

Out of the Blue

Out of the Blue was first produced by Padua Playwrights at The Lost Studio, Los Angeles, 2007, under the direction of Guy Zimmerman, and with the following cast:

Gary Lee Kissman

Mama Bean Tina Preston

DaddyO Hugh Dane

Chorus Mary Greening

Dr. Jones Gray Palmer

Danny Andy Hopper

Laura Niamh McCormally

Antonio Mark Adair Rios

Characters

Gary *Our Hero*

Mama Bean *His mother*

DaddyO *His stepfather*

Dr. Jones *His “doctor”*

Danny Boy *His dead son*

Antonio / Chauncey *“The Angel of Death,” the Cameraman*

Laura *His dead friend, the Girl on the Bed*

Chorus (*italics*) *Gloria, Freud, Einstein, Policeman, Security, Rule’ (Rulay), etc.*

Scene

A platform in space; above a flood; a hospital room; an airport; hell; etc.

Chorus lines are in italics; parentheses are asides.

- Mama Bean** If you don't want something, then you don't have to worry if you don't get it.
- DaddyO** I went to China one time.
- Mama Bean** Not what you went, what you want.
(Sex. More and more sex. Fame, more and more fame. Gold, more and more gold.)
- DaddyO** What it meant, the hordes and the shouting, falling off the edge of the world.
- Mama Bean** China!
- DaddyO** Slamming their bodies around, and then—the abyss.
I see them now, scarf to scarf, silken thread in the black cold shining as they fall.
- Mama Bean** Falling naked through the sky.
- DaddyO** And everything is the way it is because it is that way.
- Mama Bean** Has to be.
- DaddyO** So it's all right.
- Mama Bean** What are you going to do? C'est la vie.
- DaddyO** Where the light is neither warm nor wet so the sex dries up and there is no issuing forth, and a good thing, too, say I. Enuff is enuff wid all da reproducing dere. Save da semen dere. Be immortal, says I.
Electro-chemico-magnetico!
- Mama Bean** And so we shimmer and shine.

In the light of the sun.

- DaddyO** And so we're left hanging.
In the solar wind.
- Mama Bean** Again and a gun.
- DaddyO** A string of family photos crackling into deep space and flickering out...
- Mama Bean** One by one...
- DaddyO** Like firecrackers.
- Mama Bean** Flashes in the sky. An exuberant cloud.
(Or crowd.)
- DaddyO** Like a hurricane, or a typhoon...
(Or a flood.)
- Mama Bean** Or a deluge!
As Mama Bean looks out through her eyes at the storm of mankind and Baby Bean says:
- Baby Gary** What's wrong with DaddyO?
- Mama Bean** Don't bother Daddy. He doesn't feel good about himself for some reason.
(He's a jerk for some reason.)
- Mama Bean** Don't bother Daddy.
(He drinks too much and he eats too much.)
- Mama Bean** For some reason.
(The fat head.)
And DaddyO says:
- DaddyO** I never thought I'd be fat.
I never thought that fat would apply to me.
Not me.
I never thought I'd ever be fat.
And now I am.
(Fat.)

Mama Bean It's just his belly sticking out.

DaddyO So, what the fuck,
Things happen,
C'est la vie,
Que sera, sera,
It's all good.

Mama Bean All they want is penetration,
Says Mama Bean.

Mama Bean They need to shoot their stuff,
They need to merge with us,
And I'm the result, and you're the result,
They just can't help it,
They're animals with genes to express,

SOUND of a HELICOPTER approaching.

Mama Bean And here he comes now, our genome boy,
Our product Gary,
So slide on over DaddyO.

DaddyO Glad to, Mama. Help is on its way.

Mama Bean Just a few words. I thought, serve, make yourself useful
now, and then, when the time comes, someone will take
care of you. But it's not necessarily so, is it, DaddyO?

DaddyO No, there's no causality there necessarily, Mama Bean.

Mama Bean What I thought. (Everything seems to be going backwards.
I write the ending first and go from there.)

The HELICOPTER appears in the distance.

DaddyO Here comes our boy.

Mama Bean It was a hurricane, first, I think.
*Or a flood,
a typhoon,
or a cataclysm.*

Mama Bean I love the sound of that.

DaddyO It is a helicopter approaching.

Mama Bean Finally.

The HELICOPTER appears closer.

Antonio *(Off, in the sky)* What would you ask for, Gary, if you
could ask for it?

DaddyO A movie. Say a movie, Gary.
Fame!

DaddyO He needs a good part in a good movie, right Mama?

Mama Bean That'll do it, Daddy!

Antonio *(Off)* Wouldn't you want to see your boy again? Your
Danny Boy? Go to hell and see his employer, I mean his
killer?

DaddyO Or a maiden?
Sex!

DaddyO A luscious virgin from Asia?

Mama Bean Not you.

DaddyO I mean for Gary.

Mama Bean Looks like he'll have to parachute in, Daddy.

DaddyO No, it's a helicopter.

Mama Bean It's a parachute. Who's the other guy?

DaddyO It's the Pilot.

Mama Bean It's the Devil.

DaddyO It's the Pilot.

Mama Bean He's the Angel of Death.
DaddyO I thought you said, "Devil."
Mama Bean He's the Devil.
All you have to do is pull the plug.
Gary *(Off)* What I really want is to get even once and for all and for all time.
Mama Bean Aren't those the same thing?
DaddyO Money would also be good.
Gold!
DaddyO Say a few words about money why don't you, Gary?
Gary *(Off)* I could use some money, actually.
Antonio *(Off)* One thing only. You could see your boy or you could see your boy.
Gary So I don't have a choice, really?
Mama Bean No. All we need is a bottle of water. H₂O. I'd pay anything if I had anything.
Antonio *(Off)* Come on, make a choice.
Gary *(Off)* Okay, I want my Danny Boy.

*A toy helicopter lands noisily or silently on stage.
Enter GARY and ANTONIO.*

Gary How you doing, Mom?
Mama Bean How am I doing?
Gary How you doing?
Mama Bean I'm not doing anything. You can see that. Talk to your father. Say hello to your father. Say "Hi Dad, how you doing, Dad?"
Gary Hi, Dad. How you doing, Dad?
DaddyO I'm not good.

Mama Bean He's not good.
DaddyO I'm sitting with your mother in the sky.
(On a roof or a boat.)
Mama Bean He's a fathead. He has to remain seated. Ask me why.
Gary Why?
Mama Bean He's too fat to move. You get that? He's too fat to move.
Gary I came to see you, actually.
Mama Bean I am, actually.
Gary I mean how are you?
Mama Bean He means how am I?
DaddyO How?
Gary How.
Mama Bean How is too much for me. Actual suffering.
Ask your father.
Gary Dad?
Mama Bean Don't ask me.
Gary Dad?
DaddyO She's depressed.
Mama Bean I'm not depressed. Water's rising, but I'm having a good time.
DaddyO I know that.
Mama Bean No you don't, fathead.
Gary That's good.
Mama Bean Sure it's a lark, it's a laugh a minute. Am I right, DaddyO?
DaddyO Definitely.
Mama Bean I'm just sick of people. Otherwise, it's a joke, isn't it?
DaddyO It's a joke.
Mama Bean He'll just repeat me now because he's insecure. Right, Daddy? Ask me something else.
Gary How do you feel?

Mama Bean I feel terrible. Life sucks. It's a pain. Right, Daddy?
DaddyO Life sucks, it's a pain.
Mama Bean Hear that? He'll repeat. Say something on your own, Daddy.
DaddyO I was in China once.
Mama Bean Go on!
DaddyO I was there.
Mama Bean And?
He hesitates.
Mama Bean Don't be intimidated. You can talk. Talk. You were in China!
DaddyO I liked the faces very much.
Mama Bean And?
DaddyO I liked the faces.
Mama Bean Ask him why.
Gary Why, Dad?
DaddyO Because the Chinese are nice and they're open. If you smile, they'll smile back at you. They have open faces. It's not like here. Here everybody has layers on their face. Actually, they have no face. It's just a self-important thing, a fantasy thing, you know, instead of a face, whereas in China, they have real faces, and if you smile, they're right there with you, they'll smile back. Then hopefully you'll have a face.
Mama Bean Good. That was good. Say thanks, Gary.
Gary Thanks, Dad.
Mama Bean But we figured out the trouble with the situation, didn't we Daddy?
DaddyO They're falling off the edge of the world.
Mama Bean Yes, there you have it.

Say something, Gary.

Gary I heard you're on life support, Mom.
Mama Bean Life support? I'm wired is what I am. If life is electricity then it doesn't matter one way or another if you follow my meaning.
DaddyO He doesn't, he doesn't follow your meaning.
Gary I get it, Mom. Life support.
Mama Bean I was plugged in before and I'm plugged in now. They're watching my pump is what they're up to. They've plugged me into a breathing machine, a breathing machine, a breathing machine. Which is connected in its turn to the camera. You see the camera?
Gary Yes, I see it.
Mama Bean That's the camera.
DaddyO But where's the cameraman? You'll probably want to know that. Do you?
Gary What?
DaddyO Want to know it.
Gary Sure.
DaddyO He went out for coffee and then he'll be back. Okay?
Gary Sure. (That's a lie. He's right over there.)
Right over there.
DaddyO He can leave the camera running.
Mama Bean The camera is always running.
DaddyO Just don't jiggle it.
Gary Okay.
DaddyO So it's all okay.
Mama Bean I'm plugged in and hooked up and in the frame, so to speak.
DaddyO And the cameraman is in the vicinity.

And his name is Chauncey.

Mama Bean So. What brings you to see your dear old Mom?

Gary I had a dream. I couldn't sleep and I went out into the hall. Gloria was there and Danny Boy and you were all in costume.

We?

Gary Danny Boy was hidden, I couldn't see his face. Gloria looked at me. She was wearing a gleaming shawl over her head and her eyes were clear and knowing. I thought, "I'd better get some sleep." I went back into my room. Through my window there was a view of the ocean, dark blue, lit by the moon, with many boats, some of them galleons, cresting on the waves. I thought, "What a marvelous view. I should tell them to come and look! Look! Why have we never looked at this wonderful view of the ocean?" And I got back into bed. A voice said, "Gary, your mother called." I woke up and I realized that I hadn't been out in the hall. I had been asleep, and there was no view of the ocean through the windows, and I was quite surprised by that.

Mama Bean So then you came to see your Mom?

Gary Yes.

Mama Bean Are you all right?

Gary I'm good.

Mama Bean You're a good boy.

Gary Thank you.

Mama Bean But that's not good enough, is it Daddy?

DaddyO Not really, no. You could be good if you want.

Mama Bean He knows that.

DaddyO It's up to you.

Gary I think I'm dreaming now.

Mama Bean He was born that way, wasn't he?

DaddyO I wasn't there.

Mama Bean Well, that's obvious.

Antonio I think she wants you to pull the plug. Or give it a little kick maybe, cut the circulation. What do you think?

Gary I don't know what to think.

Mama Bean You get shocks? You get the jolts, the shakes and the shudders?

Gary No.

Mama Bean I did.

DaddyO She's had it with all mechanics, electrical, magnetical, or chemical.

Mama Bean They banged a nail into my head.

Gary A nail?

DaddyO Metaphorically.

Mama Bean That's how it felt, obviously. And you?

Gary What?

Mama Bean Did you commit a crime?

Gary Well, no, I don't know. Existentially, I guess I feel guilty, yes. I was doing fine, actually. I was in the airport, I was on my way, perfectly normal, and then everyone started looking like the devil. No, that's not right. I was looking around the airport, and it seemed to me that all the people who had accepted Jesus as their savior immediately were devils.

Mama Bean And the camera? Where was the camera? Did you ask?

Gary No.

Mama Bean It was above, up there, I'm sure, more than one, no doubt about it, surveillance and so on. And then what happened?

Gary I called the police, because I could see that no one in reality was saved.

DaddyO Of course. Anyone can see that. They're sad and scared and mean and they act like nothing's wrong.

Mama Bean Or they think they're already saved.

DaddyO So if they're not worried about it, there's no problem, which is what I meant.

Mama Bean Meant?

DaddyO Before. They have faces over their faces. We have lots of meetings. We have discovered, for example, that these layers of fat you see on me are garments for the inner soul. Well, you could say insulation for the wiring, if you want, or a compulsive/obsessive eating disorder, if you want.

Gary I was in the airport on line at a Starbucks, you know, for a stupid cup of coffee. Unfortunately it was right in the way of the stream of people looking anxiously for their airplanes. I started watching them and I fell into a trance. The next thing I knew I was in a police station.
Are you taking some sort of medication, Sir?

Gary No, Sir.
Should you be taking some sort of medication?

Gary Did you say meditation?
No, meds, you know, drugs.

Gary I don't know if I should, no.
Let me put it this way: have you been prescribed a prescription?

Gary Prescribed a prescription?
By a doctor.

Gary Yes, I'm an actor.
Have you been taking the medication?

Gary No.
Did you forget?

Gary No.
You did it deliberately?

Gary What?
Mis-take your drugs.

Gary No mistake. Not that. No, I wouldn't call it that.
No, I mean you didn't take your new drugs, did you?

Gary No.
Why not?

Gary I think it's wrong to take medications because it could be harmful to my bodily system, which is organic.
Who can I call?

Gary And besides, I'm clean and sober in every way.
Is there someone to call?

Gary Call my wife, Gloria or Marcia.
Which one, pray?

Gary Gloria. Call Gloria.
Hello, Gloria?

Gloria I don't want to buy anything.
This is the police.

Gloria Oh. Is it about Gary?
He had an attack.

Gloria A heart attack?
No, either mental or nervous.

Mama Bean I'd call it a reality attack.

Gloria He has them all the time. You want to know why?
We know why.

Gloria He's an actor.
Come and get him and bring his meds.

Gloria I don't have his meds.
He's ranting and raving.

Gloria He's preparing a performance.

Gary People think if they accept Jesus as their personal savior then they don't have any more problems. They get into heaven guaranteed. They're enraptured. And what is heaven? I'll tell you. Everyone's equal and everyone is rich and sexually satisfied and happy. They're blessed out, is what I mean. I mean blissed out. They're in a state of bliss, permanently, and they don't have to do anything or give up anything or strive or suffer their lack of anything because they have accepted Jesus. They have the Rapture. All they have to do is die and they're there. I'm sorry, DaddyO, but you see all these fat guys swaggering through the airport, so I'm yelling at them *the devil is on their shoulder, the devil is on their shoulder*, they better repent, which means they should rethink their situation and come back to the real world.

Gloria Ordinarily he doesn't say things like that.
We had to rush over there and put the clamps on.

Gloria He thinks them but he doesn't say them.
The people thought it was a terrorist attack. We had to shut down the airport. I don't think that's right.

Gary They live in mindless misery but they have accepted Jesus. Then it's all good, it's all good. Line 'em up, the fat and the righteous, line 'em up and march 'em into the sky, into the blue. Sorry, Daddy.

DaddyO No problem, fat is fat. It's like I said.

Mama Bean What?

DaddyO Like I said, marching off into the sky, like prickly ghosts, if you want, or crackling photos, if you want, popping in the sunlight.

Mama Bean I don't think it's right, either. And I don't think it's justice, either. I think it's fantasy, is what it is,
Excuse me?

Mama Bean Makes me sick to my stomach. Makes my guts tighten up like they was violin strings. You could play a symphony on 'em, if you want, dark, tragic, if you want, a dirge, a lamentation.
I'm an airport policeman, ma'am.

Mama Bean That's not my fault!
DaddyO cracks up.

Mama Bean Say something, Gloria.

Gloria She's really very intelligent. And so is her son, Gary. What happened was her grandson was shot dead downtown, our Danny Boy.
At random, so to say?

Gloria Never found his killer, kid on a bike. Murdered our Danny Boy.
Gary sobs.

Mama Bean Don't cry, son. This is amazing. It is the era of suicide bombing. Who ever heard of such a thing? I have lived in and out of madhouses for twenty or thirty years and I never heard of it. Have you Daddy?

DaddyO Never. Never heard of it. Where you stuff your car with dynamite or fertilizer and blow yourself up with it. Incredibly stupid. Bones and meat and blood splashing all over. It's for God you know. It's in the name of God, splashing the blood around.

Mama Bean What could that possibly mean?

DaddyO God knows why. When in point of fact we're all the same person, it turns out, in the long run. Woudn't you say?

Gloria No, I don't think so.

Gary I do. I think we are.

Gloria Oh, Gary!
So, tell me, ma'am, where does the woman live?

Gloria His mother? In a home.
Ma'am?

Gloria I won't tell you what kind of a home. It's a nuthouse, where people pass. Into the next world, whatever that is. Her name is Mama Bean. Gary, that's her son, my ex-husband, he owes her, believe me, for his very existence. And then the floods came, so he's gone to pay or pray her back, before it's too late.

Gary I'm here to listen.

DaddyO Splattering, splattering is the word I meant to use.

Mama Bean Thanks, Gloria.
Bye, bye.

DaddyO To describe the effect of bombs. You see why she's so gloomy, why she has no hope. Blood and guts, splattering the walls, shattering the windows. It's not heaven these guys are going to, believe me. It's hell. Red splotches on the walls. It's not graffiti.
Time to go. Gary addresses the void:

Gary Gloria.
Bye, Gary. Do you feel better now?

Gary No. Why should I feel better? I saw what I saw and it's totally real. It's hell is what it is. People talking loud and munching chips. And so on. Glaring at each other.

Hating each other. Starbucks and Taco Bell. Dirty chemicals in the dirty water.

We can't have it. We can't have people roaming the airport yelling things about Christianity or heaven and hell. We can't have it. There is a terrorist threat.

Gary It's already there, the terror is there already, there's terror there in the airport already.

That's what I'm saying. We have homeland security to think about, so that's enough don't you think? That's all I'm saying.

DaddyO He wants to go and see his mother.

Who cares?

DaddyO He wants to go and see his dying mother.

I don't care where he goes. So long as he goes through security first.

DaddyO This is Security, Gary.

Security You.

Gary Me?

Security Step aside.

Gary Why me?

Security Hands up.

Bong bong bong. She's like hitting him with that stick, with the BAM BAM BAM, right arm, right leg, left arm, left leg, and smack in the crotch. What the fuck, does he look suspicious?

Security You look suspicious to me. And it gives me a chance to intimidate you and frighten you and overpower you, so it's cool, it's a cool job, and it shows you and it shows them and it shows the government we're doing our job. I was trained for it and I like it, and I get paid for it, and

fuck you if you don't like it, my boyfriend still likes me and that's all that counts. Take off your shoes.

Gary My shoes?

Security Take off your shoes please. (I don't like the looks of you, you look like a fucking asshole, you look obsessed, so take off your fucking shoes.)
Keep your mouth shut, Gary.
He takes off his shoes, she looks at his shoes.

DaddyO (Shoes, it's amazing how intimate. She doesn't realize his frail psychology.)
She's stripped him naked and slapped his dick.

Security Thank you, Sir.
And she shoves him down the line.
He's almost in tears.

DaddyO He is an insecure person after all who is homeless and a drug addict so why pick on him?

Gary (I'm an actor, Dad!)
And there's Antonio standing there at the gate and he's supposed to be looking at your ticket, am I right?

Antonio Hey.
It's the Angel of Death.
He's standing there in the doorway to the airplane looking at people's tickets and ID.

Antonio Is this you? Gary?
He asks.

Antonio He don't look like you. This is a lie. It's a stinking lie, get ready to die.

Gary Antonio?

Antonio Die now and pay later. Ha, ha. Pay now and die in a minute. Ha, ha. Pay as you die—and follow me.

Step on board, please. Seat 29B.

Gary 29 B?

Antonio What did I say? Are you deaf and dumb?

Gary I'm sorry.

Antonio Sit down, why don't you.

Gary This seat here?

Antonio What's it say? Does it say 29B?

Gary Uh, yes it does, it does.
Sit down. Jeez, what a dope.
Sit down.

Gary Thank you.
Sit down, you're blocking the aisle.

Gary Okay, okay.
Sit down.

Gary Thank you.
Finally.

Gary Thank you.

Antonio Stop saying Thank you. Just sit down.

Gary Thank you.
ANTONIO sits down next to him.

Gary Antonio?

Antonio I'm your escort, Gary.
Look at these people, if you could see past the faces and the shouting, you can see the hating that is common in hell.

Antonio To hell.

Gary Actually, I'm going to see my mother.

Antonio You see that, what they say, how they act? The people? Let's hope they don't put a bomb on here. I'd like to drop a suitcase on that guy's foot. You see that expression? It's

haughty. He's a big guy. He thinks his meat deserves respect. Stick out an elbow, catch him in the gut as he pushes by, *un pinchazo! Andale pues!*

GARY sticks out an elbow and jabs the person.

Antonio Muy bien! Bravo!

Gary Thank you.

Antonio Jesus Christ, Gary, you're too appreciative.

Gary I'm sorry.

Antonio And apologetic.
So, anyway, our boy Gary flies through the air to Vegas—and then he gets on a yellow helicopter and lands over here.

Gary Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad.

Mama Bean Good to see you.

DaddyO Bienvenudo.
Again.

Gary What is this place?

Mama Bean This is where they put the dying, Son. This is where they put the finished and the decrepit, the groaners and the cripples.

Gary It stinks here, Mom.
Mom.

Mama Bean This is the Land of the Dead.
(Or hell.)

DaddyO Well, not exactly, Mama.

Mama Bean Not exactly?

DaddyO No. This is the antechamber to the Land of the Dead.

Mama Bean Exactly.

Gary Is Antonio still here?
(Or hell.)

Mama Bean He's standing right over there.
Here I am.

Mama Bean Can't you see his wings?

Gary And the cameraman? Where's the cameraman?

Antonio / Chauncey
Here I am.

Gary Oh.
Antonio. He's the same guy as the Cameraman.

Gary Chauncey?

Chauncey Hi.
That must mean something.

Mama Bean Isn't that something?

DaddyO Yes, but what does it mean?

Mama Bean I don't know, actually.

DaddyO Sorry. Look around you. Peoples frozen in by the lies on their faces. Is that right? No. Peoples frozen in the lies. No. Peoples faces and crippled postures, frozen in by lying. That's close enough. Get a shot of that why don't you, Mister?

Chauncey Cameras rolling, thank you.

DaddyO Lying means you can't pray, because you have no inner freedom then, so you're talking to the wall, so to speak.

Mama Bean You don't know anything about it, do you?

DaddyO I do, so to speak, which is to say I do, that is to say, not those superficial favors you might ask for, like I hope she gets slapped, or I hope he loses his money.
Or I hope they all drown.

Mama Bean Of course not.

DaddyO That's not prayer.

Mama Bean Of course not.

DaddyO Where you're asking for bad things to happen to other people, certain people, friends of yours or family members—that's not prayer at all.

Mama Bean It's not lying either.

Gary Not lying?

Mama Bean No, it's the truth. That's what you want, correct. You want him to fall down, you want him or her to get kicked from here to Mecca.

DaddyO Are we still on?

Chauncey We're on, thank you, cameras running.

DaddyO So we've lost the point here as usual.

Gary I'm sorry.

DaddyO In front of them.

Mama Bean Never mind, Daddy.

DaddyO Lying, criminal lying, any kind of lying, like I didn't mean it and it wasn't my fault or she started it. Or, I wish you the best and God help you.
Have a good day.

DaddyO I can't do it today but I'll try tomorrow.
I had intended to comfort you but then other things happened.

DaddyO I love you.
I don't love you at the moment but I love you in general most of the time.

DaddyO The homily for that is you're full of yourself, or your mind's not right,
And you can't run naked in the streets, either.

If you had kept your mouth shut, and not said anything bad, and kept a low profile, and did your share, and paid attention, this wouldn't have happened, Gary. But it did.

It happened.

That's how you get to hell in a hand basket and end up wandering the streets with all your goods in a shopping cart, Gar'.

Gary Tell me about it.

Walking the ashes of your dead son, Dan, while your wife is shacking up with Vernon in the Palisades.

And the girls are at her mother's.

And the sun goes down over the Pacific.

DaddyO Because there's such a distance, Gary, between you and me and our own behavior.

(A gulf or a chasm.)

(A shadow or a link.)

(A flicker or a tape.)

(A photo or a flash.)

Mama Bean Perhaps we all have this in common, you and me and them?

DaddyO No. Most people are normal. They are at one with their behaviors. There's a unity there, an unquestioning, a day-to-day kind of thing where you get up and your day unfolds before you. They are happy, and they are decent. They vote. They let each other be. They're undivided in themselves about being alive and they have a good time. That's your Marcia for you, and Gloria too, actually, they are good folk who want to live right. And then there are people like you, and people like Laura, who want to die, basically.

Antonio *Vámanos.*
Gary Is the camera running?
Chauncey Every second counts, my friend. Camera's running. It's very expensive and it gets more expensive the longer you wait. It's like oxygen in the air, every tick it makes an absence. You get that? You follow me on that? A vanishing. A molecule here, a molecule there, of oxygen, my friend.
Mama Bean That's the most I've ever heard from him.
Chauncey Eventually: suffocation.
Mama Bean Yes. Exactly. Say more.
Chauncey No. I'm sorry I spoke now.
Mama Bean That's okay.

Awkward silence.

DaddyO Say something, Mama.
Mama Bean It is the problem of breathing, isn't it? And the problem of breathing, the problem of breathing, the problem of breathing. It's the lack of oxygen, of course. Oxygen in, carbon dioxide out. It's a chemical situation. It's a burning inside. Combustion. Strange. Trees, of course. That's why every second counts.
DaddyO Can I say something too?
Gary Do we have time?
Antonio A moment. Visiting hours are almost over, folks.
DaddyO It's the doctors and the pharmaceuticals, they're a bunch of crooks. And I'm including the shrinks in this here indictment. You have Freud and whatnot, he was a writer, him, a literary man, and you guys come along and make a business out of it, a trade, selling the snake oil, working

the crowd, walking the line, it's a beautiful con and there's no end of marks.

Enter DR. JONES.

Am I right, Jones?

Mama Bean No! Not him! We don't have time for him!
Dr. Jones You have to go to college and medical school and then you have to build a clientele, so it's not easy and it's expensive. And then you have to be nice. You can't say, what a jerk or what a nut, or this guy's a total bore I wish he'd get the fuck out of my office, no, you have to murmur and ask leading questions and smile in a friendly manner. I'd say you had to smile maybe a thousand times a day. People have trouble with their moms, people have trouble with their Dads, and that's the whole story right there.
DaddyO So what do you do, Jones? (This is Dr. Jones.)
Mama Bean STOP!
Dr. Jones People have trouble with their wives.
DaddyO So what do you do, Jones?
Mama Bean Oh, God.
Dr. Jones It's the money like I said, and if the problem is not Mom, then it's probably Dad, and if it's not Dad then it's probably the wife, and if it's not the wife, then it's probably him.
DaddyO Who?
Dr. Jones Himself.
DaddyO So what do you do?

Dr. Jones But the trouble with the wife might be his father-in-law, and the trouble with him might be her mother-in-law, so you never know.

DaddyO So what do you do?

Dr. Jones Mainly I agree. I agree and I agree and I smile and I smile and if the person doesn't speak I ask a question. And then I ask another question until we get some momentum, and the next thing you know the 45 minutes is over and you can relax with a cup of coffee or tea or go to the bathroom or confer with a colleague. And the person is helped. He has been listened to and he has support.

DaddyO I see.

Dr. Jones And I also prescribe. I might prescribe a prescription, as you know.

DaddyO So everyone is satisfied.

Dr. Jones Right.

DaddyO Everyone gets a taste, so it's good. It's all good.

Mama Bean Gary, shoot your father!

Dr. Jones And I don't take Medicaid.

DaddyO You don't take Medicaid?

Dr. Jones No.

DaddyO I think that sucks, Jones.

Dr. Jones You're a throwback to an earlier age, sir. The fifties, if I'm not mistaken.

Mama Bean He certainly is. Gary, are you there?

Gary I don't have a weapon, Mom.

Mama Bean Where's the cameraman?

Chauncey Here I am.

DaddyO You ask how I came to be here, in this halfway house to hell?

Mama Bean No, no one asked! Chauncey?

Chauncey It's not up to me, Ma'am.

DaddyO Many little irritations came to be, mainly with noises and sounds.

Mama Bean Noises ARE sounds.

DaddyO Voices, doors slamming, water running, babies crying, and creating revulsion, in my soul and in my mind.

Mama Bean Isn't the soul the mind?

DaddyO No.

Mama Bean Wouldn't you say, Chauncey?

Chauncey No, I wouldn't. I can't. It's not up to me. I'm sorry.

DaddyO Everything became very annoying. You could see it especially in your car, your stupid car, your gas-guzzling stupid fucking car, you could see it there, all day and every day, driving around, hither and thither, to stores and shops, banks and rehabs, because there's other people cutting in, pulling out, passing by, blowing horns, revving motors, staring you down, hating you, banging your bumper, slowing down, speeding up, squealing tires, riding brakes, running lights, turning left, blocking your way, especially the SUVs, the sport utility vehicles, especially the women, when they're driven by the women, they are aggressive and mean, and the men are smug and brutal wearing shades, especially them, with the hairy arms, belligerent elbows hanging out the window, like this, the men and the women, them especially, like this, arrogant behind the wheel, self-satisfied behind the wheel, where everyone is actually equal, so that's annoying.

Mama Bean Are you done, DaddyO?

DaddyO Well, it's the hesitation, a faltering, there in the soul, in the mind, in the nervous system, actually, the dropping things, the missing things, the losing things, the stutter and the dribble, the hitch and the limp, the twitch and the grimace, as you can see if you can see, if you take a look around, there's a loss of cognizance, a moaning and groaning and a certain rage, yes, a rage at irrevocable fate, so to say, rage and futility, hooked up to machines, plugged into sockets, is that what you want? No. The little things first, the names and the numbers and then everything you've ever known on earth, gone, gone down the tubes, down the hole, gone forever, is that what you want? No. Not me and Mama Bean. It's not what we want.

Gary Is that it, Dad?

DaddyO But it is what we'll get. It is what we're going to get. You too, Gary, with the loss of vision, the loss of memory and the loss of hope, one eye blind and hallucinations, it's what you'll get, too, without a shadow of a doubt, in the end, Gary, unless you keep the faith, gasping for breath as the air shuts off and the light goes out. That's what Antonio is here for, that's why he hangs around, the Angel of Death come to give you a tour, my boy, of hell.

Antonio *Verdad. En la tierra de la muerte. Un momento más.*

DaddyO *(Fast)* But of course I don't want to sound negative, I'm not being negative, you should remember the good things, count your blessings and be grateful for what you've got, it's a debt you can only repay with suffering and love, so say thank you and bow, bow down, bow deep, get down on your knees and say thank you, thank you, I am alive, I have experienced life, the joy and ecstasy of life, the

horror of life, the pain of life, the suffering and the pain, and remember running as a boy and feeling the rush of life, the joy of breathing, the well being, the happiness of running and playing, shouting and jumping, hitting and kicking, catching and batting, swimming and sliding, give thanks for all that on your knees.

Antonio *Bueno. Andale pues.* Here is the gate. Here we are at the gate. This is the gate. *Aquí es la puerta. Aquí estamos a la puerta. Esto es la puerta.* However. *Como que paso.*

Gary However?

Antonio However, you meet Danny Boy, some other people, you can't get mad, *y no venganza*, okay? *Vamos.* What's the matter?

He sees eyes, eyes everywhere.

Antonio *Es Purgatorio.* Here is jealousy, *celosos*, which causes rage. Step through Gary, and don't swagger and don't hallucinate and you'll be A-OK.

Gary Wait.

Antonio *Todo está bien.*

Gary What if the door closes and I can't get back?

Antonio Your life is over. Don't worry about it.

Are you kidding me?

Antonio Do like Dr. Jones. He bows his head, remember? He makes a pause and bows his head and then he goes through the door, remember? Maybe he says a prayer, or he makes a little comment, like "This is me, Dr. Jones," as he passes through the door.

Dr. Jones This is me, Dr. Jones.

Antonio You can do that, Gary.

Gary I'm afraid of the dead. I'm afraid of the dying and the dead. I'm afraid of the old and the sick, the wretched and the mad.

Dr. Jones People love themselves, Gary, and they believe everything they think. They believe everything they think about themselves and everybody else, about life and the universe and everything else. They believe and they believe and they believe. That's why they get mad, Gary. That's why they commit perversions and atrocities, because they love themselves and believe in themselves. That's what you hear when you step through the door. That's what you see when you step through the door. The anguish of believers and envy and rage. That's why I nod. I nod my head and I make a comment, an inner comment, as I pass through the door. It's not exactly prayer, but I make a comment. And what I mean by that is God help me, I think, God help me because I am helpless in front of this rage. And I spill coffee on the floor. I spill coffee on the floor as I bow my head and make an inner comment as I pass through the door into my office.

Mama Bean How does this help my boy Gary, hearing this story from Dr. Jones? Hey! He's got him stranded halfway to hell! Can't anyone hear me?

Dr. Jones There is one more thing I want to say, before I leave you, before I step away, and that is: I learned all this from Freud, years ago, how people loved themselves and believed in themselves, as though they were God, actually, now that I think about it, they believed in themselves as though they were God. And this had been observed by Freud, and written by Freud years ago, before his people had

been taken out into the fields and murdered, before his people, the Jews, had been gassed to death and burnt alive, he knew, Freud, of this propensity for evil, this belief in the self as though it were God himself, he knew and he foresaw, Dr. Freud, of the Evil Inclination.

Mama Bean Get this guy away from us! Stop the camera!

Dr. Jones And so we owe him a debt, a great debt is owed to Dr. Freud and to his people, and now I'll stop, I'm done.

Mama Bean Thank God!

Dr. Jones *(Weeping)* I'm sorry. I don't know what's come over me. I just wish there could be one day on earth, one hour, one minute without horror, but it will never be. There never was a moment without horror and there never will be, will there, Antonio? Will there ever be a moment without horror on earth?

Antonio No.

Dr. Jones All right. Good bye, then.

Mama Bean At last!

Antonio Good bye.

Dr. Jones I'll see you in my office.

Gary Fine.

Dr. Jones I'll see you in my office.

Gary I said fine.

Mama Bean Go! Go go!

Dr. Jones Bye then.

Gary Good bye, Doctor Jones.

Antonio Ready, Gary? You can see your Danny Boy.

Gary Danny?

Antonio *Si. Y su asesino también, finalmente.* Pull the plug.

Gary It's pulled.

Camera's off. He sees DANNY BOY in his mind's eye.

Hi, Dad.

Gary Okay, when do we go?

Antonio I can't say exactly. You have to watch out. It could happen now and it could happen now. It could happen now. It could happen now. But you can't be distracted. Like you might see a pretty girl, *por ejemplo*, who opens her eyes to you, who opens her heart to you, who returns your gaze, who walks beautifully, who smiles wonderfully, who falls naked before you and calls to you, who wants you to touch her, to embrace her, to enjoy her mouth and her body, even then you cannot turn.

Mama Bean Don't cry, Gary...
Says Mama Bean.

Mama Bean Look up. Look at the blue.
Manufactured above in the factory of God.

Mama Bean I'm sorry, Gary.

Gary That's okay, Mom.

Mama Bean I shouldn't have hit you, I shouldn't have yelled.

Gary It's okay.

Mama Bean You should have had toothbrushes and brushed your teeth. And had some good food once in a while with a steady income, with a steady home.

Gary But I didn't.

Mama Bean No. It was your father's fault.

DaddyO Me?

Mama Bean Not you. His real father.

Dr. Jones And then what happens is a repetition. You do with your son like your father done with you.

Mama Bean Right. My own mother used to bang her head with a shoe. Her own head with her own shoe.

Dr. Jones Your daughter will do with her daughters like her mama done with her.

Mama Bean And when she wasn't banging her own head she was banging mine.

DaddyO A hymn of thanks, if you will, to the women.

Mama Bean Oh, no! Chauncey!

DaddyO I mean those who loved me and loved me even though. I enjoyed the sex and I definitely appreciated it and appreciate it now, thank God, say I, for the sex even though.

Mama Bean May I? I can't say the same about the men, as they boozed their way across the continent destroying everything in their path, no. As I live and breathe. No way.

DaddyO Thank you. You know who you who are, girls. Thank you. I hope you live and breathe and remain forever young. (I don't know why I said that.) It's a good thing and I regret my earlier remarks. (One always regrets one's earlier remarks, like Archimedes to his executioner.) More and more sex. I want more. I want all I can have, within the physically possible, within the emotionally stable, within the intellectually reliable, to make love with the women, my woman, your woman, his mother and her daughter, and I wish I had more sense in those days, when I was thin and good-looking and so on, I wish I had the sense then to let it out, to show how I felt, to reveal my yearning, to express my longing, to say my

thanksgiving then and there when I had the chance even though.

Antonio Time. Let's go.

DaddyO Hold up, Juan.

Antonio Antonio.

DaddyO Not to speak of love and affection and simple generosity, basic kindness, ordinary charity. Let me counsel to my stepson, now.

Antonio Hurry up, please, it's time.

DaddyO Make sure you got a way back, son. The oxygen around here is going fast. I don't know if you can follow me or understand me. CO₂, Gary. CO₂. There's oxygen in there but we can't breathe it. You follow? There's oxygen in water, there's oxygen in coal, but it's useless for breathing. We need oxygen to breathe, out of the blue, we need air and water to live and food to eat and feet and folly and electricity for the pump.

Gary And the plug, Dad?

DaddyO Well, the image of pulling the plug, it's too harsh, in my opinion, besides being illegal, it's not about the plumbing as much as the wiring, is it? It's more the transformation, am I right? It's not like water flowing from one place to another, is it, Horacio? It's more the horizon itself, isn't it?

Antonio Antonio. You buy a ticket.
Yes, it's not like that.

Mama Bean The horizon?

DaddyO There's a separation there, a distinction, so to say. You go, and you're there.

Mama Bean I see.

DaddyO Turn the camera back on. Chauncey?

Chauncey Here I am.

DaddyO We'll invite Gary to do his Archimedes, and that will prepare him, and us, hopefully, and them, and us, for the Land of the Dead. Isn't that right, Mama?

Mama Bean Well, I don't know. I don't know if it's right. Chauncey, what do you think?

Chauncey I can't say, Ma'am. Camera's on.

DaddyO Good. And then we'll have it. On tape, as it were. Forever.
Good. Archimedes.

DaddyO Gary?

Gary Thank you.

Chauncey Camera's running.

Gary *Archimedes, you know, he had it mathematically. 400 BC. The man figured it out, in Greek. He had the calculus. Nobody knew of course because it was written in a book that has a bible written over it. It's called a palimpsest. Archimedes, he was figuring it out. He's standing on a street in Alexandria making a diagram and a Roman soldier saunters over.*
Don't disturb my circles,
Says Archimedes,
Don't walk on my stuff.
The soldier stops and stares. What the fuck is this? I'll step on his fucking circles if I want to. What's that? He says, and Archimedes ignores him. Or maybe he waves a hand at him, like this, as if to say, You're an ignorant peasant, don't disturb me.
Or maybe he waved his hand, like this, as if to say,
Don't bother me, I'm thinking.

*Or he waved his hand like this, as if to say,
Get out of my light.*

*And the soldier shifts his weight and he sees the old
Greek dead but he waits a minute to enjoy the situation,
the Greek is dead but he waits. The soldier waits. It's a
beautiful weighty moment on the street in Alexandria
while the Roman soldier watches Archimedes draw a circle
in the sand and sees him dead before he slowly shifts
his weight and draws his sword. And Archimedes has
discovered the calculus, but the soldier is a farmer and
a warrior and a citizen of Rome; he's not in a hurry;
there's infinite time before he stabs old Archimedes with
his sword.*

*Does Archimedes see the sun before he dies?
Archimedes sees the sun. He sees the sun and the shadow
of the soldier. He who had seen the calculus and the
geometry of the infinite looks up and sees the sun. And
then the Roman soldier steps into his light and
Archimedes is annoyed and the soldier draws his sword.
He who had foreseen the stabbing of Archimedes draws
his sword to stab Archimedes through the throat.
He enjoys the moment.*

*Yes, he has visualized the action and now he can savor
the drawing of his sword and the stabbing of Archimedes.
The drawing of the sword, the short Roman sword,
makes the sound of imminent death.*

Antonio Oh, yes,
Says Antonio,
Así es.
He knows that sound.

Antonio I know that sound. It means the blow is coming. The
blow is imminent.

Gary *Does Archimedes experience remorse? Something comes
out of your mouth, your hand waves, an expression is on
your face, and you can't take it back. You can't take it
back and you must pay. You must pay the consequences
of what came out of your mouth or the wave of your
hand or that expression on your face, and you must pay
forever. So, yes, yes, Archimedes experiences remorse on
that account.*

He raises his hand to receive the blow, like so.

*The Roman soldier knows nothing of mathematics, but
he knows outrage and insult. He can take care of it with
one blow and move on. The next moment awaits him.
His feet will move him, his legs will carry him, his
scabbard will receive his sword.*

*First he'll wipe his sword. He'll wipe his sword in the sand.
He'll wipe his sword of the blood of Archimedes that has
gushed out onto the sand from his neck. Archimedes'
blood splatters out onto the sand over his diagram, and
the soldier pauses to look at his work.*

*Not the diagram. The dying Archimedes is his work.
The soldier pauses to look at the dying Archimedes. But
not for long. He pauses and wipes his sword. Blood.
The blood of Archimedes running out into the sand from
his neck. Blood pouring out from his neck. Blood of the
father and mother and the ancestors. Blood pouring
through the generations of man into the sands of the earth.
The soldier wipes his sword. The scabbard receives his
sword. The soldier looks down at the dying Archimedes.*

But not for long. He feels the sun on his back, he feels himself looking out through his own eyes. He has no thought about it. His existence is physical, muscular. He grunts and steps away. (Grunts)

DaddyO Thank you, Gary.

Gary You're welcome.

Antonio Follow Archimedes now...

Says Antonio,

Antonio Into the Land of the Dead.

(Or hell.)

Mama Bean That was good. I liked the part about the light. I love the light, just like everybody, I'm not completely crazy. We are in the sun's atmosphere, after all. To be part of the atmosphere of the sun is to be part of the sun.

DaddyO That is to say, we're in an electrical-magnetical situation, aren't we? Or, in other words, the solar system?

Mama Bean Good, Daddy.

DaddyO Yes, there you have it. That is to say, the current.

Mama Bean Yes, on the air.

(On the wind.)

(Or a gust.)

Chauncey You're not allowed.

Mama Bean What?

Chauncey To pull the plug. You're not allowed to pull the plug. It's illegal.

DaddyO Someone could trip over the wire, accidentally, as it were, trip over the wire and go flying off into space.
Or off the edge of the world.

Mama Bean And I would rise up into the blue.

DaddyO Or Superman could put his finger in there.

Mama Bean Oh, now you've said it, Daddy.

DaddyO I was just thinking.

Mama Bean Superman and fingers and plugs.

DaddyO Or the Angel of Death could fly in and do the disconnect.

Gary This is him right here.

Antonio / Chauncey

We'll go to hell first.

DaddyO I can't see his wings.

Mama Bean I can.

Antonio / Chauncey

I'll keep the camera on. Let's go see Danny Boy.

Gary Let's go.

Mama Bean Watch what you say there. You can think it but don't say it. Just don't say anything. Maybe take something with you.

Antonio / Chauncey

No, you can't take things there.

It's not a place where you like take things.

Antonio / Chauncey

Except for the camera. The most important thing is the camera. So, you're at the door, you're at the gate. You can see the door, you can see the gate. But it doesn't open, the door doesn't open, the gate doesn't open. Is that correct?

Gary Sí. Yes.

Antonio You stay then.

Gary I'll stay. Good.

Antonio Right where you are.

Gary Okay.

Antonio Right there by the gate.

Gary I am.

Antonio And wait.

Gary I'll wait.

Antonio *Muy bien. Andale pues.*
(*And they step onstage. There's DANNY BOY.*)

Dan Hi, Dad.

Gary Is that you, Danny Boy?

Dan It's me, Dad.

Gary Oh, my goodness!

Dan This is the one, Dad, this is the guy.
Roolay.

Gary I wish your mother was here, Dan. I wish she could see you now.

Dan Look. This is the one.

Gary The one?

Dan Which shot me in the park, Dad.

Gary Kid on a bike?

Dan Yeah. His name is Rule.

Gary Rool?

Rule No, Rulay, wid da axent on da e, Roolay.

Gary Roolay.

Dan Tell him what happened, Rulay, tell my Dad.

Rule Dey caught me and cut off my head. In Eye-Rack.
Dis guy wid a max.

Dan Mask.

Rule A max. He said God bless and sliced off my head.
Like dis.

He cuts off his own head.

Rule And den he says Hang im from a lamppost, him. And dey did, but my head wuzzin da garbidge bin. Da meg wah runs—

Dan Americans—

Rule Put me back togeddah a gun.

He puts his head back on.

Gary Why did you shoot my boy, you?

Rule He's standin' dere wid his girlfriend, him. Why shid he has a girlfriend and not me? He's standin' dere wid da nice close, him. Why shid he has da nice close and not me? He's standin' dere wid money in his pocket, him. Why shid he has da money and not me? He's standin' dere wid his car on da street, him. Why shid he has a car and not me? He's standin' dere wid a foochure, him, nice. Why shid he has a foochure, nice, and not me?

Gary So you shot him, my Danny Boy?

Rule Definidlee. Den I joined da army, U.S.A.

Gary Hey! Antonio! You hear that?

No answer.

Where'd he go the motherfucker?
Here I am.

Dan Listen to this, Dad.

Gary Don't go, Danny Boy!

Dan Listen to this.

Gary Hey, Danny, it's good to see you. I don't know how much time I got here. Do you?

Dan No time here, Dad, at all.
Gary Well, your mother's fine and she sends her love, I'm sure.
Dan You could give her a hug but you won't remember.
Gary I'll remember!
He won't remember.
Dan Listen to this.
Gary Don't go!
Dan Then listen, Dad.
Gary I'm listening!

MAMA BEAN steps onstage.

Mama Bean Gary?
Gary Yes?
Mama Bean It's me, Gary.
Mama Bean!
Gary But you were! But I just!
Mama Bean Pulled the plug! They cut the flow, Gar', not they and not the flow. Let's say I got out of the current, popped out, waved out, expired up. No. Let's say I changed horses, I got off one horse and on to another horse. No. Let's say they turned off the infernal machine, Gar' and it was about time, it was a drag, and I got off that mother and into the blue. Yeah. Let's say.
Gary What, Mama?
Mama Bean Watch this, I said.
Watch this.
Mama Bean And they took photos and everything. Flash, flash, and you cried out...
Gary Mama Bean!

Mama Bean And Daddy said.
DaddyO Good-bye, Mama!
Mama Bean And Daddy said.
DaddyO I'll see you soon, honey! Won't be long now! The air is running out and so is the money, Mama!
Mama Bean Bye, Daddy! And I waved and waved from the blue, and I sighed in the blue like a specter, like a ghost, and I took Pablo's hand here—
Antonio Antonio.
Mama Bean And we came through the Golden Gate.
Dan Good to see you, Mama Bean!
Mama Bean Good to see you, Danny Boy!
Antonio *Un momento, por favor.*
Mama Bean What's happened now, Bernardo?
Antonio Antonio. *Es un error.* Mistake okay? Go back. Wait a few minutes.
Mama Bean The door is open?
Antonio Door still open. I'll come and see you. Don't worry about it.

She steps back up off the stage.

DaddyO Mama?
Mama Bean They must have plugged the damn thing back in.
DaddyO You're breathing again!
Mama Bean They plugged it back in! I've had it with these damn hospice-type places, these dispose-alls!
Dr. Jones I hear you there. Nowhere do you see more clearly the contempt mankind has for itself.
Mama Bean What? Who's talking?
Dr. Jones Me, Dr. Jones.

Mama Bean Maybe it's all for the best. Something wrong with your eye they cut your head off. Something wrong with your toe they cut your foot off. Something wrong with your mind they electrocute it.

Dr. Jones That's what I was saying.

Mama Bean Yeah?

Dr. Jones It's a borderline profession, is what I mean to say.

Mama Bean So say it.

Dr. Jones It's a borderline profession.

DaddyO Selling the old snake oil, running the old con, eh, Dr. Jones? Pitching the rubes, sweet-talking the lonely, consoling the frightened, stroking the egotists, bamboozling the neurotics, and so on.

Mama Bean Slow down, DaddyO. I liked Freud.

DaddyO I like Freud.

Dr. Jones Freud was a serious author.

DaddyO The man was an artist.

Dr. Jones He suffered deeply from cancer of the mouth.

Mama Bean He smoked too many cigars and he couldn't give them up. Am I right? The man was addicted.

Dr. Jones That's true, I'm afraid.

Mama Bean Afraid are you?

Dr. Jones Figure of speech.

DaddyO Where is he now? Freud?

Dr. Jones He is in the underworld, suffering dearly from a broken heart.

DaddyO The man was an artist.

Dr. Jones You want to stay out of hospitals is all I'm saying.

Mama Bean Thanks, Doc.

Dr. Jones And rest homes and halfway houses for that matter. Buy your own breathing machine and your own I.V. and you'll have half a chance to die decently.

Mama Bean I hear you there.

Dr. Jones Or just die and get it over with.

Mama Bean I hear you there, too.

Dr. Jones I don't know why I said that.

Mama Bean You said it because you meant it. Don't take it back now.

Dr. Jones Am I right, Alfredo?

Antonio Antonio.

Dr. Jones Yes or no?

Antonio *Sí. Es mucho mejor.* Just drop dead and follow me. These people are hanging around here with their mouths open, moaning loudly, an incomprehensible moan, dribble coming out of their mouths. I'll be right back.

He returns to hell, where LAURA appears.

Laura Mr. Gary?

Gary Gary's my first name.

Laura Hi. I'm Laura.

Gary Laura?

Laura Danny Boy found me dead on a bed. Remember?

Gary Oh, I do. Yes.

Laura Can I talk to you? Can I tell you things?

Gary Yes. Tell me. Tell me everything. Please.

Laura I feel sexy here, I feel like hot and moist. And then I feel despair or whatever because it's so utilitarian. I mean, the biology is out of whack if you know what I mean. Actually, it's understandable to a certain extent if you

start losing the faculty of breathing, if you start losing the faculty of thirst, although of course thirst is not a faculty, thirst is necessity, and so is breathing, so I'm not taking it all back, because these abilities were ordained for men and women, for creatures with a possibility, breath and thirst, for the possibility of becoming. You should read the existentialists about this, not only Freud, not only Marx, read some of the existentialists, the Jewish and the non-Jewish, like Martin Buber, like Karl Jaspers, or Soren Kirkegaard, he was trying to say something also, or someone like Kant, whose first name was Immanuel, I read all these guys believe it or not, I wasn't only shooting up or turning tricks. So in certain situations under certain conditions it makes sense to have an unfettered sexual drive, to merge and multiply, to entwine and propagate, the first of which being the condition of extinction.

Gary Laura?
She's so intelligent!

Laura Such a vision of horror I had, I suppose you'd call it a sin.

Gary No, I think it's totally understandable.

Laura A beautiful October afternoon, sunshine on the Pacific, I remember that, I can see it now. This will end, I thought, this will all have to end, vanish and reappear, shadow and light, as I walked along with my sunglasses in my hair, I had no sexual thoughts in those days. And then it got cold, and then it got dark, and I was ready for my shot. Not a close-up, Chauncey, I mean a fix.

Gary Chauncey?

Laura I see my mother walking the streets. She's lost half her mind.

Gary I met her, Monica, on Wilshire—

Laura I see my father going to AA meetings and bragging about his sobriety. He's always pulling up his pants, walking around with his fly open. Freud would have had a field day with that one.

Freud *It's not that much, the history of Man, the story of Man. You have the Greeks and the Jews, and that's what you have, and the Chinese, and of course the Egyptians, and that's what you have, and that's all you have and that's all I'm saying.*

Gary Freud? Are we talking about Freud?

Freud *It's not that much.*

Gary I heard he is around here someplace, Freud, in the Land of the Dead.

Laura Don't bother Dr. Freud.

Freud *There is the sexual obligation and the murder obligation and you have to eat and smoke cigars, and you're obliged to suffer and die.*

Laura That's him again. I know him. He's horny and absentminded.

Freud *That's all I'm saying. There's the biology of the situation, arising out of nothing, or out of the mistiness of time, I don't know, maybe a black hole for all I know or anybody knows, causing sex and murder and suffering and death, that's all I'm saying.*

Laura Those were the days. I have to say. I enjoyed it sometimes. Three times I was almost murdered. Twice on the street and once at Chauncey's place.

Gary That's what happened to my Danny.

Laura Lots of drug dealing going on and games played with firearms. Roulette. Shoot the apple off the head, whatever. Once you shoot you can't go back. I'll say that a gun: Once you shoot you can't go back. You can't go back there. Nope. What's done is done. It's like turning your wheel. You're driving your auto or whatever, your SUV, your truck, your gas-guzzling self-important vehicle, and suddenly you have an impulse to swerve.

Gary I know about that. I've had that.
Muses Gary.
As Einstein says to Dr. Freud:
Einstein *There's no such thing as Time, and there's no such thing as God.*
Freud *Yes, that's all I'm saying.*
Einstein *It's an explanation that can't be explained.*
Freud *The Word.*
Laura You have an impulse to swerve and you turn the wheel and crash, bang, boom, it's a big mess, crunching metal, squealing tires, screams and body bags and air bags and shards of glass shattering on the road. Along with the body parts. And then a silence, the silence of destiny, of finality, of no going back.

Einstein *Yes, like the silence before the death of Archimedes.*
A moment there of silence, sky above, earth below, shared by the Roman soldier and the Greek mathematician.

Laura Chauncey was the guy. Renaldo set up the dates.

Antonio Antonio.

Laura Antonio set up the dates.

Gary Chauncey?

Laura Chauncey shot the film, brought the smack. I said to Rondell, if I OD, don't bring me back, let me go and burn the body.

Gary That's what my Danny said.

Dan *Burn my body Dad and throw my ashes into the ocean.*

Laura You're an actor, you should know.

Gary What?

Laura The endless phony baloney, Gary, the writhing and moaning and the grinning product endorsements. Don't worry about it if you can't follow.

Gary I can't follow.

Laura Don't worry about it. I don't mean to be harsh. I'm sorry if it seems harsh. I'd like everything to be nice, I'm sure.

Gary Of course, you would.

Laura Don't say of course, it sounds like bullshit.

Gary I'm sorry.

Laura Don't say you're sorry, you sound like an automaton.

Gary I don't know what to say.

Laura Shut up then.

Antonio *Párate y attende okay?*

Gary Okay.

Antonio *Muy bien.*

Laura Tell the Spic to shut up too, fucking mealy-mouthed death-dealing dickhead.

Antonio Whoa.

Laura It is harsh, it's the gene protein arithmetic flowing through us like water through a pipe. Don't say okay again.

Gary Okay.

Laura Money is more important than people. Ask anybody with a brain in his head. They'll use rat poison and borax to

dummy up the dope. Chauncey's specialty, along with the digital home movie. Sex and dope. We'd shoot up in the room and lie down, me and him and me and her or me and them and she and us and so on. Chauncey did it all, he used three digital cameras and two tripods and wandered around with one camera in his hand. Everything looked good, the reds and the blues, the bright-eyed gazes, the naked skin, everything looked polished and nice. He said moan and be happy and I did and I was. Why is sex dirty if it's a reproductive function? I've wondered so much about that. Well, maybe it just is, along with everything else. But we have to be happy inside, don't we?, we have to look on the bright side, the sunny side, the good side of things. Excellence is good, and we tried to be excellent and shiny.

Gary I do worry about my art.

Laura Your art?

Gary You know, my performance.

Laura I hate that word. Performance.

Gary You know, whether they like it, whether they hate it.

DaddyO *People should have a good time. If they're having a good time, then it's all right with me. Well and good, say I.*

Mama Bean Sex is fun. It's fun, but there is some effort required.

DaddyO *And then your chest is heaving and you're about to have a heart attack.*

Gary Well, I guess I was talking about acting. Not sex. I was so full of myself, I so totally misunderstood. You know, they're nodding and smiling hatefully and I'm thinking they're in thrall to my performance. You know, like that.

Laura Don't worry about it. The theatrical art is probably as dead as I am. Hey, you'll all be wired. You, the living. You won't have to wait for anyone to act. You won't need to think anything at all. There will be speed of light communication. Bingo. Day and night total entertainment. Won't have to leave your heads.

Gary Don't go. Tell me more.

Laura More? You want more?

Gary Yes—Is that the future?

Laura Well, I said, like I said, as I was saying, there'll be no future as you know it, because everything will be instantaneous.

Fiber-optic.

Gary No future?

Laura No.

Time,

She says,

Will stop.

Laura Time will stop, as we know it.

(There is only the ever-present,

Like a photo

Or a still,

Like a picture,

Or a snap.)

Laura Yes. If the universe is made of ice, and time is an endless freeze, black and white and grey, and a boy's warm life is snuffed like a bacterium?

Gary Yes?

Laura You understand what I'm saying?

Gary No.

Laura Then what difference does it make?

Gary I don't know.

Laura No difference at all. Nothing at all. There's the answer for you, Gary.

Gary I don't understand you, Laura.

Laura I don't care if you understand me or not, actually. Actually, you don't know if you'll make it through the night. Isn't that strange? Don't you find that strange? Nobody knows. Nobody knows if they'll make it through the night. Another night on planet earth. No one knows. No one fucking knows. And you can't find the past, either. The past is nowhere to be found, Gary.

Gary Well, I don't know.

Laura It vanishes, Gary, into thin air! Look!

DaddyO *Let's hope the earth's axis doesn't suddenly tilt, Mama, and the Past go tumbling off into space along with the real estate.*

Mama Bean *Why hope, DaddyO?*

DaddyO *Well, I don't know. Why not?*

Laura Like a book or a disc or a DVD.

Mama Bean *Why not?*

DaddyO *There is no Past!*

Mama Bean *It's a global freezing, is what they call it, DaddyO, the icy ataxia.*

DaddyO *I like that, Mama.*

Laura That's why I liked to shoot up, Mr. Bean, I mean Gary, because of the cold. And now I'm dead.

Gary I can't tell. This all looks real to me. This all looks live (*It's all in the lighting.*)

It's all in the timing.
Says the Cameraman
Chauncey
To his Self.)

Laura You don't know. You may never know.
Laura says.

Laura But the time will come, of course, when you'll know.

Gary You mean, the time to die?

Laura Of course to die, Gary, to die and go to hell, of course. What did you think? Like Danny Boy, and me, like Mama Bean, who came and went and she's coming again.

Gary I never think it can happen to me. Not me.

Laura That's why I'd like to see my parents, Monica and Charles. Ask the Spic, the blower, Manuelito.

Gary Antonio?

Laura Yeah. So they can realize. I want to see if I can communicate, at long last, from the grave, from the Land of the Dead, from hell. Ask him.

Antonio I'll give you a moment there of unforgetfulness, of recognition, *una timbre de alarma*, if you want, if that's what you want.

Laura I do, yes.

Antonio But it must be earned. You will have to pay.

Laura I've earned it. *Gracias.*

Antonio No.

Laura Come on, fuckhead, do the switch.

Antonio You have to be happy now, you have to be grateful.

Laura I am. I will be. Thank you.
You can trick me for it later.

Antonio *Bueno.* Here's Charles.

On stage.

Charles So I'm standing on Santa Monica in front of my meeting when this Mexican guy comes up to me with his blower.

Antonio You see this?

Charles He says.

Antonio It's a telephone.

Charles I know what a phone is, I says.

Antonio Listen, there's a message in there, just for you.

Charles That is a leaf blower, dirt bag.

Antonio I'll turn it on.

Charles Don't turn it on motherfucker.

Antonio Here we go. (*Starts the motor*)
(*It's a sound from hell.*)

Monica Charles?

Charles I can't hear you!

Monica It's me, Monica!

Charles Monica?

Monica Monica.

Charles Where are you?

Monica I'm in a phone booth.

Charles Shut the door!

Monica Are you on your cell?

Charles What?

Monica Are you on your cell phone?

Charles Don't yell.

Monica You must be.

Charles Okay, you don't have to yell.

Monica I heard from Laura.

Charles Where are you, Monica?

Monica I told you.

Charles Are you in an institution?

Monica I'm in a halfway house, Charles. It's not an institution. It's not mental. Where are you?

Charles I'm standing on Santa Monica Boulevard. In front of my meeting.

Monica Oh, good.

Charles I'm not going into the meeting.

Monica That's fine, Charles.

Charles I know it is.

Monica Can you hear me now?

Charles Yes.

Monica Don't be sad.

He weeps.

Monica Charles?

Charles What do you mean you heard from Laura? What does that mean?

Monica I heard her voice.

Charles It's not good to hear voices, Monica. Crazy people hear voices.

Monica Well whatever.

Charles What do you mean, well whatever?
(*It's like water running.*)

Monica Sounds like water running.

Charles That's a blower.

Monica No, I mean the words.

Charles Monica.

Monica Yes, Charles.

Charles Say what you want to say.

Laura *Stay together.*

Charles Monica?

Laura *Stay together with each other. Divorce is stupid because nobody's perfect.*

Charles That's Laura!

Laura *And then you get decrepit and you can't control your functions and you'll need help. Before that you'll realize you're a memory and that's it and that's all.*

Charles Laura?

Antonio Okay, call over.

Laura *Bye.*

Charles Bye, Laura.

Laura *Pray for me if you want, if you feel like it. Maybe the words go somewhere, black fire on black. Who knows? Something that cannot die. Check it out.*

Antonio Say goodbye. *(Turns off blower)*

Monica Charles?

Charles I can't hear you.

Monica I'll come over, okay? I'll come to the meeting.

Charles I'll wait.

Monica You can be number one, Charles.

Charles I'll be number one.

Monica You'll be one and I'll be two.

Charles Okay Two.

Monica Okay One.

Antonio Gary? *(Turns on blower)*

Gary Here I am.
Here he comes exactly the same in every frame, Gary Gary Gary endlessly appearing endlessly Gary Gary Gary here he comes.

Antonio Here's Danny Boy.
Here he comes exactly the same in every frame, Danny Danny Danny endlessly appearing endlessly Danny Danny Danny here he comes.

Dan Hi, Dad.

Gary Hello, son.

A miniature red Jaguar rolls ominously onto the stage.

Dan I have to tell you, Dad, you can't stay.

Gary I know that, Danny.

Dan And when you go back you'll pull the plug again. You'll pull the plug on Mama Bean.

Gary I don't think so.

Dan You don't know that now and you won't remember.

Gary Dan?

Dan I'll give you what happened, Dad, that day in the park, if you want, if that's what you want.

Gary I do, yes.
You see out there—look out—you see that? You see the glint? It's a gun, Danny Boy. See the car? See the red car? I wanna go, Dan, Danny.

See the red car with a guy with a gun? It's Rule—Rulay—he'll cover it—I'll shoot it, he'll cover, okay? That's a joke—so you give the motherfucker his borax and you stand—you stand there quietly and don't run, okay, Danny? No run run run Danny Boy—you stand quietly and don't run—Danny, I wanna go.

Go, get the fuck out of here.

Fuck you you stupid shit, you're a nothing piece of shit, with a mouth—a piece of shit with a mouth—a piece of shit with a shitty mouth—a shithead with a mouth and a camera.

Okay—see the camera, Honey, you see the camera in the car? Not this camera, the one in the car—you see the glint in the red car? It's a gun—you see the guy? Rule—Rulay? You see him? You see the gun? See the gun in the red car? I see it.

Look at the red car see the red car with the guy with the gun?

I see it I see it.

What is it is it a Jaguar is it? Red jag with a fag in it California tag?

Yeah, yeah.

It's Rule it's Rulay in it the fag in the Jag. I'll zoom—close on his face you see his face?

I see his face, I see his stupid ugly face.

Now here comes kid on a bike. You see him. Kid on a bike here he comes exactly the same in every frame, kid on a bike, kid on a bike, endlessly appearing kid on a bike here he comes.

You wanna go?

I'll go. Danny?

Yeah?

Can I go.

Go go go go go go.

Gunshot.

Death of the motherfucking son death of a son. And everything everything remains exactly exactly as it was as it was no change it's exactly the same as it was.

He was shot, Gary's boy.

And the world stayed exactly as it was as it was, again and a gun.

Gary I'm gonna kill this guy, Chauncey. You get that? I'm gonna kill him.

ANTONIO turns off blower.

DaddyO Fucking mower and blower.
Says DaddyO.

DaddyO I'll be glad to get away from the noise.

Mama Bean I been there and it's nice. 'Course, who's to tell? No elements there that have to be converted, or convicted. It's just light and warmth, kind of bright, hot.

DaddyO I'm ready to go, too.

Mama Bean Why you, DaddyO?

DaddyO I'm tired of dropping and tripping and forgetting and falling.

Mama Bean I see.

DaddyO Sex is my thing and I'm not getting any.

Mama Bean 'Course, I know that.

DaddyO My main thing.

Mama Bean I liked it but I can't.

DaddyO Well, you're all hooked up.

Mama Bean Maybe later, maybe tomorrow.

DaddyO I can look but I can't touch. Sexy girls in little jumpsuits in the prime. I feel the urge but I'm invisible. They don't see

me. I am not a player. I wish they'd have mercy and take me home. I have seen some pussy would brighten up heaven.

Mama Bean Oh!

DaddyO What?

Mama Bean I'm moved! Pull the plug and don't let them turn the damn thing on again.

DaddyO I'm coming with.

Mama Bean Then who can I depend on?

DaddyO Your boy.

Mama Bean Gary?

DaddyO Himself.

Mama Bean I'll try.

Enter Gary.

Hello, Boy.

DaddyO Where you been, Son?

Gary Went to the john to get away from the noise. Mowers and blowers. Here he comes again, Gustavo.

Antonio Antonio.

Gary Fuckhead can't give it a rest.

DaddyO You've met our cameraman I presume?

Gary Him? Antonio?

No, Chauncey. Chauncey's the name.

Gary Chauncey!

Chauncey.

Gary I know you?

Antonio Me, you know. Soy *el Maestro de la Mirada*.

DaddyO Nice.

Gary Not you. Him. You look and sound familiar.

I been to hell and back a few times. You ready?

Gary For what?

Shoot the snuff, film the act, pull the plug.

Gary The cameraman from hell.

Every angle, every shot. Thoughts, postures, strivings, hopes and failures, regrets, lies, all in the moment, like Archimedes and the Roman.

Gary I feel like I know you somehow.

We can do takes. One, two, three, four.

Mama Bean It's alright, son.

Five, six, seven, eight.

DaddyO You see these guys, they're bowing their heads in prayer? What are they thinking? What are they saying? What are they repeating?

Nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

Mama Bean Gary?

Gary What?

Mama Bean Pull the plug.

Gary Pull the plug?

Mama Bean Pull the plug.

DaddyO Is it heartfelt joy? Honest sorrow?

Antonio I don't know.

Don't ask me.

DaddyO Or are they counting to a hundred and back, one breath at a time?

Antonio I don't know.

DaddyO Ask them. Ask them what they're doing when they're bowing their heads in prayer.

Antonio I don't think so.

Last breath, the last and the lost.

Gary Chauncey the Cameraman.
Antonio I'll shoot my blower.
Go. (Blower)
DaddyO We'll go together Mama Bean.
Mama Bean I don't think so. You stay.
Gary? Gary?
Gary Go, Mama.
DaddyO God bless, Mama Bean.
Mama Bean I'm ready. Here I come.
No one moves.
Mama Bean I'm here.

The End