

SAYER

(Or Shatter 'n Wade 2)

A Play

(Characters: Everybody has different colored hair. SAYER'S is long and white. SALLY'S is blonde, GINNIE'S bright red, BINT'S a black crew-cut, WALLY is bald and wears a cowboy hat, CROSS has long brown hair.)

(Staging: An empty stage, imagery – the train --on the walls. Characters find their way around. Projection: the oncoming train, the crash.)

(SAYER seems to be talking to himself onstage, but BINT and SALLY are a few steps behind him, making a triangle:)

SAYER: I don't think things are getting any better.

BINT: I have to agree with you there, Sayer.

SALLY: I think they're getting better.

SAYER: I think you're out of your minds.

SALLY: For every bad thing that happens, a good thing happens.

BINT: Where is this written?

SALLY: In the Book of Life.

SAYER: Can't you see what's coming, Sal?

SALLY: Not exactly, no.

BINT: There's a train on its way with a bulldozer on it.

SALLY: Oh?

BINT: Can you see?

SALLY: I don't see no train. *(Pause. They look. The train, far away now, is coming. You can hear it's **sound** in the distance.)*

SAYER: Here it comes. It's on its way.

BINT: Like I said: There's a train on its way and its got a bulldozer on it.

SAYER: You got people around here who can't see reality. They see something else. They don't see things as they are. Isn't that the way it is? Everything they see -- is themselves! I mean -- they see some vision of themselves. But what are they seeing? Do you follow? It's delusion. They see themselves and they see themselves and they don't see anything but themselves.

BINT: You said that already, Sayer.

SAYER: No, I didn't!

BINT: We heard you.

SAYER: Who else is here with me?

SALLY: It's me, Sally!

SAYER: Come forward!

SALLY: *(Stepping forward)* We heard you, Sayer. it makes no sense, as far as I'm concerned.

SAYER: Why the hell not?

SALLY: Because when you look at the world, you see the world.

SAYER: But what world? That's what I'm saying -- it's a world tinted by your view of it. I thought that was a good way of saying... the saying.

BINT: Tinted?

SAYER: Well, skewed, skewed is the word.

BINT: Skewed.

SAYER: Yes, because I'm the center of the universe!

BINT: Okay, I get it.

SAYER: Especially these fucking politicians and beureaucats and celebrities who are making up their minds about us, about you and me, deciding our fate, our future, our very lives, and they don't know their asses from their elbows!

BINT: I agree with that, Sayer.

SAYER: Then you agree with everything I've been saying.

BINT: Almost everything.

SAYER: I m glad you agree with me.

BINT: I said, "There's a train on its way with a bulldozer on it."

SAYER: That's got everything to do with everything.

BINT: It's reality, Sayer.

SAYER: That's right, Bint. As usual, as always.

SALLY: Do you see a train? I don't see a train.

BINT: I thought I saw a train.

SALLY: I thought I didn't see a train.

SAYER: Are you going to the meeting, or what?

BINT: Where's the meeting?

SALLY: There was no door to the meeting.

BINT: I know there's a meeting.

SALLY: Where's the fucking meeting?

BINT: It's here in the camp.

SALLY: Where's the entrance?

SAYER: Where did you come from?

SALLY: I live in the camp.

SAYER: You could be from outside the camp.

SALLY: I'm from *in* the camp.

SAYER: You could have gone shopping, as always, as usual -- you could have gone walking, you could have robbed a bank, or cooked a duck --

BINT: There's supposed to be a meeting.

SALLY: Where's the meeting?

SAYER: This is the meeting?

BINT: Where's the entrance?

SAYER: This is the entrance.

BINT: Where's the door?

SAYER: There is no door.

SALLY: There has to be a door.

SAYER: You mean to someone's house, someone's domain?

BINT: What else could she mean?

SAYER: Someone's tent or shack, a lean-to, a plastic bag on a stick? What?

BINT: None of those.

SAYER: A mattress on the ground? A futon under a tree? Back-pack as a pillow? What?

SALLY: I said, "Where's the door?"

SAYER: Well, I don't know.

BINT: That's great. Good for you.

SALLY: He 's lying.

BINT: Who is?

SALLY: About the door.

BINT: Who are you?

SALLY: Sally. Remember me? I live in the camp.

SAYER: I know who you are.

SALLY: I'm so glad.

SAYER: But who do you think you are? To be giving advice, to be making judgments?

SALLY: Like what?

SAYER: Who 's lying, who 's dying, who 's crying.

SALLY: I wasn't crying, I was saying, "Where's the door?"

BINT: Okay. Forget about it.

SAYER: She was lying, though.

SALLY: Like you and everybody else.

SAYER: We have rights. We were all born equal, with equal rights.

BINT: That's why we can have a meeting.

SALLY: Where is the meeting?

SAYER: There is no fucking meeting.

SALLY: Why not?

SAYER: Because we don't have a quorum, that's why.

SALLY: How many is a quorum?

SAYER: Four or five, or seven and eight.

BINT: Do we have an agenda?

SAYER: We have an agenda.

BINT: What's the agenda?

SAYER: It's about resistance.

SALLY: Where's the door?

SAYER: Eviction. It's about Eviction.

SALLY: Eviction?

SAYER: They're coming to get us. They're on their way. The authorities. Why? Because we have overstayed our welcome. As always, as usual. We are no longer wanted in the vicinity. They want us to go away and find a new abode and never to come back.

BINT: You'd think they'd tell us where the meeting was.

SALLY: You'd think there'd be a door.

SAYER: It's because we're homeless and jobless and dirty. It's because we shit all over the place and make piles of garbage, and it stinks. So they have to clean it up, and get us out of the way.

SALLY: No, we do the best we can. We do the best we can, and we don't bother anybody. We're not out there stealing and shooting up, or drinking ourselves to death.

BINT: I agree with that.

SAYER: It's all about money and advertising and jobs.

BINT: I would agree with that, too.

SALLY: I'm glad, Bint. Bint agrees. Even though he 's not all there upstairs.

BINT: What did she say?

SAYER: A bunch of dumb politicians in a dumb beauracracy. I meant Democracy.

SALLY: Plutocracy, Sayer.

BINT: That's what I thought, too.

SAYER: Good for you, Bint.

BINT: Thanks, Sayer.

SAYER: I didn't give you anything, Bint.

SALLY: I have a question.

SAYER: What's the question?

SALLY: What's an Ego?

SAYER: Is that a real question?

SALLY: Yes, all my life I have wondered and been accused, and I don't know what the fuck it is.

SAYER: Not now. We have too much to think about now.

SALLY: Then when?

SAYER: Maybe tomorrow. Once we get this resistance issue settled. First, we need a quorum. What about Shatter, what happened to Shatter?

BINT: Shatter wandered off. I heard she did a bunch of guys and then became a Rabbi.

SAYER: A what?

BINT: That's what I heard. A Rabbi. This was years ago.

SAYER: She's not Jewish.

BINT: Maybe she became Jewish or maybe she was always Jewish.

SALLY: Shatter was a friend of mine and she was not Jewish. She liked to pretend she was Jewish, but she wasn't.

SAYER: Why?

SALLY: Because Jewish people are smarter and nicer and more talented. She also liked grey nail polish and false eye-lashes.

SAYER: And Wade? You remember Wade?

BINT: Yeah, he took a hike, he took a crash. Bye, bye Wade. He was on his way to a meeting, or he was just leaving the meeting. And then, **kaboom**.

SAYER: Too bad, is all I can say.

SALLY: Where's the fucking meeting?

SAYER: Anyway, forget it.

DALLY: He always wanted to go out with me, but he was afraid to ask. (*Enter WALLY*) Wade.

SAYER: Ah. Look who's here.

WALLY: Greetings.

SAYER: You looking for the meeting?

WALLY: No.

BINT: There's supposed to be a meeting, but we don't know where it is yet.

SAYER: This is it. This is the meeting.

BINT: Wally, there's a train on its way with a bulldozer on it.

WALLY: I'm not going to any more fucking meetings. No more meetings.

SAYER: Okay. You see the train?

SALLY: And we don't know where it is. The Door.

WALLY: I'm sick of fucking meetings. So, if this is a meeting, I'm on my way, I'm gone.

SALLY: Because we can't find the door.

SAYER: Hang in there, Wally. This is an important meeting. You see the train?

WALLY: I see the train.

SAYER: That's why we're having a meeting.

BINT: It means Eviction.

SALLY: That's why there's a bulldozer on the train.

SAYER: You see the train?

SALLY: I do see the fucking train.

WALLY: Great.

SALLY: Great?

WALLY: Things are always what they have always been.

SALLY: That is an ontological impossibility.

SAYER: Do you know what that means?

SALLY: No.

WALLY: And there are too many of us. And that's that. So, I'm going.

SAYER: Thank you.

WALLY: You're welcome.

SAYER: You realize, of course, that more people make for a larger economy.

WALLY: You can shove all that up your ass. *(Train whistles)*

SAYER: Thanks, again.

SALLY: Wally. Did you go to college?

WALLY: None of your business.

SALLY: Where'd you go, Shithole University?

WALLY: Fuck you and your Irish ancestors. *(Starts off.)*

SAYER: Wait. Where are you going?

WALLY: Out. Where reasonable people speak reasonably about reasonable things.
(He doesn't move.)

BINT: Good luck.

SAYER: *Bon voyage.*

SALLY: Have a nice day.

WALLY: I've changed my mind.

SAYER: Bravo. There's a train coming.

WALLY: I'll wait for the train.

BINT: Bad idea.

WALLY: No. I'll wait for the meeting. *(Awkward pause)*

SAYER: So. Wally. What you been doing?

WALLY: I been working as a hospital attendant.

SAYER: No shit?

WALLY: But I quit.

SAYER: Why?

WALLY: Too many bugs, too much shit around.

BINT: I get it.

SALLY You'd think there'd be an enclosed space here, with a door or an entrance.

WALLY: For what?

SALLY: For a meeting.

SAYER: Now they bomb hospitals. They bomb them into submission. The bodies are shattered and scattered. We were just talking about that.

WALLY: Hospitals?

SAYER: No, Shatter an' Wade. You remember them? You were around then, Wally. We were going to meetings in those days.

WALLY: No more fucking meetings.

SAYER: Well, there's a meeting today, and you ought to stay. Because we are being Evicted. We are not allowed to live here any more.

SALLY: Well, that about covers it. *(Train Whistle)*

SAYER: Back in the day. People stayed home and they didn't try to come into your house. You'd have to knock. You had to knock first. If you had a house. Some of these people had no houses. Like us. They lived in cars, they lived in tents, they lived in the open, they slept on the ground. They lived in alleys. I'm talking to those of you who may have had houses. Okay? In the past, in the good old days, back in the day, and so forth. Maybe you don't have a house. Maybe you never had a house. Back in the day. Maybe you have an apartment. That's alright, it's alright to have an apartment. What's wrong with that? Maybe it's not even an apartment, maybe it's

only a room. Maybe you live in a room somewhere. That's what I'm saying. If you live somewhere where there's a door, where there's a door between you and the world, the dangerous, terrifying world, where bad things happen, where people believe in murder and explosives. So, if someone wants to visit you, they should knock on your door, first. If you see someone out there, then there should be a knock on the door before you let them in.

BINT: What if you don't want to let them in? What if you see people out there in front of your house and you don't want to let them into your house? What do you do then?

SAYER: Well, you don't let them in – that's what I'm saying. You tell them to go away, or you completely ignore them. Or you call the police. Or you forget about the police and go ahead and shoot them yourself. That's what I would do. I'd open fire.

BINT: What if you don't have a gun?

SAYER: Well, you're fucked then. You're fucked in that case. It's completely stupid not to have a gun. Thank the good Lord then, that at least you have a door.

SALLY: Where's the fucking door?

SAYER: You have to have a door. And you have to be able to bar the door. That's what I'm saying. Bar the door.

SALLY: There is no door.

SAYER: I know that. I wasn't talking about that. *(Train whistle)*

BINT: There's a train on its way with a bulldozer on it.

WALLY: Say again?

BINT: There's a train on its way with a bulldozer on it.

WALLY: Now, I get it.

SALLY: About time. Shithole University.

WALLY: What if you want to go out the door?

SAYER: Are you stupid, or what?

WALLY: No.

SAYER: No, what?

WALLY: I'm not stupid.

SAYER: Yes, you are. You're a stupid motherfucker wearing a cowboy hat. What's wrong with you? You stupid motherfucker! You have no idea, you have no clue.

BINT: He's clueless.

SAYER: You're completely clueless. There's no hope for you. It's hopeless. No hope.

BINT: No hope.

SAYER: None. You'll go out of your fucking door and get your head blown off or your throat cut. If that's what you want.

BINT: That's what he wants. He wants to go out and go shopping and buy things.

WALLY: Sure, I want to go out and get my head blown off and get my throat cut.

SAYER: You think that's funny? You think it's a joke? Come on!

BINT: I don't think it's funny.

WALLY: I don't think it's funny, either. But I want to live a normal life where a guy goes out of the door and he does things, maybe for a living, or just for the fun of it, or maybe he needs food and medicine and a present for his girlfriend.

SAYER: Right! Bar the door!

BINT: Bar the door.

SAYER: Bar the windows! Put bars on the windows! Don't forget the back door. Put a chest up at the back door, whatever you want, a table or a chest or a big arm chair, put something up against the back door, if I were you.

BINT: Right!

SAYER: Close up the fireplace! If you have a fireplace, close it up.

BINT: If you have a fireplace.

WALLY: I don't have a fireplace.

SAYER: People will believe anything you tell them, if you tell it to them often enough. That's a proven fact. You can tell them they have three heads. You can tell them that fire is water. *(Pause)* Where were we?

BINT: Doors.

SALLY: A bulldozer?

WALLY: We weren't talking about beliefs.

SAYER: Because that is what they are doing out there. They are going around believing things.

SALLY: What about the bulldozer?

BINT: It's on its way.

WALLY: We were talking about doors.

SAYER: That's what I'm saying, don't let them in the door.

SALLY: Where's the fucking door?

WALLY: I'm not talking about that.

BINT: What are you talking about?

WALLY: I'm talking about going out the door. That's all. And there is no door.

BINT: No door?

SAYER: Believing things and gathering things. That's what they do. And hitting each other and shooting each other. Why? So, don't go out there.

BINT: There's a gate?

SAYER: Through the gate.

WALLY: It's not really a gate. There's really no gate. It's really a street. They come down the street with bulldozers and cop cars and move us around. We don't do much. We don't do anything but pack our bags.

SAYER: That's what I'm saying.

WALLY: Because we don't have shit. We have plastic bags. And that's it. That's our shit.

SAYER: So, your shit is packed?

WALLY: I'm all packed, such as it is, such as it was, which it wasn't much, a bunch of rags and toiletry and a blanket and a jar.

SALLY: Sounds to me like he's lying.

BINT: She thinks everybody 's lying all the time.

SALLY: They are!

BINT: Everybody lying, all the time, all the time, 24/7.

WALLY: And a pillow and a sheet.

SAYER: There you go.

WALLY: And I got my knife and I'm wearing my hat.

SALLY: There you go. Because he's bald. You're bald, are you not? Take off your hat.

WALLY: Okay. Sure. *(Doesn't move.)*

SALLY: Take off your hat. *(Takes off his cowboy hat – he's bald.)* See?

BINT: We knew that already.

WALLY: It matters little if a person is bald.

SALLY: It's just not as attractive.

SAYER: So we can go on ahead and have our meeting.

WALLY: Why?

BINT: You were going to say why?

WALLY: I said, Why.

SAYER: Why?

BINT: Why.

SAYER: Why what?

BINT: Why we shouldn't go out the gate, and there is no gate.

SAYER: I wasn't talking about the gate.

WALLY: Why we shouldn't go out the invisible gate, and avoid the fucking meeting.

SAYER: I don't know why, but that's good, Wally. Very good.

WALLY: Thank you.

BINT: Why?

SAYER: Why?

BINT: Why is that good?

SAYER: The invisible gate. I love it. I was talking about doors. It's a metaphor. Like the gate. The gate and the door. You can't do better than that. The gate, the door.

BINT: The gate, the door. *(Train whistle)*

WALLY: Let's not sing.

SAYER: No singing. We don't go out, but they come in here. They come in here after us and move us around. Truncheons and whips. Firehoses and gas. That's all I'm saying.

WALLY: Let's hold our ground, then.

SALLY: See, he's one of us!

SAYER: He knows that, Sally. He knew it and you knew it.

BINT: Anyway, we won't move. We like our own place, our own little community, right here. We'll fight. Right here now.

WALLY: And we don't need no meeting.

SAYER: This is the meeting.

WALLY: We are refugees.

SALLY: We are migrants!

SAYER: No singing.

BINT: Nobody's singing.

WALLY: Refugees, in our own community!

SAYER: Modulate your voice. That's all I'm saying. Modulate your voice. Who's that? (*Enter CROSS*)

CROSS: It's me.

SAYER: What are you doing – making an entrance?– we thought you died. Am I right?

BINT: We did. We thought you died.

CROSS: I almost died.

SALLY: I never thought he died.

WALLY: I never thought about him at all.

CROSS: Anyway, I didn't die.

SAYER: We can see that. But you look weird. You look tattered. You look like you might drop dead any minute. That reminds me, about the doors, I was trying to say something about that. What?

WALLY: We don't have doors, we have flaps. I think they're called flaps.

SAYER: You weren't following me, you missed the point. I was talking regular life, regular life in the city, on the planet, in the world. The life of Man on Earth.

WALLY: And?

SAYER: To be aware, to know what's happening, the kinds of creatures out there, the nature of society, Resistance, the dangers and the mishaps thereof.

WALLY: Let's take those one at a time.

BINT: You say something, Cross.

CROSS: No.

SAYER: Shall I continue? May I continue? Can I go on?

WALLY: Go on.

SAYER: Good for you, Cross. I guess you're more alive than dead. Which is the whole point. Because we are creatures that are dying. We are creatures that are

dying. No exceptions. No exemptions. No passes for the very intelligent, or the very stupid. Which brings me to the main point, which is the stupid, the unbelievably ubiquitous and profoundly overwhelming stupidity of our *fellow man*. You follow me so far?

SALLY: We follow you. It's not that hard.

CROSS: We're not stupid.

SAYER: You mentioned Beckett.

CROSS: No, I didn't.

SAYER: You think he wouldn't agree, you think he wouldn't nod his bony head and grin? He would. He'd nod his bony head and grin from ear to ear.

CROSS: Horrible phrase.

SALLY: Skull and bones is what it is.

SAYER: And that's not all. The mean-ness. The sadistic mean-ness. You seen anything like it? I haven't. We see it right here, up close, sadistic mean-ness running rampant on top of rampant stupidity and credulity. (*Train whistle*)

WALLY: That's not what I heard.

SAYER: What?

WALLY: The Board of Directors has ordered us to move to Goodall Street.

CROSS: Oh.

BINT: Goodall street.

SAYER: What kind of creatures are we, that are dying?

CROSS: Are you asking me?

SAYER: No, I'm talking to the wall.

BINT: That's a good one.

WALLY: There is no wall.

CROSS: I don't have an answer.

SAYER: I'll tell you.

BINT: Say on, Sayer! I've said that before. I've said it a hundred times. It's a terrible thing, saying things over and over and over again.

WALLY: We are stupid robots, Bint. Go on, Sayer.

SAYER: He is meat and bones and a soft brain and a hard head and a rotten mouth from which opinions flow, and dirty hands, which vote his stupid know-nothing opinions.

CROSS: Who are we talking about?

SAYER: Us.

WALLY: Good grief!

SAYER: Meanwhile, others, other humans, like us in every way, are driving cars stuffed with explosives into walls, and blowing themselves, and everyone else in the vicinity, to shrapnell. So that's very smart, too. That's about the smartest thing he can do. Blow himself up for God and go to heaven for a Blow Job. Excuse my language.

SALLY: You're excused, Sayer. I've heard it all before. Excuse me. Nobody is paying attention to me, so I'll go away now. And you owe me an explanaton, Sayer.

SAYER: For what?

SALLY: For Ego, it's meaning and manifestation, it's reason for existence and it's true function in our stupid, phony lives. Thank you. (*SALLY steps aside.*)

CROSS: Come back soon!

SALLY: Fuck you and the horse you rode in on!

CROSS: (*To himself*) I came on foot. A long way.

BINT: What does that have to do with our present prediciment, Sayer, that's what I want to know. We don't live in rooms, we don't live in apartments, we don't live in houses, we live on the floor of a parking lot.

CROSS: It's not a parking lot.

WALLY: In America.

CROSS: By our own choice.

BINT: Wait a minute. We ended up here. Everybody ends up somewhere.

SAYER: Six feet under, Bint.

BINT: I got that.

SAYER: Including you and me.

BINT: I got that, too. So what does he mean by our own choice?

SAYER: Ask him.

BINT: What do you mean our own choice?

CROSS: How many things can I mean by that?

BINT: How many?

CROSS: How many.

WALLY: Say one.

CROSS: One. I had a job, I had a family, I could buy milk, I could take the train, I said hello, I could fly in a plane, I could vote, I could watch TV, I could do anything I want. But what did I actually do? I put some shit in a black plastic bag, and I ended up in this place, this godforsaken place.

WALLY: We thought you died.

CROSS: I was sick, but I didn't die. They crushed my chest and put a new heart in there, and here I am.

BINT: But you could still die.

CROSS: As has been said, we all will eventually die.

WALLY: Let's go into the details.

SAYER: I don't know if I want to do that. Go into the details. We need to establish things first. I mean, get our footing, which is called the premise, I believe, the premise, which is why we're here in the first place.

BINT: This godforsaken place.

WALLY: This parking lot. With a fence on one side and a wall on the other. And weeds. And a lot of crap all over everything. And no door.

SAYER: It's all in your imagination, Wally. I'm talking about the skinny, the motive, the imminent, the impending, the inevitable doom, the *do re mi*. Which is: that we are about to be evicted, fkorcefly, by the State. So. There you have it.

BINT: What?

SAYER: To conclude: there is a war going on, an eternal war. It is a war of the intelligent against the stupid, the rich against the poor, and that's it, and that's all.

BINT: Which ones are we?

SAYER: We're out of it. We're not in it. We're consequences. We don't even count.

BINT: Then what's he doing here now? Him, Cross?

CROSS: I'm a walk-on.

WALLY: Does he have rights?

SAYER: Of course, he has rights. What's wrong with you? Are you dumber than dumb? Are you denser than stone? Are you an idiot's idiot? It's in the Constitution!

WALLY: Alright, alright.

SAYER: We know him, he's one of us, he has every right. We've battled. We've competed for attention with him.

BINT: So true.

WALLY: So we can continue.

SAYER: Right. (*Silence*) Take a point, Cross, and start. Start anywhere.

BINT: Just start. Like, how'd you get here and what do you want? How did you get here and what do you want? Go ahead. Start.

CROSS: I walked here and all I want now is a moment's peace.

SAYER: Say more.

CROSS: I walked here and all I want is a moment's peace and maybe a girlfriend. But I'm not sure about that.

SAYER: More.

CROSS: I walked all the way here and all I want is peace and quiet and a minimalist sex life. Maybe.

BINT: You won't find it here, Pal. You came to the wrong place.

WALLY: Back up a minute.

SAYER: Start again, Mr. Cross.

CROSS: They broke my chest open and banged a heart into it and wound me up and put me on the street and gave me a kick. All I could think of was my obituary. I wrote my obituary a hundred thousand times. It was all good. Everybody lauded me and praised me for all my good qualities and the great things I did with my life. Now I realize it was all an illusion. Nobody will remember I was ever here to begin with. And they might say bad things. They might even lie. They might make up stories. And who cares if they do, because I won't be here to enjoy it, one way or another. Isn't that odd? So, who cares?

BINT: I certainly don't.

SAYER: I do the same thing, Cross. I make up obituaries. But nobody's putting me in the paper. Anyway, they're online now, all the people, the people who count. It's not about me, it's never about me.

BINT: Whose heart did they bang in there, Cross? Was it a pig? Was it a dog? An Orangutang? Ha!

CROSS: Shut up, Bint!

WALLY: We think we should be noticed. We think we should count for something.

SAYER: Consequences, is all.

BINT: Some people care. You got the social workers and the NGO's and the photographers.

SAYER: That's why we should hold a press conference! There's one idea.

WALLY: I agree with that. Instead of a meeting.

BINT: But nobody would come.

SAYER: We have no phones. What about that? I think we should say something. They took all our phones. No, let's say they need to be charged.

CROSS: There's no place to charge our phones in this desert wilderness.

SAYER: This parking lot.

WALLY: They took all our phones, so there's nothing to be charged.

SAYER: There's electricity in the air, there 's electricity everywhere, but it's unavailable to us as human beings without the devices you can charge money for.

BINT: I couldn't follow that.

SAYER: Yes? So? We'll just have to have an event without phones, and that will be that.

BINT: Fine with me.

SAYER: Good.

CROSS: So there goes the press conference?

SAYER: Not necessarily.

CROSS: What about Sally?

BINT: She doesn't know anything about phones.

WALLY: She just left. She's not around. You didn't notice? She was here, but she left. She told you to go fuck yourself, if I remember right.

CROSS: Where is she now?

WALLY: We don't know where she is.

SAYER: She's right over there. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

CROSS: Is she in shape?

BINT: She knows nothing about phones.

WALLY: She's not exactly in shape, no. You can see for yourself.

BINT: She's not in shape.

SAYER: What the fuck does that mean anyway?

CROSS: I don't mind fat. I don't mind fat on a person.

WALLY: I do.

SALLY: Go fuck yourselves!

SAYER: You hear that?

BINT: I don't like it, either. I had a nurse once. Very nice. Told me fat was good, fat was okay, because you'll need it when the shit hits the fan, you'll need all you got on you, then. When you're all hooked up and your flesh is fading. All your money and all your fat. That was right over there in Santa Monica.

SAYER: What does that have to do with anything, Bint? How is that relevant? What's the fucking point? Anyway, you must be deaf and dumb. She got caught up in the sweep.

CROSS: Sweep?

WALLY: We had a sweep. So they flushed her out. What, I don't know. Some hole in the ground.

CROSS: What's a sweep?

SAYER: It's where they come in with armored cars and tanks and bulldozers and police vehicles and move you along as they search for arms and money and contraband, anything you might have that you're not supposed to have, which is mostly anything you might have.

BINT: But that's not what happened just now.

WALLY: That is not what happened.

BINT: I mean, it happens, but it's not what happened recently.

WALLY: She just left. She wasn't paid attention to, and she left. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

BINT: And Sayer owes her an explanation.

WALLY: For what?

SAYER: I forget now.

SALLY: EGO!

CROSS: What about Martin?

SAYER: What about Martin?

CROSS: That's what I said.

SAYER: That's what you said, but it isn't relative.

CROSS: To what?

WALLY: To what we were saying. Right, Sayer?

SAYER: Right, Wally.

BINT: He got shot. Martin.

WALLY: They shot him.

BINT: He was pointing at something, and they shot him. They thought his finger was a knife or a gun.

SAYER: That's what I was saying. About guns.

CROSS: Guns?

BINT: You said nothing about guns.

SAYER: Everyone has to have one, and don't open your door. You should know that Cross, a man with your qualifications.

CROSS: I do know it.

SAYER: And don't open your door. Keep it locked, and lock your windows, and watch your kids, and don't go for walks at night. Tell them, Cross.

CROSS: I was a teacher of Social Studies. I had a house in the Valley. One night I went for a walk and I never got home again.

SAYER: He was drinking himself to death.

CROSS: I went into the woods, and I got lost.

BINT: House, with the yard and the pool?

CROSS: Lost.

BINT: Wife and kids?

CROSS: All lost.

SAYER: There you have it.

WALLY: You're lucky to be alive.

CROSS: That I am.

SAYER: Thank the Lord. Do you have plans?

CROSS: Plans?

SAYER: You know, like "plans."

CROSS: No, I have no plans. I worry, but I have no plans. I don't know how I got here and I don't know where I'm going, but I'm hoping to be saved.

SAYER: That's true for everybody. You didn't say anything new.

CROSS: That's all I have to say.

WALLY: He just needs to get laid.

BINT: It's never too late.

WALLY: Before you drop dead, or get shot in the head.

BINT: Like Martin, who was perfectly innocent.

SAYER: I wouldn't go that far.

WALLY: Or swept up in a police action.

SAYER: Trigger happy motherfuckers.

BINT: They'll shoot you for being retarded.

SAYER: As usual, as always.

WALLY: They'll elect you for being a thief.

CROSS: They'll hate you for being intelligent.

WALLY: They'll revile you for being a chief.

CROSS: They'll brain you for being indigent.

WALLY: They'll renounce you for being asleep.

SAYER: Okay, enough!

CROSS: They'll bounce you for being arrogant.

SAYER: Stop!

WALLY: They'll trounce you for being a sheep!

SAYER: I'm gone!

BINT: Good-bye.

WALLY: Good luck.

CROSS: Take care of yourself.

BINT: Have a nice day.

WALLY: Avoid the police.

SAYER: Whoops! Here they come! I hear them now! *(Train whistle)* They're here! *(Pause, train goes out of view.)* Maybe they're not here yet. Wait a minute.

BINT: You're staying?

SAYER: I think I'll stay, for the moment. Where are the clowns?

BINT: What clowns?

SAYER: What happened to the clowns? The way we fear them, the way they intimidate us. The clowns with their phony smiles and unpredictable ways. Where'd they go, the clowns?

BINT: Appropos of what, Sayer?

SAYER: The human condition, Bint, the human condition.

WALLY: I didn't get that.

SAYER: You never do Wally. You never get it.

CROSS: You should memorize these things, Sayer.

SAYER: What for?

CROSS: Or write them down. Because now we can't remember.

SAYER: I know. I remember now. Eviction, violence, depravity. The war against the poor. The genocide of the homeless.

WALLY: That's five things.

SAYER: And the clowns? What happened to the clowns?

WALLY: That's six.

SAYER: I know how to count, Wally. I went to school. I graduated. Nothing more to be said. Did you hear the train?

BINT: I did. I saw it.

SAYER: Wally?

WALLY: I heard it.

BINT: There is a train on the way with a bulldozer on it.

SAYER: Cross?

CROSS: Nope.

BINT: Time is running out.

SAYER: Tell us your story, Bint.

BINT: I'm an American. I beat the slaves, I killed off the indigenous peoples, and I stole from my neighbor. I did as much as I could, for as long as I could, to succeed, and I did my best.

SAYER: Wally?

WALLY: Ditto.

SAYER: Cross?

CROSS: I spoke already.

WALLY: Your turn, Sayer.

SAYER: I found ways. I mentioned school already. We all went to school. We did everything right from beginning to end. Even the real estate. We knew how to do that. The King at the time gave you the land and you sold the land, or you stole the land, and kept the land, or you bought the land and sold it again, or you grew your stuff on somebody's land – anyway, land was important, land was important. Also, river crossings and ports and lakes and canals. That means water. Don't forget that. You have to get you one of those.

CROSS: A river?

SAYER: A crossing, Cross. Or a canal. You can't own a river. That's not allowed in the Constitution, which is about Real Estate, although you could have a border, you might want to use a river as a border. You follow me there? Never mind. Borders are interesting. That much you know, because we got one here. We have a circle around us, which is a wall. You could call it a border, even though there's a gate, it's mainly in our heads, because all we do is keep on running. You follow me there?

CROSS: No.

SAYER: You're stubborn, Cross. Your mind 's made up and you can't think straight. You can't see reality.

CROSS: My mind is clear. I can see what's what. I'm afraid it's your own mind that's confused.

SAYER: Is that so?

CROSS: That is so. I don't know where I am, I don't know where I'm going, and I don't give a rat's ass.

SAYER: That's very good.

CROSS: But you – you don't even know your own history.

SAYER: That's very helpful.

CROSS: You didn't mention slavery, for example. You said nothing about the slaves. The ones who built the mansions and dug the canals and picked the motherfucking cotton. What about them?

SAYER: I did, actually, I mentioned the slaves. Didn't I, Bint?

BINT: I thought he did, yes.

CROSS: He didn't.

SAYER: Okay. Thank you for that. Who 's next?

WALLY: Nobody is next. We all spoke.

SAYER: In that case, I will continue.

BINT: No.

SAYER: No what?

BINT: No singing.

SAYER: Who was singing? I wasn't singing.

BINT: I'm only saying.

SAYER: I wasn't singing. So forget about it. This kid is flying over the desert where all the trees are gone – they fucked the whole thing up, as usual, as always -- but down below, the kid sees a little oasis in the sand – it could be a mosque or a camel store, what – he's only a nineteen year old kid from Missoula, Montana, he's got one bomb left on him – the other one he dropped somewhere, just to get rid of it, and he'd just as soon be getting rid of this one, so what the fuck, he sees this brown muck spilling out of the building – brown guys with beards and righteous smiling and swagger, so he lets go the bomb and *slammo*, a mile of dust rises and blood and guts and body parts lie all over the ground – the kid in the plane is miles a way, thinking of his aircraft carrier and the dummies he has to deal with there, while ten thousand feet below on the ground there's a seven year-old crawling in the mess, blood pouring down his head, his name is Ahmed, he crawls up to his uncle, whose name is naturally Mohammed, and who is bleeding from his eyes and his ears and his mouth, "Why did Allah do this?," he asks his uncle. "Allah did not do this, it was the plane, who had nothing else to do, who did this," replies the uncle. "What was Allah doing?," asks Ahmed. "Forgive me, but who can say?," answers Mohammed. "He should have done something," insists Ahmad, "so we can live a complete life on Earth, and serve Allah." Now the Uncle is impatient. With his last breaths, he gasps, "You are an innocent child and you know nothing. Say a prayer, and die like a good boy."
(Pause)

WALLY: I didn't get that.

SAYER: No, you didn't. Obviously.

CROSS: Neither did I.

SAYER: It's a simple story.

BINT: Well, how is that story related, Sayer?

SAYER: To what?

BINT: To anything. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

SALLY: It's about a boy in the desert!

BINT: That tears it for me.

SAYER: The other thing is relationship, as you were saying.

BINT: I wasn't saying that.

SAYER: Not you, I was thinking of Cross. Cross?

CROSS: Well, I didn't say anything about relationship. I did mention slavery.

BINT: He just wants to get laid. Cross. I believe I said that earlier.

SAYER: You did, and I commented on it at the time. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

CROSS: I'm not sure about that.

BINT: About what?

CROSS: I'm not sure if it's true.

SAYER: Relationships are difficult. I know this from experience. First is a passionate embrace and then it's -- when can I get in there again, and then it's a desert, and you're out, permanently, or, for the most part, you're out and you'll never get back in again. I can recite chapter and verse on this.

WALLY: Never mind. I don't want to hear it.

CROSS: Me, niether.

BINT: You hear the train? *(They listen. Train whistle.)*

CROSS: There's the train.

BINT: There is a train on it's way --

WALLY: Okay, okay!

SAYER: It's a wilderness out here. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

CROSS: I wouldn't mind seeing Sally again. She's a blonde and well-built and she's friendly, too.

SAYER: Waiting for the train, it's Beckett all over again.

CROSS: I wasn't talking about the train.

SAYER: We know. You were talking about slavery, as if I didn't know, as if I wasn't aware, how this nation was made, how this nation was built -- on the backs of slaves, when, in fact, I knew all that already.

CROSS: And you didn't mention the slaughter of the Indians, the Native Americans, the genocide of indigenous peoples.

SAYER: I did mention the indigenous peoples. Ask anyone.

CROSS: Did he?

WALLY: No.

BINT: I don't remember.

SAYER: Well, what are we supposed to do about it? What can we do now? There's nothing we can do, because we're nothing ourselves. Perhaps we should pay! We should pay reparations! No doubt about it. But we have no money! There's nothing we can do! We're helpless indigents waiting for a train!

BINT: There is a bulldozer on the train.

WALLY: I agree with Sayer. What are we supposed to do? Quit and surrender?, die and bury ourselves?, throw ourselves off the stage?, get run over by the train? What are we supposed to do?

SAYER: We can complain about the situation while we wait to get run over by the train. Either that, or we run for our lives.

CROSS: We run for our lives. We are not wanted. We are the indigent. We have no part in normal society. Wally?

WALLY: Why are you asking me all of a sudden? There are so many fucking problems, day in and day out? That's why people throw themselves out of windows and onto railroad tracks, and get shot by the police.

BINT: Food and water and a place to sleep. A hot shower. Somewhere to wash your clothes. Shave and a haircut. Taking a dump, taking a piss. I can't stand it anymore.

CROSS: I've changed my mind.

BINT: About what?

CROSS: The entire situation.

SAYER: You don't want to run for your life? Is that it?

CROSS: No.

SAYER: Is that it?

CROSS: I just said, No.

WALLY: What else are you going to do?

CROSS: Don't run.

BINT: I won't run, either.

WALLY: It's stupid to run. Run to what? Where do we run?

BINT: Nobody is running yet.

CROSS: I wasn't talking about that.

BINT: We're just standing here.

WALLY: Where to, Bint? Your knot is slipping, by the way.

BINT: My knot?

WALLY: The one on your head -- your bandana, your silly, wise-ass, red bandana.

BINT: Thank you for that. *(Ties his bandana.)*

WALLY: No problem.

CROSS: I was talking about girlfriends.

SAYER: Oh? What happened between then and now?

CROSS: When?

SAYER: From the time you arrived to the present moment.

WALLY: He sounds stupid to me.

CROSS: Actually, I'm very intelligent.

BINT: He's changed his mind is all.

CROSS: I don't want to get involved. I'm done. That's it.

BINT: What happened to you?

CROSS: I changed my mind.

WALLY: You said that already.

CROSS: Maybe my hormones have changed.

SAYER: Would you care to explain? Never mind. That was awkward. We don't need any explanations. *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

SALLY: EGO!

CROSS: I don't want to touch anybody or feel like I have to touch anybody, or worry about what they're thinking about me, or touch me, or anything about genitalia. Or telling me what to do, or criticising me, or advising me, or looking down on me.

BINT: Or beating us with clubs. So?

CROSS: So, I'm not going anywhere or saying anything.

BINT: Great.

CROSS: Or observing me, or judging me, or talking about me, or making a place for me, or thinking about me, or any kind of intimacy at all. That's it. *(Pause)*

WALLY: He's been walking around too much.

CROSS: Or sending me messages, or asking me to buy things, or asking me how I am, what I want to do with my life, or anything.

BINT: Well, you don't have to worry.

CROSS: I'm not worried.

BINT: Because nobody is thinking about you.

SAYER: That is correct.

WALLY: It's a delusiion in the first place. . *(SALLY raises her hand.)*

SALLY: It's his fucking EGO!

SAYER: Adamant. Hard as a rock.

CROSS: I don't agree with that.

SAYER: Hard as nails. *(SALLY raises her hand.)* You hear that?

BINT: It's Sally rasing her hand.

SAYER: Oh.

BINT: She's right over there.

SAYER: Hold up, Sally. I got more to say. It's the vice inside you, Cross, that tells you that your genes are worth preserving and passing around. I mean, the voice, not the vice, though maybe it's a vice, I don't know. Tells you your name is worth a hundred thousand bucks. Tells you she doesn't want you for your money, but your essential, beautiful, irreplaceable Self. Tells you if you don't survive the assault of the oncoming bulldozer, that the earth will be bereft. Tells you Life sucks and you might as well jump. Life is meaningless, so what mistakes can I make?

CROSS: Thank you, Sayer. I've heard enough.

SALLY: Shut up, Sayer.

SAYER: Funniest joke I ever heard!

WALLY: We don't want to hear any more jokes.

CROSS: That was no joke. *(Train whistle)*

WALLY: That was the train.

BINT: It's on its merry way, Pal, and its got a bulldozer on it.

SAYER: It's a train called Righteousness.

BINT: Say?

SAYER: I'm not joking. That's the name of the train.

BINT: On its merry, fucking way.

WALLY: On its way, on its way. The merry train called, Righteousness.

SAYER: No singing.

WALLY: Here it comes, here it comes.

SAYER: Stop the fucking singing.

WALLY: Okay! Okay!

CROSS: Can I continue while we wait?

BINT: Go on, go on!

WALLY: Continue, continue!

CROSS: I don't want to hear footsteps. I don't want to hear murmuring. I don't want to hear dishes being washed. I don't want to hear floors being swept. I don't want to hear water running. I don't want to hear air blowing. I don't want to hear floors creaking. I don't want to hear cars passing, or children playing, or alarms going off, or ambulances blaring, or fire engines, or cities blowing up. That's it for me. *(Pause)*

BINT: Go on, Cross!

CROSS: I don't want to see anything! I don't want to know anything! *(Pause)*

BINT: That's it?

CROSS: Because I've changed my mind.

BINT: Is that it?

CROSS: No, I don't want to hear my own voice. *(Train whistle)*

SAYER: Righteousness will do it every time.

CROSS: That's not what I'm doing.

SAYER: We're not talking about you.

WALLY: We don't care what you're doing.

BINT: Which is nothing, anyway.

SAYER: It's his fucking ego popping off again, saying pay attention to me, Pal. As usual, as always.

BINT: Otherwise, there's not much happening.

SAYER: Listen to me, Pal. Pay attention to me, Pal.

CROSS: In the moment, so to say, right here in the moment.

BINT: What could he possibly mean by that?

SAYER: He's been away, Bint.

WALLY: Still, the moment 's here, and then it's gone.

BINT: It certainly is.

CROSS: You don't know. You're fucking ignoramuses.

WALLY: He's cursing more, too.

BINT: I don't give a shit.

WALLY: Me, neither.

BINT: I don't give a fuck.

WALLY: I couldn't care less.

SAYER: It's Popeye the sailor man. *(We can see the train, coming closer.)*

CROSS: *(To himself)* I don't want to see any more dead bodies. I don't want to see any more stupid bombs, or stupid people making bombs, or bombs smashing into children, or buildings falling down, or people saying things like, Kill the Infidels!

WALLY: We heard you, Cross.

BINT: We couldn't help but hear you.

CROSS: Is there a bulldozer on the train?

SAYER: There is a bulldozer on the train.

CROSS: I don't want no more terror!

BINT: He's terrified.

WALLY: He's going to attract a lot of attention.

SAYER: Is that what we want?

BINT: No.

WALLY: Yes.

SAYER: I don't think so.

WALLY: No more fucking attention. (*SALLY stands, takes a step.*)

BINT: Well, we got it now. Oh. Sally. Where'd you go, Sally?

SALLY: Over there.

SAYER: Where'd you come from, Sally?

SALLY: I just said. (*Pointing*) Right over there.

SAYER: Welcome aboard. Welcome back. Glad to see you.

SALLY: Thanks.

CROSS: It's a pleasure.

SAYER: I'm sure I speak for everyone. Especially Cross, here. You remember him?

SALLY: I remember the name, but not the face.

CROSS: I have a different face.

SAYER: What happened to your face?

BINT: I was only pretending, to tell the truth.

WALLY: Pretending what?

BINT: To know his face.

WALLY: That IS your face?

SAYER: What happened to your fucking face?

CROSS: I was running and I fell down. Gravel got into my face. I said the wrong words and they threw acid on my face. I was staring at a guy and he took an icepick to my face. I made a pass at a girl, and she threw hot water in my face. For tea.

SAYER: Which is it, Cross? *(Silence)*

BINT: He's incapable of telling the truth. There must be a word for that.

WALLY: He's a psychopath or a sociopath.

CROSS: I feel bad about it.

SALLY: Things happen. I'm not trying to be smart. He just needs a break, it seems to me. Give the guy a break.

SAYER: Here's a break, Cross, in the form of a snake. *(Picks up a snake.)*

SALLY: Good grief!

WALLY: Where'd you get the snake, Sayer?

SAYER: At my feet. Slithering around. Part of the local religious practises here. I'm going to kill you, Wally, first chance I get.

WALLY: Why?

SAYER: I'm going to cut your fucking head off. You got that?

WALLY: Got it.

SAYER: We will have no talk of religion, and sing no hymns! You got that, Bint?

BINT: Got it.

SAYER: We will avoid self-pity and refrain from sexual impulses. You got that,, Cross?

CROSS: Got it.

SAYER: So, I'll now talk about the snake, if I can, the snake motif, the meaning of snakes, wandering in the desert, stomped on by helicopters and cowboys. No, that's not it. Snakes represent the energy of the life force, especially in China. On New Year's day, you see lots of dragons in China, with firecrackers going off, which celebrate the forces of Life itself.

SALLY: I hate snakes.

SAYER: Of course you hate snakes, because snakes represent --The life force, which is also sex. Sex, that most mysterious driver of mankind, Sex itself, slithering through all our lives.

SALLY: Not mine, Sayer. And if you throw that snake on me, I'll cut your balls off.

BINT: Somebody kill it, step on its head!

SAYER: Never mind – I'll do it. I'll hit it with a rock!

SALLY: Me, too. I'll hit it with a rock! *(Much ado while they throw stones at the snake.. Pause.)*

SAYER: There, it's done. Everybody back off. *(Pause)*

WALLY: I had asked Sally before if she recognized Cross. Sally?

SALLY: I recognized the rest of him, but not his face. I do like to watch good-looking men walk around. I like to look. We're not in Saudi Arabia. *(Train whistle)*

SAYER: Look away yonder toward the coming of the train. *(Train coming closer.)* Understand? *(They re-arrange their line-up on the stage.)*

SAYER: Sally?

SALLY: What?

SAYER: How do you feel?

SALLY: Dread dreaded dreadful.

BINT: Ditto.

SAYER: I feel quieter, myself. How do you feel now, Cross?

CROSS: She's very attractive.

WALLY: Who is?

CROSS: Sally.

SAYER: Don't look.

CROSS: You look great, Sally.

BINT: You look like Annie Oakley.

SALLY: Thanks for that, Bint. I got a story to tell.

SAYER: What's the story, Sal?

SALLY: The story is this.

CROSS: No jokes.

SALLY: it's not a joke.

BINT: Better get going.

WALLY: The train of Righteousness is on it's way!

SAYER: No singing.

WALLY: I'm not singing.

SALLY: The story is this.

SAYER: You ready Cross, you ready for this?

CROSS: I'm standing here quietly and paying attention.

SAYER: Good. Go, Sally.

CROSS: And gradually getting a hard-on.

SALLY: I can see it.

SAYER: Erase that.

SALLY: Looks like a regular fucking codpiece.

CROSS: Don't look.

SALLY: Or a load of semen, is what it is.

SAYER: Just don't look. Turn away. *(They turn slightly.)*

SALLY: May I?

SAYER: Please.

SALLY: One day, one fine day, when the Sun arose in the Eastern sky....

WALLY: Oh, no. It's gonna be one of those.

SAYER: Go on, Sally.

SALLY: A man, maybe he was an Angel, came down from Heaven and declared that if everything continued as it was, that everyone would be killed, either by flood, fire, earthquake, or water. So, take your pick.

BINT: Why?

SALLY: Because you are a bunch of lying, cognitively challenged, sonsofbitches, and you don't take care of the Earth like you're supposed to.

WALLY: When?

SALLY: You are complete fuck-ups.

WALLY: I asked "when?"

SALLY: Soon as the train arrives. They've had it with human beings, especially us, because of our ignorance and stupidity. The locals, as well, because they lie with impunity.

WALLY: I'm confused now.

SALLY: You are always confused. The dummies who sell us the stolen goods and the phony corn. That would also be you and me and all your stupid friends around here.

WALLY: Who 's them? The ones on the train?

SALLY: I don't know, they come from a higher sphere. Maybe they live on the moon. They're going to pick me up and take me with them.

WALLY: Why?

SALLY: They think I'm very attractive.

CROSS: You are.

SALLY: And pure of heart.

SAYER: You're not.

SALLY: But I could slay you all first, and save a lot of trouble.

WALLY: You are unarmed, Sal.

SALLY: And save a lot of time. I wouldn't mind doing that. It's the thing to do these days. Teenagers walk into theatres and open fire with machine guns. Imbeciles drive trucks into crowds. Frustrated women strap bombs to their bellies and blow up various facilities. Hospitals. Check-points.

SAYER: It's the fucking politicians. They have big mouths and say they believe in certain things but they're lying and lying and they have no clue, so it can make you very pessimistic.

WALLY: I agree.

SAYER: Where's Bint?

BINT: Right here.

SAYER: Why don't you say something?

BINT: Forces. Forces we have to submit to.

SAYER: There are forces and we don't know what they are. Forces that are driving the bus.

CROSS: Like what?

SAYER: Like the weather.

SALLY: This is a really interesting question.

SAYER: Yes, it is.

WALLY: All about forces.

SALLY: Pick an example, Sayer, before we run out of time, and I kill you off before the train comes.

SAYER: Methedrene is one. Destroy the world before it's done. And heroin will do it, too.

BINT: No singing.

WALLY: We don't do that shit, turns your skin blue and your eyes white as baseballs.

SALLY: Say another one.

SAYER: I'm thinking. Sunshine. Sunshine is what we eat. Did you know? No, you did not.

BINT: One more, Sayer.

SAYER: Fella told me about membranes the other day.

WALLY: Membranes?

CROSS: Membranes?

SALLY: How is that related, Sayer?

SAYER: Directly, Sally, directly. Because the shit has to pass. It's no joke. Wally can be a big help here. Wally was a hospital attendant. Am I right, Wally?

WALLY: It depends.

SAYER: Depends on what?

WALLY: On what you're talking about.

SAYER: Membranes. You know what a membrane is?

WALLY: I know what a membrane is.

SAYER: What is it? *(Pause)*

WALLY: It's like a door.

SAYER: It's not like a door.

WALLY: Or a gate.

SAYER: It's not like a gate.

WALLY: It surrounds the cells and bodily organs.

SAYER: Right. It's more like a by-way. So there's movement. Some things go through, some can't go through. It's a force. Nobody can explain it.

CROSS: I think it's all electrical. *(Enter GINNIE)*

SAYER: Hey, Ginnie –what’s up?

GINNIE: Sky ‘s up, Sayer.

SAYER: She always says that.

WALLY: Ever the optimist. Why does she have to turn everything negative into a positive?

GINNIE: Because that’s my nature.

WALLY: It’s unnatural, in my opinion.

BINT: By the way, there’s a train coming soon with a bulldozer on it.

GINNIE: I missed that last part.

BINT: There’s a train with a bulldozer on it, coming this way.

GINNIE: Before that.

CROSS: I had hopes. I had dreams.

SALLY: I didn’t. But I wish you well.

GINNIE: Good for you, Sally.

SALLY: Tell us your story, Gin.

GINNIE: I’m afraid of the dark and I hate auditions.

WALLY: That’s it?

SALLY: She was a child prodigy.

GINNIE: My dear Mom beat me, if I didn’t get the part.

SAYER: Come on!

GINNIE: That’s why I’m so neurotic. But I still go out and I do my best and I have a good attitude. I just can’t stand learning lines.

SAYER: And that’s why you live out here with bums like us! Okay, never mind. As usual, as always.

CROSS: I can't believe the fickleness of it all. Mallarme said it well. "A throw of the dice will not abolish chance."

SALLY: Could anybody follow that?

GINNIE: Not me.

CROSS: Never mind. I was talking about biology. I was talking about Fate and how nobody has a real choice, really. Least of all me. Blown about like dust in the wind.

GINNIE: Think of the sublime life you've managed to have Cross, and stop complaining.

SALLY: Sublime? (*Train whistle*)

BINT: And here's the train coming with a bulldozer on it.

CROSS: Shut up, Bint. I'm trying to say something.

SAYER: Let him talk. We got nothing but a little time. To kill.

GINNIE: That's a lie if I ever heard one.

SALLY: Go on, Cross.

CROSS: I was teaching in the Valley and I was taking care of my grandmother's house in Pomona. Beautiful old bungalow with a porch all round and the backyard fertile with chickenshit. They'd had chickens there, back in the day. Now there was all kinds of fruit: figs, persimmons, grapes, oranges, grapefruit – it was a fruitful paradise. I'd been through thick and thin and hell and high water, and all the cliches, plus shooting up in people's bathrooms. Nice dining room with a mahogany table and glass cupboards. I'd get drunk with my parents one-night weekly and play bridge. Irish whiskey was the booze of choice. Dad was an engineer with Sunkist and Mom a hard-bitten housewife of the day. Tough American Republicans.

SAYER: Get to the point, Cross.

CROSS: Point was, I forgot how bad I felt when the shit hit the fan. I'm not having fun remembering all this now.

SALLY: What happened?

CROSS: I got married and I left. Or she left. We got married to get divorced. What happens with all that pain and sorrow? What happens to the memories?

SAYER: Come on!

CROSS: Driving around L.A. with a feeling of homelessness and betrayal.

SAYER: What? Come on!

SALLY: Sex had reared its ugly head. I'll say no more.

GINNIE: That was the beginning of the end, was it not?

CROSS: It was. Couldn't believe I could go home no more, and didn't know who to blame. Who was that who did that nasty deed and strung himself out across the city of palms? Who was he? Man in a car with a pain through his chest and nowhere to go. *(Train whistle)*

BINT: The train is coming closer. It does have a bulldozer on it.

GINNIE: All for the best.

SALLY: Nobody knows. I think we should talk about clowns now.

GINNIE: So do I.

WALLY: Why?

SALLY: I don't know why.

GINNIE: We had an intuition.

BINT: I think Wally had something to say. Wally?

WALLY: You'd pick it up with a forceps – and – and – you know, you'd cut the thing out – and there's a force there --

CROSS: I think it's electrical. It's an electrical force.

SAYER: There has to be a membrane. No membrane, and we fall into chaos, we spatter into a splotchy mass, we fall apart, into pieces, into shreds, into goop, into an amorphous nothing –

CROSS: Hang on, Sayer.

SAYER: That's what a wall is, that's what a trench is, a wire or a fence, a river or a check point –

CROSS: I wouldn't say, "Check-point" –

SAYER: A border or an entrance, that is to say, a membrane that regulates the force, a force that is the membrane, which gives a shape, which holds the line, which allows things in and allows things out, a mysterious force, a pump maybe –

CROSS: Not a pump –

SALLY: We are afraid of clowns. Because they do not do what we expect them to do, and they are menacingly sad.

SAYER: -- Which permits an exchange, where substances can move, in and out, subject to the force, an orderly transmission or transmutation or transfusion, materials needed on either side -- Which is why we need borders and trade agreements, like we've been saying. *(Pause)*

WALLY: We are refugees, Sayer. We are beggars.

BINT: He wants to say something about that. Go on Wally. Don't be intimidated.

WALLY: I'm not intimidated.

SAYER: Come on!

WALLY: From the ages of eleven to fifteen, I had no money for lunches. It was during the Junior High School years. My mother was incapable of putting together a paper bag with a sandwich in it. And of course we had no money. Junior High School. You certainly do not want to beg during Junior High School. Of course, there's more to it than that.

SALLY: More to it than what?

WALLY: You had to be sly, you had to think of a new reason every fucking day. "Come on, man, loan me a quarter. I had no breakfast today. I'll pay you back." And you had to act well because you didn't want people to spit at you or kick your legs out from under you. And you hated the motherfuckers for having to ask them. But you can't show humiliation or self-pity or anger, because you wanted that quarter for a hot lunch. Fights broke out though, when I couldn't hold my temper, or I was refused. Of course, I was a star athlete in those days, though it was hard to stay in shape. I had status. And I was good-looking and smart, so I'd give them pause. I'd have an opening. Not like holding a sign up on a freeway exit. We were fucked up adolescents trying to survive and I could weasel my way around. The world is different now. The world is *Fuck You Now*. Anyway, we all know the skinny about begging. We're out there all the time hustling up a dollar. I thought I'd mention that.

BINT: Thanks, Wally. *(Enter a smiling CLOWN.)*

WALLY: Sure thing. *(Pause)* What's with the fucking clown?

GINNIE: I think he means well.

BINT: Do you live here? (*CLOWN: Shakes his head, **No.** Smiles.*)

SALLY: Did you come to scare us? (*Shakes his head, **No.***)

CROSS: Did you come to warn us? (***No.***)

BINT: You know, there's a train coming, towing a flatcar with a bulldozer on it. (***So?***)

SAYER: Do you sing? (***No.***)

BINT: So I wouldn't hang around here, if I were you. (***No.***)

WALLY: No singing is allowed here. (***No***)

CROSS: I don't think it means well The train, I mean. (***No***)

SAYER: I don't mind singing. I just don't like it loud. I don't like too much emphasis. It's in bad taste.

CROSS: I agree. (***The CLOWN waves.***)

SALLY: What's he want?

CROSS: Who is he? Is he one of us, or an outsider, a spy?

BINT: He 's a clown.

CROSS: I can see that.

WALLY: What's he doing here?

GINNIE: Maybe he was at a birthday party, or a cocktail party, and then he got lost, and he ended up here. (***No***)

SALLY: They're going around scaring people.

CROSS: I heard of that.

SALLY: I think it sucks.

CROSS: They're not real clowns. They're fucked up teenagers going around scaring people.

SALLY: What is that? What is all that? (**CLOWN makes a face.**)

GINNIE: I'm glad. I'm glad the younger generation – my generation -- has feelings.

SAYER: But what feelings? Come on! It's a perfect image, if you ask me – kids in clown outfits terrifying the populace? Perfect. How the young generation is worse than the one before.

BINT: Haters.

SAYER: Right, Bint.

GINNIE: That's not what I meant.

WALLY: You don't know what you meant.

SALLY: Yes, she did.

WALLY: What?

SALLY: Caulrophobia.

WALLY: What's that?

SALLY: It's Greek. For *Fear of Clowns*.

GINNIE: The clown has feelings! (**CLOWN makes another face.**)

BINT: I'm not going anywhere with that guy.

WALLY: Me, neither.

SALLY: I'm not staying here, either. (*Train whistle*)

BINT: I'm not going to say it. But --

WALLY: I'd like to go back to an earlier point, if I may, about the singing.

SAYER: What about it, Wally?

WALLY: It's opera.

SAYER: And?

WALLY: I hate opera.

CROSS: Me, too. People shouldn't be singing things that are meant to be heard intimately, mouth to ear. Quietly, personally. Especially not loudly. My ears can't take it.

BINT: What's with the fucking clown? **(CLOWN grins broadly, waves.)**

SAYER: Leave him alone, Bint. He's here for a reason. **(Yes)**

SALLY: You can't take anything, Cross. All you want to do is stay home and watch television.

CROSS: I would if I could.

SALLY: By yourself.

CROSS: You can come with me, if you want.

SALLY: No.

CROSS: Why not?

SALLY: It's impossible. We're not suited. **(True)**

CROSS: We could try.

SALLY: Won't work.

CROSS: How do you know?

SALLY: You're too stuck in your head and you walk funny.

CROSS: How do I walk?

SALLY: You walk like a Brooklyn street gangster. **(CLOWN mimes CROSS'S WALK)**

CROSS: This is true.

SALLY: And I'm taller than you.

CROSS: I thought we could overcome that.

SALLY: I don't think so.

CROSS: Probably not.

SALLY: And I'm smarter than you.

CROSS: I'm not sure about that.

SALLY: I can speak five languages.

CROSS: Okay, never mind.

SALLY: We can be friends.

CROSS: No. I don't think I'll see you again. You go your way and I'll go mine.

SALLY: *Vaya con Dios.*

CROSS: I had hopes. I had dreams.

SALLY: I didn't. But I wish you well.

GINNIE: What's up with you, Cross?

CROSS: I was thinking about love, Ginnie. I'll say a word on that. I was thinking about love. Like the smooth cheek of a woman. Like her lips, those soft lips. The tenderness in a woman, how it helps a man to go on living. How it gives him a reason to make another effort, yet another effort. To go on home, to be welcomed home, to be given respite, to be given hope. That's about it, really. Bye-bye. **(BYE)**

SALLY: So long, Cross.

GINNIE: I don't know where they think they're going.

WALLY: Mars, maybe.

BINT: There you go.

CROSS: No, I'll go back to camp, myself.

SAYER: This world has about had it. Too much crap and slimeballs and plastic.

BINT: I hear you there.

WALLY: But Mars is a bit far.

GINNIE: Who knows what could happen? Train could be a boon. Bulldozer could clarify Reality. All 's well that ends well.

BINT: I think it's coming on a sweep.

GINNIE: What the place needs – a good sweep.

SAYER: She just can't hear herself. Or help herself. Some day you'll be dead, my dear. You won't be feeling so positive, then.

GINNIE: You too, Sayer.

SAYER: I know that.

CROSS: I can't believe how good you look to me, Ginnie.

GINNIE: Is that right?

CROSS: And a minute ago I was in love with Sally.

GINNIE: Shows to go ya, don't it?

CROSS: Yeah, I'm feeling bad about the whole thing. Pointless to believe in people, rather, pointless to believe in yourself, get it all wrong anyway. One minute you're with a person, next minute you're leaving them, and you're a miserable wretch on top of it. **(CLOWN Waves)**

WALLY: Look at that fuckhead – he's still waving at us.

SALLY: I'm out of here. *(The train is coming closer. Whistles.)* Save the Clown. **(“No need,” gestures the CLOWN>)**

GINNIE: Sounds like a title.

SAYER: Hey – Bye, Sally.

SALLY: I changed my mind.

(The slightly menacing CLOWN quickly mimes a door frame.)

SALLY: *(To herself)* I think he has too many self-esteem problems.

GINNIE: He'll be fine, he just needs some therapy.

WALLY: You don't have to figure it all out.

CLOWN: **(Miming)** Now there is a door! Here's the door! Come on in, or come on out! **(He waves. Nobody moves.)**

WALLY: I'm tired of people telling me things.

*(The train arrives. **CRASH!** Dim out as everyone scatters through the “door,” held “open” by the **CLOWN**, who remains. A moment. Still, quiet.*

***CLOWN** takes two steps forward. He is now backlit. Pause. He smiles.)*

THE END

Murray Mednick
11/10/16

