judgment of my nine-year-old mind?

The next day, when the Sisters took us to the park... I wandered astray of the pack.  
I was kidnapped.

**EVELYN**

An orphan girl to disappear.  
The shepherd cannot find his sheep.

**MARILYN**

Who would notice? I wasn't sure of my disappearance myself, either.

One moment I was in the park. The next, I was suffocating in darkness. The back trunk of some forlorn trunk. I, along with, the other girls caught wandering amock—ripped from our lives, forced into another kind.

For four years, I worked in a sweat shop. I was surrounded by the very mindlessness that I first saw in that poetry reading, so long ago. For four years...

**EVELYN**

The sheep worked for the fox.  
It did its work for it.  
The fox grew nigh on fat.

**MARILYN**

And then came the eve of my thirteen birthday. I knew from the disappearance of my older sweat shop sisters that I was to be sent off the next day. One needs not the rumors for a reason; there is only one endeavor of more monetary efficiency than the machinery that exploits the unpaid sweatshop workchild. The cruel labor of our lives had made us older than we were—coarser, more cynical, more eligible... I was to be sent off to become a prostitute. A girl pretending to be a woman.

I ran away, that faithful night.

**EVELYN**

The sheep did dream.  
And it dreamt of leaving the fox.  
To escape to the green pastures of its dreams.  
The orphan girl dreams, too.

**MARILYN**

Perhaps I was the first to do so. There were no obstacles in my way. No barbed wire fences. No security. No armed guards to shoot me down, me, the expendable runaway sweatshop workchild. Perhaps I was the only girl who still knew that there existed a freedom outside the sweatshop walls.

*MARILYN looks out into the depths of the audience,*

*with an extremely forlorn look. EVELYN starts crying, tears falling from closed eyelids. Projector shows this.*

**MARILYN**

I stepped out into the streets of an urban city.

It was cold. Mercilessly so. And, I found myself starving. I fainted in the dark depths of an alley.

I woke up to a light. A bright light through the crack of a door. There was a large wooden sign above me.

I felt a welcoming wave of euphoria when I first saw it—it was the first word I had read in four years. In the sweatshop, we lived as mere animals. Illiterate, the lot of us. Some of us unable to speak. Most of us, unthinking, always, by sheer exhaustion incapable of thought. Doomed to stay ignorant, thus easily manipulated. Expendable, each of us not important, but needed in the same way that a fraction of a cog in the machine makes it run.

The fateful words I read after my long sojourn from WORDS were: (*Mouth agape in wonder.*)

**BAR BOSS**

(*Voice from shadows off stage.*) “The Styx.” Girl, you lookin’ at the sign of “The Styx.” You lookin’ on workin’ here?

**MARILYN**

The hunger gnawed at me, as the dimmest traces of my memories of a life long before stirred in me the concept undermining the modern world. The voice in my head told me that in the real world there was something called money. Money bought things. Money bought food. I needed food. Very badly. Very, very, badly...

**EVELYN**

On top of the world, I looked down...  
I saw naught but an abyss everlasting.

**MARILYN**

Fate would have my life exactly the way it is. Free choice only to decide *how* I approach my destined career, but not to deny it.

I had no ID. I looked of age. The Boss had a fake one drawn up for me.

**EVELYN**

The date was wrong.  
The time was wrong.  
My whole life went by:  
My youth stolen  
By creed of a piece of paper.

**MARILYN**

They asked me for my name, and I answered “Marilyn.” But, the fake ID maker was part deaf, and he wrote down “Maria.” They made up my surname and they sped up the years of my life. In the flash of a moment, I became known as “Maria Haley, Age 18.”

*MARILYN turns to the side towards where the strippers (still hidden in the dark), away from the audience.*

**MARILYN**

Maria Haley worked with the other ghouls at The Styx, but try as she did, she couldn't become a ghoul. She learned the ways of the ghouls, and she became hungry no longer. She learned how to haunt, and she made a lot of money. She let the ghouls induct her into their coven, and she became a heroin addict.

More and more, she craved. More and more, she wanted. More and more, she lusted...

*MARILYN pauses and freezes.*

**EVELYN**

“Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all convictions, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.”  
(Credit: W. B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”)

*MARILYN turns back to the audience, regains motion.*

**MARILYN**

And that was how it went, the story of my life.

*Lights turn on suddenly to signal the thought-change.  
The bar-scene is again illuminated.*

**MARILYN**

No... I-I cannot imagine any other life. I cannot imagine myself in... (She looks at her “reflection,” scrutinizes it. Ponders for a moment. Beat.)

But... What if I had a twin? Someone like me, and yet *unlike* me. Someone whom was born to be me or... a version of me. Yes, a different version of me... One who lived a totally different life.

A nice life. She grew up in a cottage in the hills. She woke up everyday to the sunrise peering through the mountainside surrounding her, protecting her from... from the outside world. She grew up running carefree through wild country grass—green and tall and wavy in the wind. She picked daisies in the sun... And she wove crowns made of wildflowers in bloom. She was a princess of her world.

**STRIPPER 1**

There ain't such things as princesses anymore.

*MARILYN spins from the mirror to look at strippers.*

**STRIPPER 4**

I doubt there are stretches of idyllic storybook lands like that still in existence.

**STRIPPER 1**

Yeah, as I was sayin', the princesses an' all 'em royal'ers got staked by the people. First there was that socialism or commy sham. And then everyone figured out the joke was on them, so it all got replaced by this hoax called democracy. An' the wildlands, girl? You know that the metro you live in now's built on toppa one. They all gone, girl. Replaced by grungy hopeless places jus' like this.

**MARILYN**

*(Startled voice.)* So you heard me.

**STRIPPER 1**

Yeah, sista, we heard'ja. All of'us did. We just don' always respond to what we see and hear.

**STRIPPER 2**

Perhaps it's better that way.

**STRIPPER 1**

Yeah girl, it's better to just phase out, let life go. You know the Energizer Bunny? Well, life is kinda like that. It doesn't keep goin' and goin' and goin'. It just goes for a while, and then it dies. That's life.

**SMOKER STRIPPER**

Oui, c'est la vie. *(Blows a puff of smoke.)*

**STRIPPER 4**

The point is that a perfect life like that can't exist in real life.

**BONDAGE STRIPPER**

*(With Maniac-like passion)* It's all about the torture, the struggle, the pain and, oh, the sweet, sweet paaaaaiinn. *(Beat. Apathetic voice.)* I'm leaving for my 2 AM—ahem—bonus-buyer.

**STRIPPER 5**

*(With faint mockery.)* Farewell my dearest Mistress Ivanna the Terrible.

**SMOKER STRIPPER**

*(In an affected French accent.)* A mon plus cher masochiste: bon appétit et adieu!  
*(Blows a very heavy puff of smoke and after it clears, it appears that all but the four heroin-addict strippers and herself remain.)*

**STRIPPER 1**

Here girl, I'd let you jive on a deuce of my goods. *(Holds out to MARILYN a small baggy.)*

*MARILYN takes a few steps lessening the stage-gap between the other strippers and herself. Stops in midstep. She looks back at her "reflection." Wavers between motion and stillness.*

**MARILYN**

I...

**STRIPPER 1**

C'mon girl. It's black tar hero—straight from TJ. You know you want some.

**MARILYN**

*(In a determined voice.)* I... I believe she exists.

**STRIPPER 1**

Whatja talkin' bout now?

**STRIPPER 4**

Whom?

**MARILYN**

*(Uncertain at first, but certainty develops as she confabulates.)* My twin. My identical twin. The... the version of me that lived a different life. I believe it's possible. I believe it's possible to live the perfect life. A life away from all this. A life where a girl doesn't have to sell her body for money. A life where a girl doesn't have to put up with a nasty job like this, where she should be able to do what she truly wants to do. A life where she could be free to be whom she is, whom she was born to be, was meant to be—without having to worry about 'the world and all that.' The perfect existence—where she could be her true self, so that she could truly live—

**STRIPPER 4**

A perfect life like that can't exist in the real world. Think about it.

**STRIPPER 1**

Money buys ya'everything. Can't live without hero. Can't live without money. She'd hafta get a nasty job or she won't get da moolah. She ain't getting' her hero otherwise.  
*(Beat.)* Y'know what? *If* she were free to do whatever she wanted *(mocking voice)* "what she truly wanted to do" she'd... She'd hafta live in a black box or somethin.' It'd be crazy.

**MARILYN**

*(Whisper or in a wondering voice:)*

A black box...

Yes. That's it. She'd have to live in a black box. My twin—Eve Lynn, that's her name—lives in a black box!

**STRIPPER 2**

All alone in a black box?

**STRIPPER 4**

Beyond a cloister and mere nunnery...

**MARILYN**

Yes... *(beat)*

The Madonna apart from others. I'm... *(beat)*

*(Slightly uncertain voice.)*

I'm going to find her.

## SMOKER STRIPPER

Into the rabbit hole, we go...

*SMOKER STRIPPER blows a huge puff of smoke. All strippers disappear when the smoke clears. MARILYN, who stands a distance away from the smoke-cloud, remains all alone on stage.*

*MARILYN turns to directly face the audience. EVELYN pantomimes, as if a mime stuck in a box.*

## MARILYN

*(Quietly, but in a more determined voice.)* I'm going to find her.

*Lights fade out.*

## Scene 5: The Pythia at Delphi

*Upstairs corridor of a luxury hotel—with an indoor imitation of a royal garden. Bright, vibrant flowers spark green fronds. Rose bushes near the room doors.*

*EVELYN's box stands in the middle of this garden. She appears as if a Renaissance statue, and there are several engravings on marbled pillars around her. One of them reveals the scene with the telltale words, "The Pythia at Delphi."*

*In the midst of this garden of youthful beauty, there stands an OLD LADY in suspended animation. She's partially hidden behind EVELYN's box, but, quite suddenly, she jumps out of the garden and onto the carpeted corridor floor.*

*The OLD LADY walks conspicuously across the stage. She holds a wilted rose in her hands.*

*The OLD LADY places (tapes/binds) the wilted rose to a long, conspicuously untrimmed outgrowth of a rose bush outside Hotel Room 2006. She walks across the stage; exits.*

*MARILYN enters.*

## MARILYN

A job of *this* life. *(Approaches door of Hotel Room 2006.)*

Wretched.

A wilted rose... *(Cups the wilted rose in her hand.)*

Lost in a Garden of Beauty. *(Speaks to the rose:)*

*Multimedia projector shows the image of a pale rose, standing still. And then, quite abruptly, its time-spaced wilting:*

### MARILYN

“How many flowers die in the Wood—  
Or perish from the Hill—  
Without the privilege to know  
That they are Beautiful.” (Credit: Emily Dickinson.)

*The rose falls apart to pieces in her hand. As its petals fall to the floor, the multimedia projector shows a close-up of the faded rose’s petals falling. Blackout.*

### Scene 6: Death and An Epiphany

*The scene is, once again, a bedroom—with mainly a bed and TV. However, its profligate opulence contrasts with Marilyn’s dilapidated tenement room. This is, after all, a five-star hotel—a palace away from home. The window drapes are open, and from the bright side of the tinted windows, one sees only the black oblivion of the night. Ambient bright light warms up the scene.*

*EVELYN’s box is crystal-clear in this scene, no veil; in fact, since Marilyn, the actress, does not appear in this scene, Marilyn may replace Evelyn in the box. Spotlight on EVELYN throughout scene.*

*MR. BLACKWOOD, a man dressed all in white, dims down the light (enough so that the actor’s features become indistinguishable from that of a stunt-twin’s). He takes off his dark-glasses. He stands perfectly still, a few feet away from the door. He waits.*

*The scene is silent and still for a few moments—as if time has stopped and might not start again—until... The sound of a key turning, a doorknob unwinding.*

*Marilyn’s SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE enters. She wears a body-covering discreet trench coat.*

*MR. BLACKWOOD stands gaping at her.*

*Multimedia projector turns on suddenly. It shows a pre-recorded close-up of Mr. Blackwood’s face, mouthing the words, “Oh Lord, help me... I am a monster”—in-sync with Evelyn’s voicing of those words. MR. BLACKWOOD, on-stage, remains immovably still—mouth agape, but unmoving.*

**EVELYN**

Oh Lord, help me... I am a monster.

*MR. BLACKWOOD breaks out of trance. He walks over to Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE, escorts her into the room.*

**MR. BLACKWOOD**

Good evening, my dear. You look lovely.

*They stop awkwardly in front of the massive bed taking up most of the area of the room. (The set should make it obvious that although this is a 5-star luxury hotel, this man can only afford its cheapest room: the walls and décor of it look of palace-like grandiosity, but it's just all in a very confining space.)*

*Spotlight on EVELYN brightens.*

**EVELYN**

*Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE, with a bored expression, throws off her trench coat with no sign of triumph or grandeur, revealing a professional slut outfit. Perhaps silken lingerie, with an array of satin sashes... (so that even after Mr. Blackwood ravages her by tearing off her sashes, the play might still pass for PG-13)*

So innocently, the maiden flower  
Blooms, opens up her spring beauty to the  
World, the fatal, fatal world... the ugly.

*As EVELYN continues her poem, MR. BLACKWOOD ravages Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE: he tears off all the sashes, acting like a male dog responding to a bitch in heat. Mindlessly, brutally, but mundanely, he runs his hands all over her...*

A miasma of pollen, too rampant  
Poison, the silent killer elixir  
Too much, more than fate would allow the bud.

*MR. BLACKWOOD drags her to bed. Lights dim to darkness. If possible, show silhouette of bodies writhing to some ugly one-sided-pleasure sex.*

Over-pollination, the flower wilts:  
She was never meant to take on all that.

*MR. BLACKWOOD moans and grunts.*

*Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE is silent. Her long hair dangles off her head, tilted off the side of the bed. Her eyes look up to the world, upside down. There is a strangely serene expression on her face. A faint spotlight on her head—bright enough to highlight her position, but faint enough so that her features are blurred.*

*Multimedia projector shows a pre-shot close-up of Marilyn's head tilted off the side of the bed (in Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE's current position). Her expression is serene or nonchalant, as EVELYN attempts to describe the thing the scene lacks:*

**EVELYN**

Love, monogamous: the one, true passion of my existence.  
Of two souls entwined unto eternity...  
The essence of the moment: fleeting, yet so great  
As to transcend time.

Love, monogamous: the one, true feeling of my life.  
Of two sentience linked to each other...  
The essence of the moment: fleeting, yet so great  
As to transcend space.

*Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE lifts her head up, slightly, as if she's heard Evelyn's lines. (Both the DOUBLE on stage and the pre-recorded close-up displayed on the multimedia projector should show this.) She smiles with a nostalgic look, as if she's not in the hotel room, but elsewhere, in some idyllic fantasy world... even as MR. BLACKWOOD builds up his sexual vigor motion in-sync with some of EVELYN's more rhythmic lines:*

**EVELYN**

A whisper in the dark, a promise subject to lie.  
She hears me. She knows me. She shares  
My passion, my life, my body.

A phantom limb in the dark, a disembodied hand on my back.  
A sense of missing, a tragic hurt, a wrenched heart,  
A hollow core, an emptiness, a nothingness,  
A deep dark oblivion, the black abyss that has become of the universe.  
A sense of sinking, falling, a leaden weight, down, down, down...

*Marilyn's SLUT-STUNT-DOUBLE, still upside down*

*over side of bed, shows a horrid expression on her face. (Projector shows this.)*

**EVELYN (cont'd)**

A crippled body, bones shattered,  
Its skull smashed, all its secrets revealed.  
A helpless spirit disembodied,  
Severed from the world for all eternity,  
Voice no voice, word no word, end no beginning,  
As if a message forever lost in a sealed bottle adrift in the sea,  
As if a fated corpse forever locked up in an airtight black box.

*(SLUT- DOUBLE covers eyes with hands in distress. Multimedia projector pre-shot syncs shows face up close.)*

But, what of a world where you *cannot* lie,  
Where you cannot shun, cannot deny, cannot reject  
Yourself. That you can live as you are:  
Unafraid of your love, your deepest passion.  
Where you live apart from it, your distinction divine  
Sets you above, away, from the mere mundane.  
Where you are free to love, your distinction divine  
Sets you above, away, from the mere mundane.  
Where you hear your own words—my words,  
Where you see your true self, cherish, accept it:  
Grow into it, become it.  
Where you never abandoned it,  
Was never forlorn to the dearest one of all:  
Where you *let* yourself love me.

*(SLUT-DOUBLE slowly unfurls her hands. Multimedia projector pre-shot shows a look of wonder slowly spreading across her visage.)*

*MR. BLACKWOOD begins to quicken his pace.*

*Marilyn's SEX-STUNT-DOUBLE puts a finger to her mouth, striking a contemplating pose. (She is still upside down, hair dangling off her head over the side of the bed.)*

What of a world where you made not that first mistake?  
That first fall, so gently off that mountainside precipice.  
Afloat in the air, the fog a succumbing miasma,  
That slowly drags you down, downwards towards  
That living death that is your hell on earth,  
Those myriad lies, the demons you yourself created.

Where truth is truth, and your nature, yours, undeniable.  
Where you live, *truly* live, where  
You let no worldly army chase you to the edge.  
Where you live, *truly* live, where  
You stood your ground, knowing they cannot move you.

*MR. BLACKWOOD is about to climax.*

*Marilyn's SEX-STUNT-DOUBLE looks as if she's received some sort of spiritual enlightenment—an epiphany of epiphanies. Multimedia projector shows this via a pre-shot close-up of Marilyn's expression.*

**MARILYN (CONT'D)**

A whisper in the dark, a promise subject to lie.  
She hears me. She knows me. She voices  
The words from my mouth, my mind, my soul.

*Multimedia projector suddenly blacks out. (There should now be only a spotlight on EVELYN and faint illumination on DOUBLE and BLACKWOOD, as described earlier.)*

*Fades in on projector: Close-up of EVELYN looking divine, perhaps with a halo around her head.*

**EVELYN**

You've heard me. You've known me.  
You see me.

*MR. BLACKWOOD falls on top of Marilyn's SEX-STUNT-DOUBLE suddenly. He lies very still on her back. Deathly still, as if he's carried out his last act in life—the dying man's final viaticum.*

*Marilyn's SEX-STUNT DOUBLE pushes BLACKWOOD off her. His body falls limply onto the bed. She walks in a trance-like fashion towards EVELYN's projected image. She reaches out towards the projected image, to touch it. But, just as her hand is close enough to touch it, EVELYN's image disappears as projector blanks out suddenly.*

*Blackout. (DOUBLE is replaced by MARILYN)*

Scene 7: Fate

*MARILYN walks back to bed. She sits there, still for a moment. Then, she cocks her head in the air. The sense of something wrong. She taps MR. BLACKWOOD. No response. She shakes him. No response. She puts her hand to his nose:*

**MARILYN**

Oh God, he's not breathing!

*MARILYN slaps MR. BLACKWOOD. His head falls limply astray at an odd angle. White froth drips from his mouth.*

**MARILYN**

Oh God... *(She fumbles with the bedside phone. Dials three digits. Speaks to the phone:)*

Hi, my name is Marilyn, and there's a... complication. This man I was sleeping with, he—er—he just stopped moving. *(Shakes her head impatiently as she listens to the phone.)*

No, he's not sleeping. I... I think he's de— *(She looks distressed. Pulls at her hair with free hand.)*

No, I'm not going to jump to conclusions. He just stopped moving, all of a sudden. And, when I slapped him to wake him, his head just went limp to one side. And there's this gross white froth dripping out of his mouth. *(Nods her head several times to the phone, still looking distressed.)*

Yes, I understand how anything I do might lead to further medical complications. I'd leave him in the exact same position—other than his head bent in a wry angle, I'd say he looks pretty comfy. I'm at The Royal Hotel on Everest Street. Room 2006. It's near *The Styx*, off Stygian. *(Nods her head a few more times.)*

Yes, I'm—I'm fine, I think. I'm okay. I'll try to remain calm... I'll wait for you guys...

*MARILYN hangs up, sinks down limply on bed. Silence for a few minutes. She is lying on the bed, with her hair sprawled out, a kind of lewd abandon about her that disappears after a few moment. A look of lost in her eyes. (Multimedia projector shows the change in facial expression.) She forgets the presence of the dead man next to her, and she speaks her mind:*

**MARILYN**

I saw my sister. So real—too real. More real than... than reality itself.  
*(Beat.)* I'm going to find her.

I have decided to stop fearing it.

That... Obsession infernal:

Pen in hand, a piece of scrap paper in front of me.

I'd close my eyes. I'd float in the darkness,

The moment of nothingness suddenly replaced

By an instant of certainty, a rush of a feeling,

As if a holy communion with the divine, beyond...

And then the words would come, would flow, would bleed forth from me,

My mind as if an open wound, fountaining off ichor with some diabolical wild abandon.

And then the words would come, would flow, would bleed forth from me,

As if bespelled my hand would move, would glide, would fly...

By a force beyond me, a purpose divine,

The gift bestowed me.

I'd write and write.

Pen neverending.

That... Obsession infernal:

I'd no longer stop myself. I'd no longer hold back. I'd no longer shun my poetry.

I *will* find my long lost twin sister Evelyn:

There *will* be beauty and hope to light up this dark and forlorn world.

**MARILYN (CONT'D)**

*(Uncertain voice.)* It would be all-encompassing. If I let that obsession loose, I wouldn't be able to control it. I'd be like some puppet of the gods—the cruel fates: I'd write and write and write—and never be able to stop. It would be... Life-consuming. If... if I were to free myself of the world. To write only to write. To live only to live...

*Loud rapping at the door. Sound of a low-quality radio receiver from right outside. The door is kicked down. A FIREFIGHTER jumps in.*

**FIREFIGHTER**

How now, fair maiden thine?

Is that yonder gentleman befallen

The very one that ye called us in for?

*(Skips over and checks BLACKWOOD's pulse.)*

Nay, he breathes not and has no life's pulse.

*(Puts hands to BLACKWOOD's heart.)*

Nay, his heartbeat escapes me: his heart's stopped.

I prithee, fair maiden...

This man's darkest hours have long passed, for he is—

*(Aside:)* Faith, my firefighter's soul... I must tell.

Your betrothed—your beloved man... This man

Shall no longer walk the earth or take part

In all its beauties. There shall be no spring

For his pitied soul—he is no more!

**MARILYN**

*(Gasps.)* The Fates...

**FIREFIGHTER**

Now now, my dear. There is life after death.

This man has died, but you, yourself lives on.

His memories are all that remains' him.

He is survived by you and you alone.

Let your love for him transcend the body.

Let your love for him consul—comfort you.

The Fates preach bitter lessons in cruelty:

The tragedies they weave for divine plan

Cut short the life of a man, blindly so—

For justice cannot be biased. She is

Blindfolded so that she delivers he—

And only he—whose time has clearly come

The sweet viaticum at the end of

This dream, which we so naively call life.

The Celestial Cycle must continue.

Its gears that turns time into millen'um,

Its machinery antediluvian:

A lone goddess churns its motor, turning

Turning, turning, her hands cranking, cranking

**FIREFIGHTER (CONT'D)**

The wheel that drives our lives onwards unto...  
The tragedy of the moment: Young Love,  
Ended too soon. His once bride, his once wife,  
His once dearest... a widow made of she.

**MARILYN**

*(About to protest that she's not his wife, nor a widow. That the firefighter has wrongly dramatized the situation.)* But—

*Two policemen jump into the hotel room.  
FIREFIGHTER sinks back into the scenery, perhaps  
sitting still on an armchair.*

**POLICE 1 AND 2**

We have come.  
By and by, flights of fancy through the streets,  
A race through the gaps amongst wanton cars:  
Sirens ringing, radio blasting—we come!

*POLICE 3 runs panting into the scene. Another one  
follows behind him.*

*POLICE 3 stands staring at BLACKWOOD, mouth  
agape:*

**POLICE 3**

Dear God!  
Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?  
*(Turns to POLICE 4.)* Dear Officer! Is this not *him*?  
The one we have been searching for, ever so  
Long... Amidst nightless days, scouring data  
Continental, ubiquitous, for *him*—  
Signs of his presence, *his* whereabouts hence.

**POLICE 4**

Aye, Officer. It is *he*, the very  
One we have kept so dearly in our hearts.  
The maniac killer of a thousand  
Orphans. Pitiful, homeless, street urchins—  
Nay, all that, but children nevertheless.

**POLICE 1**

The childkiller's dead. Thither, his body!

*POLICE 2 proceeds to chalking the outline of  
BLACKWOOD's body. POLICE 3 snaps photos.  
POLICE 1 approaches the body, pokes it. Checks for  
pulse and heartbeat.*

**FIREFIGHTER**

Officers, dear, our man there is flat dead.

**POLICE 1**

All's well, then. For that fair maiden thither (*gestures to MARILYN*)  
Shall not suffer the pains of murderous death.  
Yonder serial killer is no longer!

**POLICE 3**

Hooray!

**POLICE 1**

(*To Marilyn:*) Dear Maiden, grieve not! For, it was either  
He or you. If this foul creep survivith  
This night, then you would not see the sunrise  
Of day, most fair, most clear, for the safe world.

**POLICE 2**

Just this: He has died, and now you shall live.

*Two EMS interns run in. EMS INTERN 2 is a step  
behind as he drags a giant electrocution machine and  
gurney with him.*

**EMS INTERN 1**

How now? A man, too still!  
Apprentice intern of mine, thou watch me  
Resuscitate this dead body with the  
Heavy thunderbolts of Zeus, All Mighty! (*Prepares to electroshock BLACKWOOD.*)

**POLICE 1**

If the law may interfere...  
I must not allow you to revive him.

**POLICE 3**

Nay, for he is a grave man, more so than  
The gravest man, for this man before you  
Kills children for sport, jolly merriment.

**POLICE 2**

The law is in our hands. We want him dead.

**POLICE 1**

Nay, more aptly put: this man is already  
Fallen, thus our job the easier, the streets  
Safer—there's no need to bring danger back.

**EMS INTERN 2**

But, but... We are sworn to Hippocrates!  
We must abet all, whether good or bad—

**EMS INTERN 1**

(To police.) Never you mind my young apprentice here.  
He knows not what his crazy mind talks of.  
We shall ignore the body, as you wish.  
Not attempt to bring it back to dear life.  
Instead, we shall set him on that gurney  
And bring him back in a big plastic bag.

*EMS INTERN 2 places a large body bag on the gurney. Then he begins to drag BLACKWOOD onto the gurney wheeled to the side of the bed.*

**EMS INTERN 2**

But what of our Oath to our Profession?

**EMS INTERN 1**

There is none higher than that of the law.  
(*More quietly, to EMS INTERN 2:*) And, these officers enforce, thus make it.

(*Walks away from EMS INTERN 2, towards MARILYN with the intention of asking her out*)  
And you, my dear, a lone flower lost in—  
(*Beat.*) What is your relation to this *foul* man? (*Points at half-wrapped BLACKWOOD.*)

**MARILYN**

I slept with him.

**EMS INTERN 2**

Number One! There is white froth dripping forth.

**EMS INTERN 1**

You *slept* with him? (Spits.)

**EMS INTERN 2**

His skin is much too pallid, and his body—  
Too emaciated. His death, why now?

**EMS INTERN 1**

Why now? Why, t'is his hour, of course. But, then...  
He seems fairly young, but his body frail—  
Eaten away, as if by a force  
Greater than life, stronger than he who's lost.  
Took him from within... a disease in him!  
(*Beat.*) It can only be—  
Number Two, fetch the OraQuick!

**EMS INTERN 2**

Do you think? No, such evil cannot be.  
The Fates...  
They cannot be so cruel... Nay, this man has...  
Already done his sin to this dear world:  
Wanton childslaughter, and now this...

**EMS INTERN 1**

My years of night as days, working this shift.  
My experience aplenty, my intuition my guide,  
The twists and turns of this celestial plot  
Oft involve *ugly* weavings of this sort.

*(Ruminating voice.)*

A man weeping beside his dying son.  
I had come in time, and yet I had not.  
The little boy's skin did burn, was blackened—  
All of a sudden, of youth's crazy  
Fancy, he had jumped 'to the fireplace,  
To the depths of the bluest fire hence—  
His dear father could not save him in time.  
Alack, outside the room, in the hallway,  
There was a clamorous sound, a wry scream  
And then silence. His mother had fallen  
Down the very flight of stairs she had trod  
Day by day to fetch her dear son's breakfast.  
She missed a step, and then she broke her neck.  
Father, the sorrowful lone survivor,  
Told me to call Sister on the other  
Side of the world to tell her of this thing.  
And while I faithfully kept back my tears,  
To complete my necessary task full,  
Father, in a sweep of a moment, the  
Blink of an eye, took forth from the drawer  
The proverbial gun, and he left me...  
Of three deaths witness I in span of three  
Minutes, hence, all's quiet aside from I.  
Much that I have learned: my youth torn away,  
My innocent idealism—that I  
Might be able to help, to do great good:  
Ease the suffering in this wretched world—  
Severed, a part of me lost forever.

**EMS INTERN 2**

But I don't believe the Fates to be cruel. (*Administers the OraQuick test to MARILYN.*)

**MARILYN**

What am I being tested for?

**EMS INTERN 1**

It is the disease of sinners set forth  
By the Almighty to clean this here world.

**EMS INTERN 2**

This here is the HIV-1 Rapid  
Antibody test. Non-invasive. Quick.

*EMS INTERN 2 takes a swab of MARILYN's tongue, then places specimen collector in a tube. He pricks her finger with a needle.*

**EMS INTERN 2**

A drop of blood, a pinprick of crimson.  
My test tube specimen is all complete.

*EMS INTERN 2 mixes her blood in tube.*

**MARILYN**

The ichor of mine falls:  
Slowly, ever so slowly  
Unto the test tube,  
Where it is mixed,  
The colors swirl,  
And we all play  
The waiting game.

*Lights dim slightly. Silence and stillness for a few minutes.*

**EMS INTERN 2**

Twenty minutes have passed. The test is done.

**EVELYN**

But, fate holds us  
Not in suspense:  
For we know already that  
There is more darkness  
Than there is light in the world—  
However diligently the sunrise  
Fights in its daily battles against the night—  
A story may only end in tragedy,  
The nature of the world  
Must hold the result as—

*The open drapes reveal the window to the world—daylight is near, sunrise is about to come.*

*The sun rises. Dawn streams in through the windows.*

**EMS INTERN 2**

Positive.

**MARILYN**

Positive?

**EMS INTERN 1**

*(Walks over to see result.)* Yes, positive.

**MARILYN**

The Fates... they mock me.

**EMS INTERN 1**

Cruel, they are.

**FIREFIGHTER**

But *just*, as just as just can be.

*The police's walkie-talkie goes off suddenly.*

**WALKIE TALKIE**

“T minus 10. Terrorist with bomb threat on Peace Street. All forces gather around on Peace Street.”

**POLICE 1**

A ticking time bomb about to go wry.

**POLICE 3**

Tick tock.

**POLICE 2**

The lives of innocent helpless hostages.

**POLICE 1**

Entrapped in the building.

**POLICE 4**

The loyal secretary.

**POLICE 2**

Bound to this world.

**POLICE 4**

The honest CEO.

**POLICE 2**

Bound to this world.

**POLICE 4**

The janitor who actually cleans.

**POLICE 2**

Bound to this world.

**POLICE 3**

Tick tock.

*There is suddenly a loud crash from the walkie-talkie.*

**POLICE 1**

We protect and serve.

**POLICE 2**

But, we cannot save...

**POLICE 4**

... in time.

**POLICE 3**

Tick tock.

*The lights fade a bit. Spotlight on TV in hotel room.  
The TV eerily turns on:*

**TV NEWSWOMAN**

The talent in the world trickles away  
But, they're rarely talent, for they know not  
Their shine, hidden luster of kismet:  
Their core melts unto sewer depths, today.

*Lights fade out.*