

DaddyO Dies Well

DaddyO Dies Well *was first produced by Padua Playwrights at The Electric Lodge, Venice, CA, 2011, under the direction of Murray Mednick, with the following cast:*

Gary Casey Sullivan

DaddyO Hugh Dane

Antonio Peggy Ann Blow

Dr. Jones Jack Kehler

Gloria Elizabeth Greer

Marcia Melissa Paladino

Mama Bean Straun Bovee

Characters

Gary Bean *Our hero, an actor*

DaddyO (James) *His father*

Dr. Jones *His “doctor”*

Gloria *Gary’s first wife*

Antonio *The Angel of Death*

Chorus *Mama Bean (Gary’s mother, Francis), Marcia (Gary’s second wife)*

Scene

Chairs on a stage and a bench.

DaddyO I'm having what they call chest pains and my hands get to tingling toward evening. It's a lack of circulation, seems to me. A moment ago, the Angel of Death was mowing and blowing in the yard. Now he's in the back somewhere. So I called my boy and invited him over. He's my stepson because I married his mother, Mama Bean. Gary, he's had his problems. His child Danny Boy was shot dead while standing near a drug deal gone bad, and then his wife left him and took his daughters with her. Presently, he lives a solitary life. I've asked him over this afternoon for a special tea. Have you fasted, Son?

Gary Yes.

DaddyO Good. I'm summoning up the juice for the healing. Pretty soon I'll whistle a tune.

Dr. Jones He likes to rhyme. Dr. Jones here.

DaddyO The tea is a purgative. You'll throw up a lot. I won't take any of it myself, but I have done, years ago, so I'd like to be involved in the proceedings.

Gary Sure, Dad.

DaddyO I'll offer counsel or commentary, views and experiences, stories to tell from the hipster past.

Gary Yours?

DaddyO Mine and others.

Gary Sounds good.

DaddyO First you need to sit down here and tell me something.

Gary What about?

DaddyO Be sincere, what you want, what you hope for, and then we'll have the tea.

Gary Okay. (*GARY considers*)

DaddyO It's part of the ritual, my boy.

Dr. Jones Afraid are you?

Gary Yes.

Dr. Jones You'd be an idiot not to be, son.

Gary Maybe this isn't a good time.

DaddyO This is the time, son. I've had a vision of the end, tubes hooked up to machines, my blood in a plastic bag, the anguish of abandonment, an alarm going off incessantly.

Gary An alarm, Dad?

DaddyO Turns out to have been the bed itself. An incomprehensible nightmare occurred. Franz Kafka himself couldn't have thought of it. I'm lying there in a pit of anxiety and the bed starts screaming like a fire alarm. And no one came to help. I pulled the plug at last. Thank God, they let me go home on a crutch.

Dr. Jones I'd love to say something about that—

DaddyO Parts starting to wear out, decrepitude, memory loss, nurses tormenting the dying, nurses bullying the weak.

Dr. Jones I'm a doctor and I hate you. Not you personally, just your human kind, your shit and piss and blood pouring out onto your pajamas and your bad conscience erupting into your chest.

DaddyO Save it for the health insurance industry, Jones.

Dr. Jones As I always say, money is more important than people.

DaddyO So if you're going to do anything Gary, it better be entertaining.

Gary Excuse me?

Dr. Jones Are you?
Gary What?
Dr. Jones Performing something.
Gary No.
Dr. Jones Good.
Gary I don't want to perform anything.
DaddyO Don't be nervous and don't panic.
Gary Maybe later.
Dr. Jones Everybody thinks they deserve to live, and not only now, but forever. Why?
Gary I don't know why.
Dr. Jones It's the biological imperative.
DaddyO Exactly.
Dr. Jones You want to keep breathing.
DaddyO You want to keep eating.
Gary You want to keep—
Dr. Jones Say no more.
DaddyO Procreating.
Dr. Jones I'll say no more.
DaddyO No more of that.
Gary I'll speak for myself.
DaddyO I've had enough.
Dr. Jones I'm done.
Gary Not me.
DaddyO I know you. You want to perform.
Gary I do.
DaddyO And be admired. You want to keep passing through, and hopefully it'll be warm and smooth and people will think highly of you and applaud.
Gary Exactly.

DaddyO And maybe even have intercourse.
Gary At last.
Dr. Jones Say no more.
DaddyO And give you money.
Gary Finally.
Dr. Jones What keeps the dogs away, my dear friend, the dogs and the cold?
DaddyO Nothing, Jones. Not even money can do that. Tell him why I was in the hospital, Jones.
Dr. Jones He got hit by a truck.
DaddyO I got hit by a truck crossing Ocean Avenue. It was a white pickup truck driven by the Angel of Death, who laughed.
Gary Did you get his license number?
DaddyO I lay there in the street, my nose bleeding. Something bad had just happened.
Gary Did you call the police?
DaddyO A German actor and his friend came by and peered down at me. They were shy people, and that's all I'll say.
Gary It's a case of hit and run.
DaddyO Santa Monica swirled around me. I don't know what drugs the mower and blower who hit me was on.
Antonio *Nada!*
DaddyO I think he was drunk. He looked and laughed and drove away.
Antonio *I was making a right turn on a red, and DaddyO was crossing the street. I got a kick out of running him over. His time is almost up anyway.*
DaddyO The Devil was drunk, which is the cause of half the world's evil.
Dr. Jones And the other half?

DaddyO Himself, and that's all I'm saying.

Dr. Jones If people want to drink and drive, then that's their business. I won't argue with them, but I advise against it. I'll say no more.

Gary Maybe this isn't a good time, you know, to imbibe a substance like ayahuasca?

DaddyO I'm an old hipster who knows what's what, but I'm feeling tired since that white truck whacked me and the hospital pinned me to a screaming bed.

Gary All right, Dad.

DaddyO And I'm lonely since your mama died. Look on up! People's looking down like their feet's on fire. While all this here will be gone and gone. In a New York fucking minute. And it's all done, fade to black. Look on up, sky's alive, while you be looking down at butt all the time.

Gary True, I am. I mean, I do.

DaddyO Well I did too, marvelous in its prime. Milk and honey, Son. You want to grab with both hands.

Gary I wish I could, Dad.

DaddyO Not getting any are you? Rejection blues?

Gary 'Fraid so.

DaddyO The tea will help. Then you got to go out, son, take a chance, get a date, say hi to a lady and start to woo. Here. Gargle with this.

GARY swallows.

Now wash your mouth out and spit again.

GARY gargles and spits.

You're too downcast.

Gary I know it. Speaking of which I had a dream last night. I was in France rolling a joint. I'm rolling this joint and it turns out I'm rolling up a centipede. I think that says it.

Dr. Jones Say no more.

DaddyO Haven't touched the weed myself for forty years. Gives me the heebie-jeebies.

Gary I've never been to France, and I don't smoke anything.

DaddyO Lots of centipedes in the jungle. Best to say a prayer for the tea now. For the healing power of nature in the tea. Let's get down and bow our heads. Let's kneel and pray on the turning earth.

Gary Can I speak now?

Dr. Jones Please.

Gary God give me the strength to be alone and away from my family and avoid drugs and alcohol and be free of resentments.

DaddyO Okay, good.

Antonio *La Planta! Natema!*

Dr. Jones Say something about the tea.

Gary And God bless the tree I'm about to drink.

DaddyO Tea, not tree! Okay, fine. Now, here's this special tea, which I'm going to give you, Gary, to drink. It's from the Amazon region, fruit of the vine, and it'll give you strength.

Gary Dr. Jones?

Dr. Jones I'll be a helper, along with your dad. *(Sits down)*

DaddyO Go ahead, drink up.

GARY drinks.

Gary Bitter. (He said I'd learn something, my dad did, about life after death. And so I agreed. He's been good to me, the old hipster, and he was good to Mama Bean.)

DaddyO Here, swirl some more water in your mouth and spit.

GARY spits.

Good boy. (*Whistles a tune, joined by ANDEAN MUSIC of flutes and drums, etc.*)

Gary Dad?

DaddyO Eyes up. Peoples looking down like there's worms in their feet. Good. You might have visions, but you'll vomit first. Takes a while. So we'll talk. Loved your Archimedes.

Gary Thanks.

DaddyO Could be an ice cream truck coming by with Eskimos in it.

Gary Say again?

DaddyO Could be an ice cream truck coming by with Eskimos in it. The white truck. Sky's up I always say, as the red sun sinks over Santa Monica Bay.

Gary I'm not sure I heard that.

DaddyO Sky's up I always say, as the red sun sinks over Santa Monica Bay. Gloria calls me all the time. That'll be her now. Hi, honey.

Gloria Can you hear me?

DaddyO I hear you fine.

Gloria Did you say something?

DaddyO I said, what's the weather? We're in a dead zone here. Can you hear me now?

Gloria Oh, yes, I'm in the Andes now! Can you imagine?

DaddyO Oh, good, I said to her: Child, go to South America. Go to the Amazon, why don't you, go to the Achuar, or up to the Andes, to the Quechua, the Otavalo, or the Inca, find out if we got any time left on planet earth. Ask: Will the Eagle make friends with the Condor?

Gloria So that's where I am now, DaddyO. And I'm looking for your friend, Don Antonio de la Selva.

Antonio Here I am!

DaddyO That was Him. I'm here with, uh, Him, now.

Gloria Don Antonio! I can't imagine!

DaddyO Remember, he's a shaman, a sorcerer! He can be in two places at once! And there's a hidden shield!

Gloria A hidden shield?

DaddyO I mean an invisible shield. Between the worlds.

Gloria Between heaven and hell?

DaddyO No, between California and South America. So you can't touch because of the time frame, or distance. And what's his name is here, too, your ex.

Gloria Gary?

DaddyO Gary. He's fucked up and poisoned at the moment.

Gloria Oh! Why?

DaddyO I'm going to cure the motherfucker with a spit and a potion and send him back into life with a new attitude.

Gloria What?

DaddyO Ayhuasca!

Gloria You say something about the weather?

DaddyO No, about Gary.

Gloria You say cloudy?

DaddyO Clouds like it'll rain, but then it don't and heat waves rise off asphalt like hot wet sheets. Weather's hostile to mankind. We deserve the worst. And you? Say something again.

Gloria The air here is good, except for the gas, except for the fumes, and there's a wonderful view of the mountains, and a volcano is exploding not far from here.

Gary A volcano!

Gloria Was that Gary? Hi Gary. Isn't it strange? Fire coming up from the center of the earth!

Gary It is! I know!

Gloria Listen to DaddyO, he knows what's what!

Gary I will! I am!

DaddyO Well, there's a panic that sets in and you feel lost, you feel lost and a panic sets in. It's a panic about the mind. It's aging and a hard life. You could be crossing the street and get hit by a truck. It happens, like I said, or there could be an alarm going off in your bed. So, there is a fear about the mind, which of course can't be trusted as a mechanism, reliably interpreting the world as it is, and the meaning, cause and effect, time of day and distance, dates, appointments, and so on.

Gloria DaddyO?

DaddyO For what can one rely on in the absence of mind? Here, you see, like this. I'm standing here like this. First I stood up and went over here. Like this. I'm here. I stood there holding my head, like this, as though something would come right side up in there, no, that I would come to peace and understanding, that all could be forgiven and undone, all the havoc of actual life now redeemed by my

hand in a meditative effort, like this, not lost, merely suspended in space a few feet above the earth, like all the others sprung at birth from the void, to live out their lives, like this, in the air between earth and heaven. Or under the sun. I'll say no more. Are you there?

Gloria Did you say you're going some place new?

DaddyO Straight up, like your boy's Mama!

Gloria That would be me.

DaddyO No, I mean your ex, I can't remember his name at the moment and he's sitting right in front of me having a panic attack.

Gloria That would be Gary.

DaddyO Right, Gary, and it was his mother who left us.

Gloria That would be Mama Bean.

Gary I saw the sky turn red in the middle of the night. Gangs are forming, armed to the teeth and on the march, armed to the teeth and on the march. It's the Christian view, which would be the End Times, or the Rapture, wouldn't you say? Gloria?

Gloria No, actually, I wouldn't say that.

Gary Them or the Jews or the Mullahs.

Gloria Oh, Gary. You're stoned. Hang in there. And when you get sober, take care of DaddyO. Feels like he wants to leave home early, before the apocalypse.

Gary And you?

Gloria Me, I think I'll hang here and search and maybe go down to the Amazon and then maybe go up to heaven when the time comes.

Gary Holy shit!

Gloria What did you say?

Gary I said what the fuck!

Gloria I'll find Don Antonio and ask him, how much time we got left on earth. Should we get high and fuck our brains out, or sit quietly in a cave? And was our Danny's life in vain?

Gary Don't go rapturing up, Gloria!

Gloria Excuse me?

Gary The stars are singing!

Gloria Yeah, I heard about that.

Gary Be careful, Gloria, and take care of yourself.

DaddyO Those are one and the same thing, Gary.

Gary Come back home and vote!

DaddyO Oh, for God's sake!

Gloria So I'll say goodbye for now.

Gary The jungle is throbbing, Gloria!

Gloria I know it is!

Gary I can hear the insects!

Gloria Okay, I better go now.

DaddyO Stay in view and stay in touch.

Gloria I will do.

DaddyO If they don't blow the whole fucking world to smithereens in the meantime.

Gloria Bye, bye!

DaddyO Bye.

GLORIA sits down.

DaddyO She's the Christian one then?

Gary Yes, Dad.

DaddyO She calls me all the time. And the other one?

Gary Marcia?

MARCIA stands.

Marcia What do you love the most? Is it your solitude? God? Drugs? Or me?

Gary You hear that?

DaddyO No. Missed that.

Gary I think I'll throw up.

Marcia *(Repeats)* What do you miss the most? Is it your solitude? God? Drugs? Or me? *(Sits down)*

DaddyO Okay.

GARY vomits. DR. JONES stands.

Dr. Jones She's given him an ultimatum. And that will tear it. It's no longer equal then, no longer balanced. The superior is demanding impossible change, the inferior must change or die or run away to find a new identity, a new life. There's a mysterious story for you Gary, the stranger in a new town. Has he run away from his wife? Are there children? Will he one day try to see them, surreptitiously, hiding behind a tree in the schoolyard? Phone calls from strangers in the night? Letters with no return address? Husbands and wives, having broken their vows, appearing and disappearing across America?

Gary I've never heard him speak like this.

Dr. Jones I'll say no more. *(Sits)*

DaddyO And your daughters? You do have daughters?

Gary Yes, we know I do.

DaddyO Of course, we know. I forgot.

Gary You forgot? The girls are good. How could you forget? Where are they now? They're teens now.

DaddyO Puberty on one hand and menopause on the other. You go down to China?

Gary You mean Long Beach?

DaddyO Long Beach, of course.

Gary Not often, no. I'm not allowed. I'm not allowed to see my daughters.

Marcia He's not allowed.

DaddyO And Gloria?

Gary You mean Marcia? Marcia's good, she's good. It's all good.

MARCIA stands.

She's with Vernon now.

Marcia *(To "VERNON," off)* Well, I'm not going to move the girls, Vernon, and I can't be with anyone who's using. I just can't do it. And I don't want my girls exposed to that shit. I don't let Gary near them, and I'm certainly not going to let them live with you up there in the Palisades.

Gary I think I'll throw up again.

DaddyO Fine.

Marcia *(To "VERNON")* He wants to die, Vernon. He just wants to keel over dead and roll down the cliff into the sea. Well, I don't care. It's your business. You can talk to whoever you want to. It has nothing to do with me.

Gary That was mean. My heart just sank into my feet.

DaddyO Take a deep breath, Gary.

Marcia He's not going to talk to you anyway. Why should Gary talk to you? And I heard his stepfather's not well. Too much dope and alcohol—like you, Vernon. Clean up your act, Vernon, and we'll talk.

Gary I want to slap her face.

Marcia Come on, I'll walk you to the car.

Gary Vernon can't move. He's paralyzed. He can't fight and he can't flee, so he freezes. She takes his arm and he moves his feet and she walks him to his car. She does not sense his rage. He gets into his car and the door slams.

Sound of door slamming.

DaddyO Do you have to vomit?

Gary That was terrible. That was me right there.

DaddyO Go ahead and vomit.

Gary I don't know if I can. No. I'm just sorry. I'm sorry the way things happened. I'm sorry I lost my Danny Boy and I miss my daughters. It's all my fault.

Marcia Yes, it was. Oh yes it was, because there has to be a fault somewhere; someone must be blamed. You think things just happen? They happen by themselves? I don't think so. I think we have to take some responsibility, Gary, for our actions.

Gary Oh, Fuck. *(Vomits)*

DaddyO You'll want to think positively right now, Gary, so you'll see good things soon. But I'll tell you son, from my own experience, it's just as hard to leave as be left. You know it's all wrong. Wrong to break the marriage vows, because

it won't affect your being. Won't affect yours, won't affect hers. Only harm will come of it and useless suffering.

MARCIA stands. She's talking to "VERNON."

Marcia You love yourself too much, like Gary. You're an actor. You're just full of excuses and self-justifications, so you can go your own way and do your own thing. So go.

Sits. GARY dry heaves. DR. JONES stands.

Dr. Jones There's the moment, the life-changing moment, the epiphany, the actual moment, you know, when you realize, "She's gone. I'm alone. I've lost my family." I'm a doctor, a healer, a helper, a prescriber, take this, take that, and I try to put up with the endless resentment, the endless resentment of the endlessly damaged and lonely and dying, and then to fill out all the endless forms for the health insurance industry endlessly.

Gary Dr. Jones?

Dr. Jones Hi, Gary.

Gary I'm not feeling too much yet.

Dr. Jones Really? You were a moment ago.

Gary I was, yes.

Dr. Jones Nausea?

Gary Yes.

Dr. Jones Hallucinations?

Gary Yes.

Dr. Jones Vomitous?

Gary Yes.

Dr. Jones Help is on its way. (*Sits*)

Gary Interesting.

DaddyO Something happened?

Gary This beautiful woman pulls up in front of me, she gets out of her car, looks at me, smiles, starts to gas up her car, leaves the pump going, and heads for the convenience store. You know, those stores with all the chips, all those endlessly nasty chips in there? Sorry. Excuse me.

DaddyO Yes? And?

GARY vomits.

Gary Excuse me.

DaddyO No problem.

Gary So then she goes into the store. And I keep hearing this rock and roll song from the fifties, "I love you, Peggy Sue."

DaddyO What did you say she was driving?

Gary Buick. (*Dry heaves*) Oh.

DaddyO Relax. Let go. I can't believe I just said that. It's the plant talking, Gary. Dry heaves are a very good sign. You feel Natema, you feel its tremendous power—Mother Earth herself, singing, rotating. Makes you want to rub. It's life itself, or friction. Electricity, or magnetism.

Gary Earthmother, show me some loving-kindness. Please.

DaddyO She's dead now, our Francis, Mama Bean, cold and gone and never coming back.

Gary Should I speak?

DaddyO No. I'll continue, and then you. You can throw up if you want.

Gary Fine. (*Starts to tremble*)

DaddyO And then, you know, high school was over, where I was in love with the girls you know, in their skirts, those were the days, in love in general with the girls, breasts in their little cups, but don't touch, can't have, can't talk, run away, and so on and so forth, even though they may have liked me, even though, I was a worthless shit in my own eyes, though I wish it wasn't so.

Gary I'm trembling, Dad. I'm shaking like a leaf.

JONES stands.

Dr. Jones Not so terrible.

DaddyO Why is that, Jones?

Dr. Jones He can't help it.

DaddyO Why?

Dr. Jones It's the plant. He's shaking in tune with the pulse of the universe.

DaddyO Let me just say—I had fled the hipster life, I thought, the psychedelics and the hard stuff and the booze. I had seen the human face.

Dr. Jones When was this, James?

DaddyO When I came up from Whittier, many years ago. We had a nice life. Glendora, California bungalow, porch on two sides, facing a park. Magnolia and Paloma. Orange groves. Ice cream bells in the park. Persimmons in the trees. Sit out on the porch and watch the illegals picnicking loudly and joyfully and loyally.

Antonio *Don't say bad things!*

DaddyO Sorry! Everything seemed just right and the way it had to be. And then Sex reared its ugly head, son. Turned my

life upside down. You have no idea. Next thing I know the locks are changed and I can't go home. Bags in the driveway. Light on in the living room. Your lamp, the lamp you read by. TV flickering. There's your moral, son, which I know you've come to on your own. And then the bitch left me for another married man. Fuck you, she says, you're a hipster and a dope. I'm out of here.

Gary Dad?

DaddyO What?

Gary I couldn't say. *(Dry heaves)*

DaddyO Later on I met your mother.

Gary What I was going to say.

Dr. Jones Good. You're doing well, Gary.

Gary Lord have mercy.

Dr. Jones That's fine.

Gary Yes. Lord have mercy. Thank you.

DaddyO Good boy. It's imagination, son. We start imagining things. We get lonely, we get horny, they glance at us and we think they like us. It's the self-love of men, leads us down the garden path.

Gary Would you say?

DaddyO I would. My own fault, I blame myself.

Mama Bean *Well, that won't do any good, will it James? Self-reproach and all that?*

Gary Oh, God.

DaddyO So. Well. Feel like you might vomit some more?

Gary Yes. *(Dry heaves twice)*

DaddyO Good boy.

Gary What happens now?

Antonio *Don Antonio de la Selva.*

DaddyO Me, I'm starting to lose my mind, like I was saying, I think in French.

GLORIA stands.

Oh, I bet that's Gloria.

Gloria Hi, I just wanted to check in, tell you about the mountains here. We're ten thousand feet up. The air is crisp and clear. Large active volcanoes surround us, giving great power to our spirits and our search. Tucumbara. Mojando, Imbabura, Cotacachi. Thank you. *(Sits down)*

DaddyO Lost her. What was I saying? Memory?

Gary Keyes and glasses?

DaddyO Right, keys and glasses. That's why they put you in a home. And then I can't track my thoughtlessness, neither in one language or the first. Look on up though, and open your ears: Sweet murmuring of water. Could be a fountain or a stream, or the waving of ocean waves.

They listen.

DaddyO Singing of birds. Feel like throwing up again, do you?

Gary Yes. *(Heaves three times)*

DaddyO It's not about us. The earth just wants to get hotter. So we're putting more CO₂ into the air. Get hotter and hotter. Boiling hot. That's what I think. That's why the sky turned red. Wait, I just heard your mother.

Mama Bean *Be happy. Whatever happens. I'm happy no matter what. Abstinence, rejection, I'm happy. Flood, famine, fire, earthquake, I'm happy. You don't like me, you think*

I'm stupid, you think I'm untalented, I'm still happy. You think I'm vain, I'm happy. You think I'm an idiot because I'm happy, I'm still happy, I stay happy. Nothing can take happiness away from me, not human weakness, human error, catastrophic climate change, human pride, human arrogance, nothing, because happiness is right here in my heart forever.

DaddyO Well, you're in heaven Francis, so what the hell? *(STATIC)* She's gone. Did you hear her, Son?

Gary No.

DaddyO That was your Mother speaking from the sky regions.

Gary I feel pretty good about it.

DaddyO Listen up, I think it's your Mama again.

Mama Bean *I can see all the Dead Zones from here, DaddyO, pocking up the planet.*

DaddyO You hear that?

Gary No.

Mama Bean *Silence. We're in the presence of Death—it's that lurking menace, Antonio, who takes a peek upstage left. He wears a white skull mask that glows in the dark. Music of the Andes. DaddyO looks at Him over his shoulder.*

DaddyO Ah, he's here. It's Don Antonio de la Selva, himself.

Gary Dad?

Dr. Jones Would you like to throw up?

Gary I would, please.

Dr. Jones Step right over there. Good.

GARY vomits. GLORIA stands.

DaddyO Oh, that must be Gloria. Hi honey.

Gloria William Burroughs called it Yage. Near the Amazon, where I am, they call it Ayahuasca, or, in the indigenous language, Natema.

DaddyO That is correct. Have you fasted?

Gloria Yes, and now I'm planning to drink Ayahuasca in front of a shaman, Don Antonio de la Selva.

DaddyO Good. I know the man well.

Mama Bean *The stage goes dark. Flashlights. Antonio steps forward. He spits, whistles, yawns loudly, fills his mouth with water or schnapps and blows it all over the stage. He mimics vomiting. People are throwing up with loud exaggeration all over the place, including Gary. Music of the Andes.*

Gary Hello? The whole jungle is singing and I can't stand it anymore. The sky is singing and the stars are drums. Little dwarves are running around with lights on their faces.

Dr. Jones Those are children with flashlights.

Gary Dr. Jones?

DaddyO Yes, Gary?

Gary I'm shaking, I can't stop shaking.

Dr. Jones This bodes well for you. Don't panic.

Gary I can't stop shaking.

Antonio *Está bien.* You are shaking with the rhythm of the plant, with the rhythm of *La Selva*.

Mama Bean *Sounds of the jungle—insects, birds, frogs, monkeys—louder and louder.*

Gary Dad?

DaddyO Yes, Son?

Gary I can't stop shaking.

DaddyO This is good.

Gary Oh, my, I can't stop shaking.

DaddyO That you, Gloria?

Gloria Yes. I feel like I want to throw up.

DaddyO Go ahead. You must purge. I think that's the word. Purge or merge.

Dr. Jones It's "purge," James.

DaddyO Yes, go ahead and purge.

Gloria Okay.

Mama Bean *ANTONIO repeats his whistling and spitting and blowing, etc. GLORIA starts vomiting.*

Gary I'm shaking, I can't stop shaking.

Dr. Jones Come and sit down, Gary.

Gary Oh, good. Good idea. Where should I go?

Dr. Jones Right over here. Use your flashlight.

Gary Oh, good. Good idea. Where should I go?

Dr. Jones You just said that. Right over here.

Gary I think I need some help.

Dr. Jones I'll help you.

Gary Thank you, thank you so much.

Dr. Jones No, thank *you*.

Antonio The plant has accepted you and you have received her, Natema. *Está bien.* It's very good what you are doing.

Gary Thank you. You remind me so much of uh... a man... a man I saw... I saw a man... I was walking from the Valley to the Sea, in Los Angeles, and I saw a Man... was it me, I mean was it you, or was it him? I'm not sure if I've made myself clear.

Dr. Jones Would you like to take a shit now?

Gary No, thank you. I mean, I don't have anything against the idea, I just don't have the use of my hands at the moment.

Antonio *Así es*, not to worry.

Dr. Jones You feel like it, just give me the high sign and I'll help you, okay?

Gary The high sign! That's good! Ha!

Dr. Jones I'll help you take down your pants.

Gary You will?

Dr. Jones Yes.

Gary God, that's fantastic!

Dr. Jones And the rest of the procedure.

Gary Procedure! Fantastic!

Dr. Jones I'm here to help.

Gary I can't use my hands. I can't wipe my ass!

Dr. Jones I'll help you with that.

Gary Jeez! Thank you very much! You're the greatest, Dr. Jones! And him, Antonio, he reminds me so much of a man—! Oh my, listen to the jungle! It's the sound of organic life on earth! It's the sound of Earth!

DaddyO Okay, sit tight Gary, while I say a few things.

Gary Sure, Dad. Oh, my! It's the pounding of the sun! It's the solar system! What I mean is—it's the solar system! In the Galaxy! The Milky Way! You hear it, Dad?

DaddyO I'll speak now. Ayahuasca is a vine—it is mixed with a catalytic agent—just imagine what it took to find the right balance, to make the chemical formula just so. Centuries or millennia. Am I right, Don Antonio? (He won't answer me right now because he's busy with Gloria.)

Antonio *(To Gloria)* You feel grief for the loss of your son.

Gloria Yes. It doesn't take a genius to figure that out. I feel very sad.

Antonio This is a true sorrow from the chaos of your lives in the city of Los Angeles, America.

Gloria I knew that already, Sir.

Antonio Take a look at your husband. You see him? He's shaking.

Gloria No, I can't see him, obviously. He's in Santa Monica.

Antonio Call him!

Gloria I'll call him. Gary!

Gary Gloria! Hi! Look, if I stand up I can't stop shaking. If I sit down, I'm all right, but my heart is pounding.

Gloria Sit down, be quiet.

Antonio Listen.

Sounds of the jungle.

DaddyO There is no death. That's what I learned years ago from Natema. That's why I've sent you to Don Antonio. I learned there was no difference between life and death. They were the same. The same energy, the same pulse. I thought these guys were the greatest hipsters of all time, the Achuar, the Otavalans, these little Indians, all of them, with the hats and the skirts, and the eyes deep with Seeing—hipsters all.

Gary I see an Archer.

DaddyO Look up, look on up at the night sky.

Gary I see a woman. A beautiful woman. Now she's smiling, now she's winking.

Dr. Jones *Bueno*, this bodes well for you. (I think I said that already.) You'll be just fine.

Gary And I see another woman, The Red Queen. One eye open and one eye closed. Now she winks. Oh!

Dr. Jones I'm right here, Gary.
Gary Who are you?
Dr. Jones I am your helper.
Gary I see Death on the face of my stepfather. It is the saddest thing I have ever seen. And I have seen the face of my wife, which had no love for me.
Marcia It's not that I don't love you, Gary, I do. I do love you. I just don't know what love means. Do you? Do you know?
Gary Dr. Jones?
Dr. Jones Excuse me, I'll be right over here.
Gary And I miss my girls! My heart is falling off the earth, Dad!
Dr. Jones His heart just dropped like a heavy iron bar, James.
DaddyO I know that feeling well, Doc.
Dr. Jones Right to his balls.
DaddyO You know, I have some experience in that area.
Gary Are you going to make a speech now, Dad?
DaddyO May I?

GARY dry heaves.

Dr. Jones Go ahead, James.
DaddyO Like you, I've been in out of different programs my whole life. Did I say different or difficult? Anyway, many of course to do with the women and the children. Running to and fro, meeting to rehab, clinic to detox and back to a meeting, another meeting, another meeting, yet another meeting—more than you can understand or penetrate, I'd say, so you can't get attached anywhere or to anyone, but I totally agree with the previous speaker.
Gary Who was that?

DaddyO I guess that's sad. It's accidental and everything else is equal. There's those who'll criticize and judge others and prohibitionize their good times, if they can. Now Francis, your mama, was an exception there. It's a problem of choice, she might say, or chance.

Mama Bean *It's a problem of choice or chance.*

DaddyO You might have to give up something to get something, and then live with the consequences. Now she's in the air we breathe, son, she's in the water, in the grass.

A white ICE-CREAM CART rolls onstage.

DaddyO There's joy in the world if you stay here and now, and sorrow too if you can bear it. Well, that's enough of that.

Antonio *Sí, claro.*

DaddyO Enough of the preachery.

Antonio *Creo que sí.*

DaddyO It's sad to die, I don't care what you say. This here's my trembly boy.

Antonio Gary. I know him well. Hopefully he's finished with the *vomitando*, I mean the vomiting.

DaddyO What's up, Gary?

Gary I feel the forces of Great Nature. I feel the earth rotating. I can hear the roaring of the plants, the singing of insects, the music of the stars. And I hear Gloria, and she sounds like the most beautiful woman on earth. Actually, she sounds like the earth itself, like Pachamama herself!

Gloria Oh, Gary!

Dr. Jones One thousand miles an hour, James.

DaddyO Is what, Doc?

Dr. Jones How fast the earth is moving.

DaddyO You have real ice cream in there? I was going to say I scream. Because that's my gut feeling, if you want to know, my intestinal flow, if you will, when I feel the spin, my feeling of myself in the pit of my stomach, if you like, some kind of chemical interaction there.

Dr. Jones A repressed fart?

DaddyO There you go. Don Antonio?

Antonio *Sí, señor.*

DaddyO I'll have an Eskimo pie. I used to think there was Eskimos in there. Frozen solid. And that each one of these little wagons contained myriads of icy worlds.

Antonio You have a wish, old man?

DaddyO What's that?

Antonio One wish and then you die.

DaddyO Just a minute while I talk to my stepson. Gary?

Gary I apologize for my incredible selfish pride.

DaddyO Of course you do. I've done it myself a hundred times.

Gary No! Not temporarily! Forever!

Gloria It's all right, honey.

Gary Forever!

Gloria It's all right. My God, he's shaking so, Daddy.

DaddyO Calm yourself, son.

Mama Bean *I'm sorry, Gary.*

Gary Not temporary! Permanent!

Antonio Okay, *calma, calma.*

Gary Okay!

Gloria Stand still so he can spray us, honey.

Gary Okay!

Gloria Stand still.

Gary I am!

Mama Bean *He can't stand still. He shakes and he quakes.*

Antonio Okay, don't move and I'll give you a spritz, but first you must take off your clothes.

Gloria Me, too?

Gary Me, too?

Antonio Take off all your clothes.

Gloria Not me.

Gary Not me.

DaddyO Leave on your underpants.

Gloria Okay.

Gary Okay.

DaddyO Here's a towel. Doc?

Dr. Jones I'll be right over here.

DaddyO Doc?

Dr. Jones I said I'll be right over here.

DaddyO Nothing to worry about.

Mama Bean *They take off their clothes. They look great in their underwear without their clothes.*

Dr. Jones Nice.

Gloria You shut up.

Dr. Jones Sorry.

Gloria Step back. Over there. Right. There.

Dr. Jones Thank you.

Gloria And shut the fuck up.

Antonio Okay, I'll give you a spritz and a rubdown with these here branches and you'll be A-OK. *Lista?*

Gloria Ready.

Gary Ready.

Mama Bean *Music. ANTONIO inhales some special water and blows it all over GLORIA and GARY, front and back.*

DaddyO There you go!

Gary It's cold!

Gloria It's freezing!

DaddyO Here's the remedy!

Mama Bean *ANTONIO starts slapping them down and rubbing them with his special branches, front and back.*

DaddyO How does that feel?

Gloria It feels great!

Gary It feels fantastic!

Antonio Okay, turn around, turn around, turn around, turn around.

Mama Bean *They are now facing each other. They speak rapidly and simultaneously.*

Gloria You act like a baby! You act like my son! You give me too much authority! You never chat! You never ask me how I am! You're only nice when you want sex! You are not present! You never smile! You're always thinking! You can't get a job! You can't make a living! You resent me because I'm middle-class! You take too many pills! You go to too many meetings! You're an actor! You don't take showers! You lost our Danny Boy! Oh! I'm sorry!

Gary You act like my mother! You're overbearing! I give you too much authority! You tell me what to do and how to live! You interrupt me! You never say hello, Gary, how are you Gary? You never want to have sex! You never even want to look at me! You're always on my case! You never encourage me! You never praise me! You hate that I'm an artist! You don't let me go to meetings! You're

always criticizing! You always say I smell bad! You lost our Danny Boy! Oh! I'm sorry!

Gloria You lost our Danny Boy, our son!

Together We lost our son Danny Boy!

Mama Bean *They make as though to embrace each other, but of course they can't—they're in different time zones. They wail with grief.*

Antonio Turn around. *(They turn)*

Gary I forgive you, Gloria!

Gloria Really? I don't forgive you, Gary!

Gary Okay, that was stupid.

Antonio Okay, go back. Gloria, you're in South America, remember?

Gloria Oh!

Antonio Right over here, okay? Take your clothes.

Gloria Oh! *(Puts on clothes)* Let me pay you!

Antonio No, he already paid, the old hipster.

DaddyO I paid already.

Gloria Thank you!

Gary Thanks, Dad. Wait a minute.

Mama Bean *They have difficulty putting their clothes back on.*

DaddyO What's the matter?

Gary I'm putting my clothes back on.

Gloria Ditto.

Gary Hear me gasping, hear my heart beat?

Gloria I do, Gary.

Gary Amazing!

Gloria Don't die yet, DaddyO!

DaddyO It ain't up to me, it's up to him, Don Antonio.

Gloria Oh, is he there, too?

DaddyO Fuckhead's everywhere. Now he's driving an ice-cream truck.

Gloria If there's no such thing as death then why am I worried? Why am I worried that you'll be gone? You'll be gone forever and I'll never see you again.

Mama Bean *Except in hell.*

Gloria I forgive you, Gary. You're weak, but I forgive you.

Gary Gloria?

Gloria Bye for now!

Gary Wait. I felt helpless and defeated and unjustly accused; that somehow my autonomy had slipped away, my sense of myself as myself, that I was no longer in control of my own body or mind, that the waters were polluted, that the earth itself was turning into a barren wasteland, that the sun had turned red in the daytime, that I run the risk of growing old alone without hope, that I have no faith, that I have been abandoned, that I do not believe in mankind, that most people are stupid, that people lie all the time, that conscience is buried in the center of the earth, that the last pure people are in the mountains of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Gloria Good, Gary! Bye, Gary!

Antonio Excuse me a second, *por favor*. I got a deal with DaddyO. His boy gets his balls back and he himself goes to another time zone.

Dr. Jones Which one, pray?

Antonio The eternal.

Dr. Jones And me?

Antonio You sit down. You'll live a long life.

Dr. Jones Thank you. (*Sits*)

DaddyO Here, Gary, drink some water. You should be almost normal now.

Gary Thanks, Dad.

DaddyO Don't thank me too much.

Mama Bean *Bell tinkles. ANTONIO retrieves the white ice-cream wagon.*

Antonio You, DaddyO? You hear the bell? Tinkle, tinkle?

DaddyO Yes.

Antonio When you hear the sixth bell, it's time, okay?

DaddyO Yes. I just wanted to say. I went on my way. In the old days. What it was. How sad I was, how mad I was, I scared I was. Fucked up to the max. While outside slaughter in the jungles and riot in the streets. Danger. Sexual danger, pharmacological danger, personal death danger, terrible danger to the roaring of conscience, roaring I say, roaring away behind my face, in my heart.

Bell tinkles.

So, I took a look at my life and there was nothing in it. I just wanted to feel important mainly.

And then he rammed me just to remind me, white pickup truck ten feet off the ground, built for ramming the unfortunate at random.

Bell tinkles.

Antonio *Tiene usted un deseo?*

DaddyO *Sí.*

Antonio *¿Qué es esto?*

DaddyO *Un beso de amor.*
Antonio *Bueno.* That was two. Four to go.
DaddyO I lived through the fifties and sixties, the seventies and eighties and nineties. One thing or another. A woman or a job, a cause, an obligation, a duty. And now I want a kiss from someone who loves me. You see that? A yellow butterfly the size of a seagull! My goodness!

Bell tinkles.

Antonio That's three and three to go.
DaddyO Just felt a kiss my son, like the touch of a butterfly's wings, right here on my cheek. I think it was your Mama. Yes. I was thinking about the times. Time I spent getting ready for the night, arranging my privacy, so to speak, lining up the meds with the water, turning the heating pad on, puffing up the pillows, placing the little chocolate bar or chocolate disk carefully by my book, with the clock near, and my eyedrops, and then quietly closing the door. And your Mama would say:

Mama Bean *Good night, James!*

DaddyO And I would whisper back: Good night, Francis! And then we would dream the same.

Bell tinkles.

Dream the same dream, like cars sinking into the swimming pool, pirate ships in the window, songs bubbling up from the Amazon. Give us a sign, Mama Bean!

Mama Bean *I already gave you one with the butterfly, James!*
DaddyO Oh, that's right. A little touch on the cheek. Not what I had in mind exactly.
Mama Bean *Say thank you and bend your knees when you do! Bend your knees and bow like a Jew to the Almighty.*
DaddyO I will, Francis!
Mama Bean *Be grateful for all your blessings.*
DaddyO I'm grateful, Francis, I'm grateful.
Mama Bean *Good. I'd say you had a chance in hell then. Ha!*
DaddyO You hear that, Jones?
Dr. Jones No, Sir.
Mama Bean *Four hundred virgins waiting for you, DaddyO! Ha!*
DaddyO You hear that, Gary?
Gary No.
DaddyO I'm a martyr to hear her tell it. You play golf?
Gary No. Sorry.
DaddyO We got a golf course here, as you can see, and it's important for some reason, I don't know why, the golf course, it's important symbolically, along with the halfway house and the recovery syndrome or racket, you know, the ambience of the thing. But the graves aren't here like they were in the old days, the graves are far away. You see these creatures the way they walk, there's no death for them today or tomorrow or immediately, no, there's only a little hole on the patch of green, round, everything round. Earth's round. How do you know which way to go? I guess they looked up, son! They looked on up! North star, the polestar, and they got their latitude or longitude and then they got their selves an astrolabe, you could wear it on your belt, like a watch,

and you could figure where you were on the wide sea,
and the seafarers had a sextant later on, so important for
piracy, my boy. Or privacy.

Gary What did you mean about the graves, Dad?

DaddyO The graves were nearby, in the backyard, behind the
walls of the city, and you fed 'em and watered 'em, me
I'm going to sing or be sung! Like a song!

Antonio *Gracias por todo.* Last bells.

DaddyO So I'm walking along on a Scottish moor, alone. The air
and light were crisp. We were in the Pentland Hills to be
exact, and I was wanting a bit of companionship, a woman
at my side, for the warmth and the chitchat, the touch,
the occasional hug. And then I thought, "It's perfectly all
right, the Earth herself is your company, and the wind is
her whisper, and the sky is her eyes, the ever-changing
look of her eyes, now blue, now green, now violet."

Mama Bean *There's oxygen there at the top.*

DaddyO The Dead Zone is where nothing lives, nothing breathes,
nothing moves. One is in the Gulf as a result of the Corn
Belt. Too much nitrogen running into the water table. It's
an area wider than New England. Planet's full of these,
pocked up with 'em. Pretty soon it'll look like Mars, only
black, black, and pocked up and totally dead, atmo-
sphere of carbon and nitrogen and methane gases.
Anyway, your Mama wanted me to mention.

Mama Bean *No oxygen except at the top. Oxygen depleted by fire
and bombs, not necessarily in that order. So say the
Hopi. Get ready to sing, James.*

DaddyO Gary?

Gary Yes, Dad?

DaddyO Go to the Amazon, why don't you, go to the Achuar, or
up to the Andes, to the Quechua, or the Inca, find out if
you got any time left on planet earth. Where the Eagle
meets the Condor.

Bell tinkles.

With Mabel, you know. She left me. I can see it clear as
daylight. She's crossing through the door into the hall,
past the Christmas tree and the ornaments, the ominous
candlelight and the ominous ornaments. I'm out of here
sweetie, she says.

Bell tinkles.

And I see myself again, standing exposed, hoping for
love—not divine love, ordinary human love, the love of
people, acceptance, forgiveness, affection—too ashamed
to breathe air, the same air as you, as anyone on the
earth, breathing in and out, happily and with sanity,
soundly, morally complete, a member of humanity. And
then I thought, keep your fucking dignity, James, don't
do anything, don't say anything. And I stood there,
frozen. And she was gone.

*

Epilogue

Don Antonio (Here we are in purgatory.) Hey Yo, DaddyO!

DaddyO What's up?

Don Antonio *Sky's up, I always say!*

DaddyO That would be me, eh, Mama Bean?

Mama Bean It would be, James!

DaddyO Strange how it all seems the same, sky above, earth below?

Mama Bean I would say so, James.

DaddyO And where be Dr. Jones, my erstwhile friend?

Mama Bean He's on his way, James.

DaddyO Good grief! The man couldn't pull off his decrepitude!

Mama Bean No one can, DaddyO, as you ought to know.

DaddyO And my boy, Gary?

Don Antonio Oh, he'll live out his life as he can, full of troubles and dreams and thoughts.

DaddyO Well, I think, I have to say, as Angels of Death go, you're at the top of the line, Don Antonio.

Don Antonio *Gracias*, but you'll maybe want to say Hello to Mama Bean, who's been watching out for you this whole entire time.

DaddyO I do. I do say, Hello.

Mama Bean Good to see you, James, I mean, in person.

DaddyO Well, what does that mean, Francis?

Mama Bean I don't know, exactly.

DaddyO Give it a try.

Mama Bean I think it means you weren't exactly there before, James.

DaddyO You mean, when I was alive?

Mama Bean 'Fraid so, James.

DaddyO I'll be damned.

Mama Bean I know it.

DaddyO Picking up a pencil, or rolling up a joint, and it turns into a centipede.

Mama Bean There you go!

DaddyO And now, what? We stay here like this till the end of Time?

BLACKOUT.

Mama Bean It just ended, James, only you didn't pick up on it.

DaddyO Oh.

Don Antonio *Gracias por todo, y vaya con dios.*

The End