

THREE TABLES

A Play

Scene: 3 tables in a restaurant or coffee shop, or just a club room. At one table are three friends, actors, CHRISTEN, RODGER and MIKE (40's and 50's). At another table, off to the side, sit JOE and SOL, older men, waiters or owners, or Gents who think they own the place. A trio of other friends, also theatre people, MARGIE, DON (a singer) and CASEY, enter later and take a third table.

Lights up.

CHRISTEN: I can have sex without having sex.

RODGER: Bully for you.

JOE: We were the first to use horses and we whacked them across the plain, the Savannah, the so-called origin of human life, in Africa.

SOL: Not us.

JOE: An idea, a concept.

SOL: Wasn't us, Sol.

RODGER: Sorry. I'm sorry I snapped at you.

CHRISTEN: Why did you do it?

RODGER: Someone had just told me to do something, and I was paralyzed by that.

MIKE: How so?

RODGER: I don't know.

MIKE: Christen? How can you have sex without having sex?

CHRISTEN: The vibe. I feel the vibe. But there's no penetration, no substances exchanged.

JOE: While Death rode along with us. Was a part of us. What could we have been thinking? Law? Proverbs? Commandments?

SOL: We are not people of the horse, Joe, we are people of the Book.

CHRISTEN: A vibration exchanged.

RODGER: Is that so?

MIKE: And the rest is fantasy and masturbation. Am I right?

CHRISTEN: Right as rain.

MIKE: So what do you do?

CHRISTEN: You get near a person and go from there, which is mainly standing, and holding your ground, and breathing. The lies I tell myself. *(Out)* The fantasies. I get emotionally attached, and then I believe in them. And then the truth comes as a shock. That's what I like about acting. It's not me.

MIKEL It is you.

CHRISTEN: No, I'm not lying. Onstage. Hopefully.

RODGER: You yelled at me, Chris. You did. *"Rodger! - Don't pick up the chair!"*

JOE: While the Anti-Jew opens his mouth again, spitting murder and mayhem. Like the former President.

SOL: What should we do?

JOE: Get ready.

SOL: How?

JOE: Get ready now.

CHRISTEN: Excuse me. Joe?

JOE: *(Arriving)* Ma'am?

CHRISTEN: My food is cold.

JOE: Sorry.

CHRISTEN: And it's not what I ordered.

JOE: What did you order?

CHRISTEN: Flank steak.

JOE: That is flank steak.

CHRISTEN: Take it back

JOE: Certainly, Ma'am.

CHRISTEN: And make sure it's hot.

JOE: Same thing?

CHRISTEN: Are you an idiot?

JOE: No, Ma'am.

CHRISTEN: So don't stand here arguing with me.

JOE: Be right back, Ma'am.

CHRISTEN: I hope so. (*JOE returns to his station.*)

RODGER: What was all that about?

CHRISTEN: Food.

RODGER: Can't you eat without eating.?

CHRISTEN: Fuck off.

RODGER: All that talk about love. Means nothing to you.

CHRISTEN: Mainly nothing. True. I haven't thought about it, but that's all I know.

RODGER: That's all you know?

CHRISTEN: That's all I know, these days. I lie to myself. Tell stories. Fall in love in about two minutes.

JOE: I'm gonna spit in her fucking food.

SOL: Don't do that.

JOE: I'm gonna spit in her food, or I'm gonna punch him in the head.

SOL: Don't do that.

JOE: I'm gonna kill the motherfucker.

SOL: Serve her her flank steak.

JOE: No, you do it.

RODGER: Why did you yell?

CHRISTEN: Sorry. What's wrong with you lately, Rodger?

RODGER: Nothing. Nothing 's wrong with me. Bad times are what's wrong with me.

SOL: Arm ourselves. Build barricades.

JOE: Too late. I'm an old man.

SOL: An old Hipster.

JOE: Two old Hipsters.

SOL: That's what happened, Joe. Everybody laid down and took their punishment, and ate shit, and died.

JOE: But I can still get it up.

SOL: Give her her food.

JOE Let her wait.

SOL: She'll complain.

JOE: Let her wait.

SOL: They'll fire you. They'll burn you.

MIKE: Bad times is right.

CHRISTEN: So I told you to pick up the freakin' chair.

MIKE: They're starting to round people up. Like the Brownshirts.

RODGER: I'm not supposed to pick up chairs, Chris. I have bad knees.

CHRISTEN: You can stand onstage alright.

RODGER: I use painkillers and hang on to things.

MIKE: They throw them into vans and lock 'em up. The prettiest little things.

CHRISTEN: Not good. What happens then?

MIKE: I don't know.

RODGER: What did you say about falling in love, Chris?

CHRISTEN: Too easily, is all.

MIKE: What about knowing your lines? That counts, too.

CHRISTEN: I know my lines. Wouldn't you say so, Rodger?

RODGER: No.

SOL: Give it back to her. Same food.

JOE: Yeah. (*Goes*) Here you are, Ma'am.

RODGER: ' Bout time.

JOE: Thank you, Ma'am.

CHRISTEN: Much better.

JOE: Yes, Ma'am. *(Goes)*

CHRISTEN: I always know my lines.

RODGER: You're over the top.

CHRISTEN: Fuck you.

RODGER: Meanwhile, I'll have a chat with the waiters. Joe? We go back a long way. We were comrades in arms.

MIKE: Which side were you on, Joe?

JOE: Get away from me you little shit, or I'll kill you with my bare hands.

MIKE: Did you hear that?

CHRISTEN: Shut up Mike.

MIKE: I know the owners.

SOL: Stay cool, Joe.

JOE: Yeah, back in the day. I wouldn't mind shooting guns, in the old days, or stomping people, or throwing grenades, but I can't run no more.

SOL: Where to now, Joe?

JOE: New York City?

SOL: That's a fantasy. I like the idea, but a fantasy is what it is. We'll never make it there.

JOE: I'll tell ya, Sol. I do look to the future now. My whole life I never looked ahead. With a positive attitude. And now I do.

SOL: A little late for that, Joe.

MIKE: Rodger? What do you think?

RODGER: Politics?

MIKE: Yeah.

RODGER: Lie low.

CHRISTEN: Lie low and learn your lines.

RODGER: It's not only the lines. The things that happen onstage. Little touches. Looks. Attention paid. Listening to one another.

CHRISTEN: I couldn't agree more. What we do is important.

MIKE: Yeah, yeah. But we have to know.

CHRISTEN: You don't do shit, Mike.

JOE: You think so? Sol? We couldn't make it in the Apple?

SOL: Yes. You're right. Maybe we could. We have many brethren there. We put out appetizers like you wouldn't believe.

JOE: I look back, too. Had some good times. It ain't so bad. Ain't so bad at all. Remember Suarino, who jumped off the building on Broadway and survived?

SOL: I do. Downtown.

JOE: Now, he's a high-up in the *Hari Krishna* movement, in India.

SOL: LSD.

JOE: Correct.

SOL: A whole life chasing pharmaceuticals. Cannabis, hallucinogens. One doctor after another, one drugstore after another, one connection after another, one – I don't know. A lifestyle.

CHRISTEN: You're a very strange person, Rodger.

RODGER: Yes. I am. So what?

CHRISTEN: Except maybe onstage.

MIKE: He 's good. Onstage.

CHRISTEN: Do you know exactly how you're strange?

RODGER: No. You tell me.

CHRISTEN: Like, for example, what's the doomsday here?

RODGER: That's a line from the play.

CHRISTEN: Doomed to what? I'm asking.

RODGER: What's happening to the country.

CHRISTEN: Come on. We're all worried.

RODGER: Listen. I had this sudden impression of the audience. There they were, despite the horrors on the street, trying to pay attention. Eyes up. All sitting there quietly and everyone in their own

heads, thinking thoughts and making up questions and answers like, “What does it all mean?”, and all of them were going to die. For sure. That was my impression.

MIKE: That’s what I saw, too, except plus the loneliness of everybody. And the fear. The apprehension.

RODGER: Including us, Mike.

CHRISTEN: Being lonely and wanting to be touched, wanting to be hugged and kissed.

MIKE: Wanting to get laid.

CHRISTEN: What’s wrong with that?

MIKE: Nothing. Totally normal.

RODGER: You flirt too much, Christen.

CHRISTEN: I can’t believe you just said that, Rodger.

JOE: What a strange thing it is, History. You think of the blood flowing up and down through Time like streams on a ball, or strings around the Earth, wrapping the Earth, and it has nothing to do with Logic or Reason.

SOL: Just the murder impulse. The killing.

JOE: Revenge of the Christians.

SOL: World War I.

JOE: Yeah?

SOL: Who started that war?

JOE: I don't know.

SOL: Nobody knows.

(Enter the three actors who sit at another table: #3.)

CASEY: The drama.

MARGIE: The theatricality.

CASEY: The loss.

DON: The wait.

CASEY: The hope.

DON: The dreaming.

MARGIE: The imaginary.

CASEY: The idiot. *(Pause)*

MARGIE: The murderous. Again. *(They repeat.)*

CHRISTEN: Fuck you, Rodger.

RODGER: Fuck you back

CHRISTEN: You've never been a normal person.

RODGER: Thanks. Neither have you.

CHRISTEN: Oh?

RODGER: You liked that liittle kiss we had.

CHRISTEN: Then, I did.

RODGER: You flirt around too much. *(A pause – CHRISTEN gets up, stands, goes as if toward the bathroom, stops to say hello to MARGIE.)*

CHRISTEN: Hi.

MARGIE: Hi.

CHRISTEN: I know you from the Theatre.

MARGIE: Yeah. Good space.

CHRISTEN: Definitely. Just wanted to say hello.

MARGIE: Thanks for stopping by.

CHRISTEN: You bet. *(Starts back to her table.)*

SOL: *(To the newcomers)* Take a seat anywhere.

MARGIE: Thank you!

JOE: They did already, Sol.

SOL: Where did we go wrong, Joe?

JOE: Stiff-necked. Lost a major battle to the Arabs. Back in the Day. Just think if we'd won.

SOL: Then what?

JOE: Then I don't know.

SOL: Marched on the Persians or whoever it was, the Egyptians? The Greeks?

JOE: Took prisoners and put them to work.

SOL: No. Went on with the trade. The Ol' Silk Road.

JOE: Hey. I like that. *(CHRISTEN returns to her table.)*

MIKE: Okay. Good. Sit down, Chris. I have an idea. Which is germane. I think.

CHRISTEN: Which is what?

MIKE: Which is to make a "well." It's like a theatre exercise I used to do. We rearrange the chairs so we imagine we're at a well. A well in the desert, a Biblical well.

RODGER: And then?

CHRISTEN: She approaches the well.

RODGER: And then?

MIKE: We see what happens. She's a beautiful woman.

RODGER: Stop with the fucking exercises, Mike.

MIKE: Let's try it. Chris?

CHRISTEN: Okay. So, the table is like a well.

MIKE: Let's make a triangle and *there* would be the well. Rodger?

RODGER: Okay. There's the "well."

MIKE: Move the chairs a bit. *(They move the chairs, making a triangle.)*

SOL: So why were they moving the chairs around?

JOE: I don't know why.

SOL: It's like the Absurdists.

JOE: Absurd. Definitely.

RODGER: What happened was, Chris, it was a moment of not knowing what to do, or who I was, because you yelled my name, and I was spooked. I felt paralyzed and blank, because I knew I had snapped at you, and I hadn't wanted to. *It snapped.*

CHRISTEN: I never said anything about it, Rodger.

RODGER: Let's drop it.

MIKE: Let's look at the "well."

CHRISTEN: *(Pointing)* There's the well. She stands at the well.

MIKE: She seems fearful.

SOL: As I was saying, as I said, so they got meekly onto buses and trains and went where they went, of which I will not speak. Only of revenge, will I speak.

JOE: Seems far-fetched, to me. Seems like there was only one way to go, and so that's the way it went.

SOL: The Europeans, especially the idiots in the East, they walked by Synagogues on a Friday night – they heard singing and happiness and it made them mad.

CASEY: Do we know these people?

MARGIE: Not really.

JOE: I was talking to so and so and that's what he said. On the rise. Anti-Semitism on the rise. In France.

SOL: All over. What are people? They get an idea in their heads and they have to execute? Swords! Thundering hooves across the plain! Blood and booty!

JOE:! I think we have to wait on these people.

SOL: Let's give 'em a minute.

RODGER: This acting company walks in and all of them are going to die. I think I'll tell them.

CHRISTEN: Leave them be, Rodger.

RODGER: We know some of them.

MIKE: No, we don't. We just share the space.

CHRISTEN: It's not normal to say things like that. To strangers.

CASEY: Anyway, facing front all the time. I don't know how I feel about that. It's not natural.

DON: It's Vaudevillian.

CASEY: And the timing thing.

MARGIE: You get your head right by knowing that right away. When to speak, when to move. Pause.

CASEY: Not a second too late, or too soon.

DON: Right away.

CASEY: Right on time.

MARGIE: It's mixing shit up.

CASEY: Say again?

MARGIE: Never mind. *El directeur.*

CASEY: I know what you mean.

MARGIE: I think that's the problem. Plus what's happening in the street. Now you see 'em, now you don't.

MIKE: Reminds me of those vacation calls about the phony vacation package -- they are preying on people with these vacation package and boat rides, it's the most evil thing, preying on the old and unemployed with lies and possibilities behind the lies, and it's all allowed by American Justice, such as it is.

CHRISTEN: Don't fret. Hang up the phone.

RODGER: I get it, I do get it. But I have to admit. I get the calls. I hate that shit.

CHRISTEN: Don't answer the calls.

JOE: Robbery and murder -- they get a kick out of it. And if you have a little booze or amphetamine, all the better. Rock and roll.

SOL: I've never told anyone, I never tell my kids, but I hate that stuff. I hate whadyacallit, too -- Hip/Hop. Rap. Stupid. I'm a Thelonius Monk, Bud Powell type of person.

JOE: Bully for you.

SOL: What can you do? What'll happen to all the intellectuals?

JOE: Dead as doornails.

SOL: Or end up as waiters, like us. We got like a rock group here and this looks like the Actors' Humane Society. A house full of actors.

JOE: *HaShem* bless us all.

SOL: Amen.

the DON: (Sings) This fucking country is going to the wolves and the pigs,
hustlers and the cons.

CASEY: They must succeed sometimes, with the old and the horny, the old and the shaky. My parents. Can't remember if they bought a boat ride to Timbuktoo or the Bermuda Triangle, or what.

MARGIE: We weren't talking about that.

DON: What were we talking about? The street. You brought it up yourself.

MARGIE: I was just thinking, loneliness is a terrible thing, and then to be preyed upon. A body, a woman's body, it has all these parts, and they have to be touched. It's just a shame what happens, a woman alone and untouched, it's a fucking shame.

DON: Timing. You can't teach it.

CASEY: But what is it coming to, when you get a phone call in the middle of the day about a trip you bought to Trinidad Toobago? What is that?

DON: He's got a point there.

CASEY: Or they're selling you tickets to a phony dance. I made that up, but you know what I mean.

DON: Call one of the waiters. They're just sitting there bullshitting.

MARGIE: Waiter! *(JOE rises.)*

JOE: Yes, Ma'am?

MARGIE: Three vodka martinis please. We're on a break.

JOE: You got it. (Sits)

RODGER: Something snapped. I apologize.

CHRISTEN: And you were trembling.

RODGER: I was trembling?

CHRISTEN: Yes. It's those little pills you take.

RODGER: Those are steroids.

CHRISTEN: Steroids.

RODGER: Yes.

MIKE: Why do you take steroids?

RODGER: You know why – it's my knees.

CHRISTEN: They make you shake.

RODGER: Oh.

MIKE: Not onstage.

RODGER: Thank God.

DON: So, as I was saying...

MARGIE: What images that brings up! I can tell you that! Lined up against the wall, hoping some fathead will be able to say a whole sentence. In your ear. While he fumbles with your dress. We hit the boards and then we hit the bars.

DON: Show biz!

MARGIE: We got one going here – like a round of golf or a game of Horse. Or jousting a joust. Must have been what happened with old Will Shakespeare. Jam sessions and iambic pentameter and a lot to rhyme with.

DON: Sounds right. That's what he wants, the Director.

MARGIE: Yes, it's a verbal celebration, a round, so let's don't stop now, or we'll all fall down.

CASEY: Good, Marge!

DON: Don't stop.

MARGIE: Pass Go.

DON: Slide home.

MARGIE: Oh, my. Sounds good and feels good.

DON: We're on our way.

CASEY: It's not a vacation package though.

DON: Not today.

MARGIE: Old bodies in the throes of desire and open laughter!

CASEY: Yeah!

JOE: Actors. I got 'em, Sol.

SOL: What can you do? What'll happen to all the actors and intellectuals?

JOE: Dead as doornails, like was said.

SOL: They killed a third of the Jewish gene pool already.

JOE: We're not supposed to think that way.

SOL: Genes. What are Genes? Strands of DNA. Science. It's Adam, or whoever it was, naming things again.

JOE: I'm on my way.

MARGIE: What are we made of? Flesh and yearnings of the heart and the delusions of the mind. Something like that. And we get wrinkled and wrinkled and bullshitted and conned. What's it mean, a "happy old age." You'd think sex would have something to do with that, but apparently it doesn't.

CASEY: Thank you, sir.

JOE: You're welcome.

CASEY: And I was thinking, "sex is Dirty," but it's not.

DON: The Sages said the sex apparatus is right next to the shithole.

CASEY: I don't want to think that way.

MARGIE: It's fun if you can get some of the grunts and groans out of the way.

DON: Good luck with that.

MARGIE: Take it slow.

DON: Take it easy.

MARGIE: Take it as it comes.

DON: Take it woke.

CASEY: Take a shower.

DON: Hey! (*REPEAT*)

RODGER: Onstage I'm not like that. Onstage it all goes away, and I fly the magic carpet.

CHRISTEN: But that's not what I'm getting at.

RODGER: What are you getting at?

CHRISTEN: It's how you are in general.

RODGER: I have no idea. Well, I have some idea.

CHRISTEN: We know that. You're odd.

RODGER: Odd?

CHRISTEN: Maybe that's the wrong word.

RODGER: I wouldn't have thought, "Odd."

CHRISTEN: No?

RODGER: No.

CHRISTEN: Nuts, maybe. Maybe you're nuts.

RODGER: I feel hurt by that, Christen.

CHRISTEN: I'm sorry. Don't think about it.

RODGER: Don't think about it? (MIKE walks upstage and engages with MARGIE:)

MIKE: Listen.

MARGIE: Yeah?

RODGER: What's up with Mike.

MIKE: I just wanted to say, what was said.

MARGIE: What?

MIKE: Be careful.

DON: Thank you.

MIKE: You see that lady? On the other table? With the red hair?

MARGIE: I do. We said hello.

MIKE: She's been through a lot.

RODGER: Sid down, Mike.

MARGIE: So what?

MIKE: That's all.

DON: Thank you.

MIKE: Thanks, again.

CASEY: Thanks a lot.

MIKE: She 's a Jewess. *(Returns, sits.)*

DON: I'm looking out at Mankind, and I am not encouraged.

MARGIE: I might add that my libido is not what it once was.

CASEY: At least you have some left.

DON: In the imagination.

MARGIE: So easily deceived we are, by our thoughts and feelings.

DON: Without which, what are we?

CASEY: Specks.

DON: Dust.

CASEY: Nothing.

MARGIE: A vibration?

SOL: What a strange concept, History, when you think about it. You could say, since it already happened, that it's happening now.

JOE: Funny way to put it, Sol. The Christians. In the South. Their fucking attitude.

SOL: It's in the soil, it's in the air we breathe.

JOE: It's in their heads.

SOL: Monotheism? Is that the cause?

JOE: I don't think so, and we probably got that from the Egyptians.

JOE: We were on the edge of the Roman Empire in the first century B.C. They don't like the competition. Is what it is.

SOL: Survival.

JOE: But who knows? They don't know anything but what they find in the sand.

SOL: Sand?

JOE: Sand. *(Wanders over to Rodger's table and stands there.)*

RODGER: Why are you standing there?

JOE: I don't know why.

RODGER: Don't stand there.

JOE: I'm not that interested. *(Goes)*

CASEY: He wants us to remember the Dead. Traditions. The Ancestry.

DON: Raises the question: what remains of the remains?

MARGIE: We may never know.

CASEY: You never know.

DON: We might find out.

MARGIE: We might have some purpose, being a link between the Earth and the Sun, like the Egyptians may have thought, some kind of service, so they wrapped their mummies – sorry, don't know where I was headed with that. I think about it. I wonder about it. What actually happened, and why did they do that?

DON: Perhaps the question of memory and the blood.

MARGIE: No, they tried to keep the body intact. That's how I understand it. Wrapped and sealed.

DON: Why?

MARGIE: I don't know why.

DON: They're trying now to take away the Science, the truth, the facts that make the Science. I don't know how to say it. It's sad.

RODGER: I grew up among the Lower Classes. We don't feel like you people. We don't feel equal. We wonder if we belong.

CHRISTEN: Don't worry about it. You're smart. You're even good-looking. But you're getting a belly. I'd stop drinking, if I were you.

RODGER: I'll never stop drinking. Why? Because it relaxes the mind, Christen. And don't tell me what to do.

CHRISTEN: Don't tell me what to do, either. I do what I want.

RODGER: That's for sure.

CHRISTEN: I change my mind.

JOE: Memory and the blood.

SOL: Is what?

JOE: The Jewish version of immortality. I overheard them talking over there.

SOL: See if they want another drink.

JOE: Okay.

MARGIE: I'm thinking of menstruation now and the monthly bleeding. By association. I'm free of that these days, thank God.

JOE:: Can I get you people something?

DON No, thanks. Memory and blood. To be remembered, to pass on the genes. The bloodline and the Word.

CASEY: No genes for me. None passed on. Does that mean I'm cut off? That the progeny is gone? Vacant. Like I was never here in the first place? You can say that about all the world. The Earth is bleeding. Oceans choking on plastic.

DON: The Egyptians – Sorry. I forget now.

JOE: They hate us because we're smart.

SOL: Like I used to say to whatshisname, we have talent and the women like sex.

JOE: Not all of them.

SOL: Intelligence and we fuck a lot. That used to really bug him. Jakeœ was his name. I'd become the little Jewish clown to him. It's an identity now in my head. I used to really get his goat. The Jews are smarter. The Jews are more talented. The Jews get laid a lot.

JOE: You liked that?

SOL: Yes. Not really. Lots of problems there with him. You're like the inside of the outside.

JOE: I didn't get that.

SOL: You're on the outside looking in?

JOE: Oh. I see.

RODGER: Vodka is a boon to Mankind.

MIKE: Right.

CHRISTEN: Why?

MIKE: Well...

CHRISTEN: Not you! *(To RODGER)* You have multiple personalities. One minute you are one person and the next minute you're another.

RODGER: Okay, let's move on.

CHRISTEN: It muddles the mind. It's something so important, Rodger, to be lucid, to know what you're talking about. The mind, Rodger, the mind.

RODGER: I got that. Thank you.

JOE: Sad commentary on the Progress of Man.

SOL: You could have a penetration and wind up with a cretin or a brain-damaged imbecile, at our age.

JOE: Good point.

SOL: Who would want that?

JOE: I was waiting one time and my cheeks fell.

SOL: Your cheeks?

JOE: They fell. I could feel it. And now you can see it. The cheeks of an old man. *(Points)* Right here.

DON: I was saying, the Egyptians knew how to organize, but the Jews did them one better.

MARGIE: Good singing, Don.

DON: Thank you.

CASEY:: Here he goes with the Jews again.

DON: They had a God who could visit with plagues. Who could blow their minds.

MARGIE: You can't do better than that.

CASEY: Nope.

JOE: Funny, to look ahead when there ain't much there to come anymore.

SOL: I'd say so. I'll go and check on the table.

JOE: What about the rock and rollers?

SOL: They're done.

JOE: Check anyway.

SOL: Okay.

RODGER: That tears it.

CHRISTEN: Look at the well, Rodger.

RODGER: No, you look at it.

CHRISTEN: I am looking at it. She's looking down into the well. It's deep. Cold.

(SOL approaches table #3.)

SOL: Another drink?

CASEY: No, thanks.

MARGIE: I think I'll have one. *(Looks at CASEY)* No, never mind.

CASEY: Your name is SOL, right.

SOL: Right.

CASEY: Thanks, a lot, Sol.

SOL: You're welcome. *(Goes)*

DON: And they knew about vibrations.

MARGIE: The Egyptians or the Jews?

DON: Maybe both. And you?

MARGIE: Me, what?

DON: Thoughts?

SOL: *(Returning)* Everything's copacetic. You like Country?

JOE: The music?

SOL: Yeah.

JOE: No. Why? I don't identify with it. I don't feel like an American. I'm second generation in this country, so I'm just not into it.

SOL: I agree with that. I'm the same.

DON: Margie?

MARGIE: I'm thinking about the many relationships. I haven't thought about it in awhile. I was lucky. I'm thinking about it because the younger ones, you know, they run into trouble with money and drugs, and screwing around, just like us, apparently, so I'm looking back, except in those days it seemed fraught, you know, with consequence. And we were at War at the time, to boot, and dead soldiers were arriving, in coffins, and hard hats attacked us, in the good old American way.

JOE: It's either that or assimilate, or convert, or pack it in.

SOL: Pack it in.

JOE: Yeah. Forget about it.

SOL: The world is the World.

JOE: Right.

SOL: The universe is the Universe.

JOE: Everything is Everything, as we used to say.

MIKE: Just listen to these guys...

CHRISTEN: Shut up, Mike.

MIKE: No, you shut up.

CHRISTEN: I don't need help from you, Mike. I can feel the well.

MIKE: Okay, okay. Let's play. The Well. "Actors must learn to play."

RODGER: "Who said so?"

MIKE: "I heard it on the radio."

RODGER: That's a quote. From our Director.

CHRISTEN: I know.

DON: Vibrations?

CASEY: What is it with the vibrations?

MARGIE: That was not put right.

DON: The Ancients knew about vibration. Everyone knew. That and alchemy, too.

MARGIE: Bad things happened and they keep on fucking happening, and the idiots keep on singing *God Bless America*.

MIKE: Let's move the chairs around in a minute.

RODGER: Again? We did that already.

MIKE: Yeah, but a lot of time has passed.

RODGER: What's the problem with that?

MIKE: Not a problem. Just move 'em an inch.

CHRISTEN: Okay. *(They adjust their chairs a little.)* Let's play The Well.

RODGER: I don't want to play.

CHRISTEN: Petulant.

RODGER: I don't feel like playing.

MIKE: Then don't.

CHRISTEN: You've never been normal, Rodger

RODGER: Thanks. But fuck you, too.

MIKE: Hey, Waiter!

JOE: What?

MIKE: Can we have another round here?

JOE: Coming right up!

MIKE: Thank you! (*JOE prepares drinks.*)

MARGIE: Yeah, they didn't like who I was, ultimately, or something. I'm not sure what they were getting at. I liked to drink and smoke? I liked the news on TV? What? Not enough confidence or mojo? What?

DON: You may never know.

MARGIE: It's right there under my nose. A fault or a weakness. A shortcoming, as they say. A certain partiality. A certain attitude. Selfishness.

DON: All of the above.

MARGIE: I'm not kidding.

CASEY: I know you're not. Excuse me. (*Gets up and goes to the bathroom.*)

DON: I know you're not, believe me. It's not like I don't have my so-called issues, like losing my temper and yelling at people, and taking advantage.

MARGIE: Practice not being a wiseguy for a while, and the whole thing becomes a performance.

DON: You think so?

MARGIE: Yes. I'm thinking about loneliness and touch at the moment. I think it all comes from the vibration motif.

(*JOE serves the drinks.*)

MIKE: Thank you. Your name is Joe, am I right?

JOE: Right. Joe. Enjoy.

JOE: *(Returning)* Quite a crew over there.

SOL: The universe is the Universe.

JOE: Young.

SOL: It is what it is.

JOE: Whatever it is. They should be careful.

SOL: They don't have to dress all in black and behave strangely amidst the population of strangers.

JOE: Who's that?

SOL: The religious. The fanatics. They make us look bad.

JOE: People are used to it.

SOL: They stand out. They'll be rounded up in the street.

JOE:: God, I hope not.

SOL: And not just them.

RODGER: *(Looking up)* How 's this?

MIKE: Different view.

CHRISTEN: You experiment too much with your mind.

MIKE: You fuck with your head too much, Rodger.

RODGER: Who says so?

CHRISTEN: Drugs and the mind. You believe drugs effect the mind. Like me. I know from my own experience.

RODGER: They do. For better or worse.

CHRISTEN: One must guard the doors of perception.

RODGER: Indeed. One must guard the doors.

MIKE: The idea is that the artifact is the thing itself, not a representation.

RODGER: How is that related, Mike?

CHRISTEN: That's like saying the World is a museum.

RODGER: I don't know what that means either, Christen.

MIKE: Right.

CHRISTEN: Who said that? Aldous Huxley.

MIKE: I did.

CHRISTEN: I have no idea what you meant.

MIKE: Right.

CHRISTEN: You're too stupid, really, Mike, to follow what I'm saying.

RODGER: No, he isn't.

CHRISTEN: He is. He doesn't see the ideas coming.

MIKE: Listen. There is a Beast coming from the East, a monster from the East. He has no scruples, he 's on his way. Buildings crumbling like wafers, bodies buried like candied stones. *(Pause)*

MARGIE: Like, it's having someone in the room. Anyone. But especially someone who cares about you, who has some feeling. Just their physical presence. I think that's a very big thing. Just someone being there.

DON: The vibe.

MARGIE: Yeah. That's what I'm saying.

JOE: And us? They'll find our names and addresses.

SOL: There'll be a knock on the door.

JOE: Like those "shithole" countries.

SOL: With shithole Dictators.

JOE: And all I wanted to do was write poetry.

SOL: Good luck with that.

JOE: And become moderately famous.

SOL: Of course.

JOE: Looked up to and respected. Highly thought of.

SOL: I'm a would-be scientist. We'd be in it for the money, basically.

JOE: Oh, come on.

SOL: Status, maybe.

JOE: Status.

SOL: And there's a little idealism there. New thoughts, discoveries. The nature of matter, of gravity. And so on.

JOE: Einstein.

SOL: He was a believer, you know.

JOE: Yes, but he got out quick.

SOL: Of what?

JOE: Religion.

SOL: I don't know what to think. I'm too old to fight.

JOE: What's the count, by the way?

SOL: Fuck the count.

JOE: What's the count, Sol?

SOL: Twenty-seven.

JOE: Thank you.

SOL: Dinner.

JOE: Right.

MIKE: You see it all the time in the movies. You see it on television. You see it in plays.

RODGER: See what? Say again?

MIKE: That what's happening is not what's happening, but a stand-in for something else. Like in a dream. But it's real. You can step right into it.

RODGER: But I don't see Life as a dream right now. Not now.

CHRISTEN: Why not?

RODGER: I can make the mental move toward Reality. But I suppose dreams are also useful.

CHRISTEN: You're always like that -- dreaming.

RODGER: Not always. Sometimes I know what I'm doing. It all seems the same to me. You get up and do what you have to do, and that's that.

CHRISTEN: Eat, shit, and die.

MIKE: Right. They're rounding people up in the streets now. In unmarked uniforms, like the Brownshirts.

CHRISTEN: Right. You said that. We ought to sneak it into the play we're doing..

MIKE: I think we should.

CHRISTEN: Write something, Rodger.

RODGER: Me?

DON: It's something of the utmost importance. So you think ahead, you look forward, you're mindful of the situation. You take care, you consider.

MARGIE: But it's not like making a catalogue, either. Or an album. Or a diary. I was going to say, "You listen, you pay attention." So what are you going to do? You do what you do. And then you look back and you say, "Why the fuck did I do that? And *that* way? What was I thinking?"

DON: Yeah. Fear, Marge. Fear.

SOL: The count. All we worry about is the count.

JOE: Why worry? The count is the Count. *(CASEY comes back from the bathroom.)* Reminds me. I go to a memorial the other day.

SOL: And?

JOE: I see an old friend of mine, and, in my joy, I spilled coffee on her.

SOL: And?

JOE: She's standing with a famous actor, an actor, a comedian, he gives me a hundred bucks.

SOL: Why?

JOE: I don't know why. *(Pause)*

SOL: You kept it?

DON: The worst thing is anticipating the worst. The sense of dread. You're setting yourself up for the inevitable future disaster.

MARGIE: You play your role. You learn your part. No, you choose your part, and you learn your lines, and you play the part, and so on. What I mean is, you've read the script, and now you have to play it out.

CASEY: I don't know about the choice there. Is there a choice? I bailed. Basically, I bailed. I thought I was making a decision, but one day I found myself on the outside looking in, and the door never opened again. So I moved on -- heroically. No, actually, I was struck through the heart. Speared. It was like being killed.

DON: I know this fellow – he believes in Free Will. He says God leaves it up to us. Somehow this doesn't jibe with the Holocaust.

CASEY: Is that what's bothering you?

DON: No.

CASEY: What's bothering you?

DON: He's too far away to do anything, tantamount to not being there. Not your friend, God himself.

CASEY: Is that how you see it?

DON: That's how I see it. Take note: they searched the skies and found a hole, a Black Hole. They have a picture now of something like Reality, where the Gravity is so intense everything vanishes into it. Even light.

SOL: What about the family?

JOE: They're all Gentiles.

SOL: How did that happen?

JOE: I'm not sure, really. I was always attracted. The wind blows the sand around. And you?

SOL: What?

JOE: Family?

SOL: I don't know what to do. I have to think about it. Do you hide? Do you run? Do you run and hide?

RODGER: Talking about plays, it's not what you think. It's not like Bad Day In L.A.

MIKE: It's not like that at all. They bad-mouth you. It's like a bad day in L.A. for real.

RODGER: Yeah, and cheap, cheap with the dough, with the claudits.

CHRISTEN: The claudits?

RODGER: Yeah, you know, like on the internet, like in the texts.

CHRISTEN: What texts?

RODGER: Any texts.

CHRISTEN: Come on!

RODGER: Okay, forget that, the emails and the documents People are saying what the fuck, friends of yours. You think they care about you, that they give a fuck, otherwise the money?

MIKE: The money?

CHRISTEN: No.

MIKE: Well, there you go, big shot.

MARGIE: People have things on their minds. Living their lives.

DON: Yeah. Yeah, like he thinks he's something. Big Ego. Acts tough, or needy. Depending.

MARGIE: Don?

DON: On the situation, the requirements.

CASEY: Like what?

DON: Like I don't give a shit what.

CASEY: Okay.

SOL: I feel like we're back in the 20th Century.

JOE: We are far as I'm concened.

SOL: But I'm sad to hear all that.

JOE: Yeah, wake up finally why don't you.

MARGIE: I'm glad, because I can be myself, by myself.

CASEY: You need others. You can't be without others. It's a problem for you.

MARGIE: It's a problem. I'm trying to see it. I'm trying to be nice.

CASEY: No way, Pal. It's not like that, and it's late in the day.

MARGIE: It is. Late.

RODGER: And the Earth has moved it's axis. Or haven't you heard. So I'd get around to it one day, though I really don't know there's much to do, to actually do.

CHRISTEN: What is love then?

MIKE: Round and round, nothing personal involved, I can tell you that.

CHRISTEN: Thank you Mike.

RODGER: You want to think of forces, big forces. *(Pause)* Now I'm silent. I have nothing more to say. But I thought you should know. What's what. And stop with the dreaming.

MIKE: Yeah. It's like *Persona*, you know, you look in a mirror and it's not you.

RODGER: The false impression you have.

CHRISTEN: I see that.

MIKE: No, you don't.

CHRISTEN: I feel it.

RODGER: Yeah, well, Mike is right. It's true, I look in the mirror and it's not me.

MARGIE: They know nothing.

DON: We're here now, and then, soon, we vanish.

MARGIE: So, immortality is our chief concern, as we were saying earlier.

CASEY: What must that be, but a fine vibration? So fine as to be invisible?

DON: That, too, can be swallowed by the Hole. No matter how fine, no matter how visible or not, it is the absolute vanishing point. As you can see on the Kabbalah Tree of Life, above the Highest is Nothing, below the Lowest is Nothing. Rabbis have been twisting their heads over that one.

MARGIE: You associate the Black Hole with Nothing?

DON: I do. This gives me no cheer.

MARGIE: But it is not Nothing. It is Gravity. Where there is ostensibly no Time, or time going backwards. And yet I can touch the Present from time to time. What is that?

DON: The Present has two ends: both nothing. Here, now, gone. The Present is the vibration of nothing. Not quite what it's cracked up to be.

JOE: Three times I was almost murdered. One with a large knife on E. 4th street. Once in Santa Fe. Once by a big Junkie with a large door key. Once an O.D.

SOL: Who wants to hear about it?

JOE: Not me. Just remembering. Stupid, really.

SOL: Welcome to America.

JOE: Land of the Free.

SOL: A plutocracy is what it is, Joe.

MARGIE: So what do we serve? What's the point?

DON: God sees himself through Man. Or knows Himself through Man.

CASEY: To that extent, we ARE God. And what is the Black Hole?

MARGIE: Where everything goes when it goes?

DON: Gravity. A fundamental Law. A force.

CASEY: But we don't know what it is, really.

MARGIE: It's the affect of mass. Bodies. I was thinking of Love, actually. I was thinking of Love. That's what they say, that's what they all say.

CASEY: Who says? What do they say?

MARGIE: The People.

CASEY: How did the Black Hole become Love?

MARGIE: I was talking sex, but I think I meant *love*. I'm not sure. *Love*. *Love* in the Universe. Can you fathom that? I can't mention names, but that's what I was

talking about, an expression of *Love*, a vibe, we could both feel it. And the others too, all the others, the touches and feelings and thoughts – all *Love*.

MIKE: Don't try to change anything, Rodger. It's perfectly alright.

RODGER: So I can't contribute?

MIKE: Go ahead. Write.

CHRISTEN: It's all about the drugs, isn't it?

RODGER: Is it?

CHRISTEN: Like the steroids, and God knows what else. That's why you tremble. That's why you paralyze.

RODGER: I don't know about that. My brain freezes up and I'm in emotional pain. And nobody gives a shit. That's what gets me. Nobody gives a shit. It's not that you don't know. You know, you just don't give a rat's ass. And that's what hurts me, and paralyzes me, freezes me.

MIKE: You're depressed.

RODGER: I'm not depressed.

CHRISTEN: We all have our own problems, you know.

RODGER: Yeah, yeah.

MIKE: Try to write something. An insert.

RODGER: Its like the cards I have -- are the cards I have. They are not symbolic of an inner life or coincidence with an inner anything. They're my real cards.

CHRISTEN: Who could follow that?

RODGER: Just one more thing.

CHRISTEN: What's that?

RODGER: They were digging up the bones. Right?

MIKE: So what?

RODGER: So I can't buy any of that. I can't buy it. Like my own bones, arthritic bones in my knees, in my back --

MIKE: In your brain.

RODGER: Not in my brain. In my body, when we kissed --

CHRISTEN: We didn't kiss, we touched lips.

RODGER: -- The bones. Listen: "Even when I was standing near Her, and we felt the vibe, my bones hurt, I was aware of my bones, and the thoughts came of the vanishing bones of the dead, though they dig 'em up and we make History out of it." That's it and that's all, so where's the *love*, where's the fucking *Love*? I'm asking you.

JOE: The only way out is UP.

SOL: Great. A Jewish spaceship. We'll colonize Mars.

JOE: If they don't have Anti-Semites there already.

SOL: What's that?

JOE: If they don't have Anti-Semites there already. Hidden under the rocks. Envy and greed, buried on Mars. Under the rocks on Mars.

SOL: Get serious.

JOE: Under the sand. Blown by the Solar wind.

SOL: Stop now.

CHRISTEN: You've always been not normal, Rodger.

RODGER: Okay. You've said that. Thank you.

CHRISTEN: In the sense that you're not functioning with a complete Ego. You've said so yourself.

RODGER: Did I?

CHRISTEN: Yeah.

RODGER: I don't even know what that means.

CHRISTEN: No Ego and low Self-esteem.

RODGER: No. I said *big* Ego and low Self-esteem.

CHRISTEN: Nothing about the Brownshirts.

MARGIE: I can't remember my dream.

DON: What dream?

MARGIE: And then there was a knock on the door. Loud and crisp. Knock, knock, knock. Definite, loud. I woke up from a nightmare, and then the *knock*. It's very frustrating, because I can't remember the nightmare, and it woke me up. It woke me up and then the *knock*. It sounded absolutely real. So I sit up and and I say, *oh shit*, it's a fucking knock on the door and it's three o'clock in the morning, it's some fucking Mexican teenager, or some bum, or a *Chabad* mafioso, so I turn on the lamp, *oh shit I hope nobody's out there*, but I put on my robe and I sneak to where I can take a look where nobody can see me, and there's nobody there. A part of me is expecting to see a hulk out there waiting to kill me, but it was not to be. This has happened to me before, when I was almost murdered, years ago, by a latino on PCB or whatever it is, dust that hallucinates you, in L.A., while I was watching the Sparks on TV, and I fought him off -- but there was nobody there last night and I saw myself creeping around as though there was. It seems like a dream now, like an extended nightmare, as I crawl back in bed. I hope I can sleep now. But that's not all. It's like I was watching the entire episode, detached, as if it was two of us there. Watching. And I wonder.

CASEY: What? It's not obvious.

MARGIE: I wonder what happened to my dream, and I wonder about death, what happens when we die.

MIKE: Those were the cards you were dealt. You see the contradiction there? It would make anybody shake.

RODGER: You stay out of this, you.

MIKE: (*Gesturing*) Full house. Aces and Kings.

CHRISTEN: What did that mean?

MIKE: You missed it, Christen. We played the hand.

RODGER: There's no point to any of that. None. It's some sort of pretend meaning. Which is the real reason. Because I don't believe in all that bullshit, existential or otherwise, religious or otherwise, political or otherwise.

MIKE: What do you believe in?

RODGER: Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

CASEY: And the bones. Scientists picking at our teeth. Tossing our skulls around. I mean, I'm looking at my body right now and I hear my heartbeat, and I snort and I have to take a leak, I'm a complete slave to these biological processes.

MARGIE: That makes sense. I can understand that. We women have our periods and the blood washes through us like we are mere instruments of nature, vessels for the rushing of blood and liquids and God knows what else. We're being flushed. We have no choice in the matter.

RODGER: So what did this guy mean, your friend, about freedom of choice?

CHRISTEN: I don't know. He thinks God created the Universe.

MIKE: Okay.

RODGER: No one had told me about the death of his mother. So I was acting normally. Then I realized. It was like walking through a glass door. It happens. I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know what it was. Affects trust in the company.

CHRISTEN: So, what are you saying?

RODGER: I don't trust anybody no more.

CHRISTEN: I don't know if any of it was intentional.

RODGER: Even more telling. Talk about being on the outside looking in.

CHRISTEN: You didn't know the woman.

RODGER: No. Because everyone was looking at me like I was a stranger. Some people didn't even talk to me. Hundreds of meetings, rehearsals, I've had with you, being sincere and intelligent. Working hard. And then I walk smack into the door.

CHRISTEN: So what are you saying?

RODGER: I don't know. Whacked.

SOL: The Philsophers don't tip very well. Go figure.

JOE: And you? You're a waiter, and you yell at waiters.

SOL: I don't know why I do that.

JOE: You want to see things done right, that's all. Look. They're getting ready to leave.

SOL: By the way. Make sure you have money and I.D. At all times.

JOE: Absolutely right.

SOL: At all times.

JOE: I hear you there.

SOL: And think of a way out. The people who left early, in Europe, their lives were saved.

JOE: Right. Meanwhile, we have to go on living.

SOL: Lemme ask you: Why?

JOE: Why not?

SOL: Indeed. Why not?

RODGER: The American Dream: it's a con.

MIKE: So why do they all want to come here?

RODGER: This is where the money is. For the moment.

CHRISTEN: People have to live.

RODGER: The End is near, my dear.

CHRISTEN: Don't call me, "Dear."

DON: Let's go.

MARGIE Leave a tip.

CASEY: I left a tip.

DON: Let's go.

MARGIE Leave a tip.

CASEY: I left a tip.

MARGIE: It's not enough.

CASEY: It's enough.

DON: In six days of the Bible, or the Big Bang and the subservient, I mean subsequent, tumult. Stars and planets and flying rocks.

MARGIE: A tiny dot of Conscious Will?

DON: God?

CASEY: Something must come all the way down to us. Like the *Logos*.

DON: Right here. Now.

MARGIE: Let's go. *(They start to exit.)*

RODGER: An Ace is an Ace and a King is a King.

MIKE: Right.

CHRISTEN: Why don't you write something? For the play.

RODGER: I don't feel like it anymore. I feel blank. Empty. That's what happens in these stupid meetings.

CHRISTEN: They're not stupid. They're demanding. We need to come up with something. Mike here is trying to come up with the cards thing, the representation idea, so maybe that's a start.

RODGER: I kind of agree with that.

CHRISTEN: Agree with What?

RODGER: This: The thing is representative of itself. It is what it is.

JOE: Love our wives and family. Visit the graves of our ancestors.

SOL: Say a prayer. Recite a *midrash*.

JOE: Put on some music. Try Beethoven.

SOL: Okay. (*Music*)

JOE: Nice.

SOL: Yes.

JOE: Here's a thought: "Life as a manifestation of an energy, the Source of which is Unknown." And Energy cannot die.

SOL: Are you saying, "That is the nature of things, the Reality of which we speak, unknowingly, of Life?"

JOE: What an idiot. I can't talk to you.

SOL: The ghost of Samuel Beckett haunts us, Joe. Because all the questions about the Truth – they're all the same.

CHRISTEN: So tell us please what's bothering you.

RODGER: You didn't tell me about Sandy's mother's death. Why didn't you tell me?

CHRISTEN: I don't know why. I think it was merely accidental.

RODGER: It says so much of how the cast thinks of me. The opposite of what I thought myself, needless to say.

MIKE: Well, don't react.

RODGER: Is that all you can say? I have to react. I'm a person.

CHRISTEN: No one meant anything by it, Rodger.

RODGER: Yes, they did.

(Table #3 at the exit - SOUNDS of a riot outside.)

MARGIE: So, I don't see the point of the whole thing. I think we should raise hell and quit.

CASEY: What do you mean?

MARGIE: What I said. Raise Hell and quit.

DON: Now?

CASEY: Hit the street?

MARGIE: Hit it.

DON: Now?

MARGIE: Now. *(They exit)*

SOL: There goes that party.

JOE: *Zie Gezunt.*

SOL: Small tip.

JOE: Theatre people.

SOL They're up to something.

JOE: The whole world is up to something.

SOL: Rioting in the street.

JOE: A virus in the air. Fungi in the ground. Clouds full of bad fantasies.

SOL: You're out there, Joe. Made of fat, by the way.

JOE: What is?

SOL: The virus.

JOE: Who told you that?

SOL: The television.

JOE: Hate, envy, bloodlust, lies. Oh, what the fuck.

RODGER: I have to say, there's something sinister about the whole thing. There is. Something sinister. It's the sense that History has lost its shoes.

MIKE: Wow.

RODGER: So History is floating an inch above the Earth, like a cloud or like the ocean.

MIKE: What an image!

RODGER: My father used to lie down under the water at Coney Island. He'd pop up and say, "Look, I was in the sky!" We all laughed. He wasn't all wrong, because the ocean met the sky on the horizon.

CHRISTEN: What was your mother doing?

RODGER: My mother was nervous. Pitter-pattered around, worrying about the hard-boiled eggs. Pretzels and Pepsis. I had siblings at the time. I don't know what they were doing. Me, I used to hide under the shade of the Boardwalk. It was so crowded on the beach you

only had room for your body. It was so hot in the city we slept on the fire-escape, or the roof.

MIKE: Nobody was talking about mass murder at the time.

CHRISTEN: No.

ROGER: Not that I remember.

CHRISTEN: No.

MIKE: Nobody talked about the Shoah until the 70s. Out of shame, out of despair and humiliation. I was working at the time. Waiting on tables. Where were you, Rodger?

RODGER: Central Brooklyn. Very few people spoke English. They spoke with shivs and billy-clubs and rocks. You could ride the trolley all the way to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Mainly I hung out in alleys.

SOL: Let's blow this joint and head for France.

JOE: No. Too much anti-Semitism.

SOL: The food is good.

JOE: Definitely.

SOL: Israel.

JOE: No. Too much right-wing. Think of All that has come before us, and of the future, where you've got these lying sonsofbitches, how do we lock them up, for Eternity – Hell, in other words?

(A knocking at the door. CHRISTEN STANDS. It stops, resumes, STOPS, CHRISTEN sits down. The scene below repeats, as though happening for the first time:)

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CHRISTEN: I didn't get that.

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MIKE: Can we get back to the main topic now?

RODGER: Fuck the meeting. Fuck the play. Fuck the break. Fuck the topic.

CHRISTEN: We were having a personal crisis. A Rodger event.

MIKE: And remember, we have a "well" now.

CHRISTEN: Let's throw Her into the well.

MIKE: Throw Her into the well.

RODGER: Who?

CHRISTEN: The woman fetching water.

MIKE: Why?

CHRISTEN: No reason. An exercise.

MIKE: Okay.

CHRISTEN: Rodger?

RODGER: Miming or mentating?

CHRISTEN: The mind. Think it. *(A silence)*

SOL: People will do anything. Just tell them often enough. What is that? Like monkeys. Chimpanzees.

JOE: B.C. On the Roman Border. Salonika.

SOL: Is what?

JOE: Hatred for the *suppliers*, the Army. The Army and the Barbarians.

RODGER: May I intervene?

CHRISTEN: Of course.

MIKE: Why throw this woman into the well?

CHRISTEN: I don't know why. It's one of my Christens, shouting in the sky.

RODGER: May I?

MIKE: Go.

RODGER: There's no representation for what I'm trying to say. I was a boy, then. Now, you got to get ready and come clean. But I feel a barrier in my chest, reminds me of a subway platform and a train zooming into the platform.

MIKE: Wow.

RODGER: My father never knew how to ask for help, even though he needed it, badly. He was a lot like I am now.

CHRISTEN: Ask for help and you might get it.

RODGER: Help!

CHRISTEN: Here comes the train. Get on the train.

RODGER: No, but I have a question.

MIKE: It's the wrong train.

RODGER: About manifestation. Let's say you proclaim a thought. But there's a gap there, between the thought and the impulse?

CHRISTEN: Yes?

RODGER: What's in the gap?

CHRISTEN: Nothing 's in the gap.

RODGER: You see, it takes a second for the electrons to move. There's a gap there, so there's time for change, there's time for movement. You're not even the same person anymore.

MIKE: But there's all kinds of organic stuff going on. The heart beats. The pulse. The liver. The guts.

RODGER: But where am I?

MIKE: Oh, the hell with it.

RODGER: Yeah.

CHRISTEN: Shut up, Mike!

MIKE: The gap has no meaning.

RODGER: Who says? You could say the Gap has the only meaning, that between the impulse and the manifestation -- What do you call that, the Gap before the manifestation? You can call it God, you could call it the Devil. You could call it Nothing. And you can't get it back. You're there, you can't go back. And you threw Her into the water. And you can't go back.

CHRISTEN: Wait a minute.

MIKE: *We* threw her into the water.

RODGER: No, Sir. No way.

MIKE: Into the well. Who was she?

CHRISTEN: We'll call her *Naomi*.

MIKE: She was fetching water in the desert.

CHRISTEN: We threw her into the well. And what is her nature now? And what was it then? *Naomi's*? And what will it be?

CHRISTEN: We may never know.

RODGER: There'll be another train coming, and I'd get on it, if I were you.

MIKE: She'll be gone by now, across the underground river and into the sea.

RODGER: *Ce'st La*.

CHRISTEN: What does that mean?

RODGER: A *cesura*. The end of a thought. A pause.

MIKE: In the movies, she'd re-appear again, like a wet ghost.

RODGER: What's to be done when everything 's too late? It's written and done. Last page. Last dime.

MIKE: The World is not permanent, either.

CHRISTEN: Who asked you?

MIKE: The Earth is not permanent.

RODGER: Witches with premonitions and loaded dice. Never tell a woman she looks tired. Seaweed drifting off her like hair.

CHRISTEN: This is a poem, really. Do you expect it to play?

RODGER: I expect it to play.

CHRISTEN: Like a roll of the dice.

.RODGER: Mallarme.

MIKE: I didn't follow that.

RODGER: It's Fate. That which has already happened, but not yet formed into form. It's a roll of the dice.

MIKE: That fellow asks interesting questions. By what momentum does the storm blow? Is it an accident?

RODGER: Maybe so.

MIKE: Meanwhile we blow the air around. Onstage. Ha.

RODGER: Do we make a soul by falling down?

CHRISTEN: No. By falling, and struggling up again.

RODGER: Agreed.

CHRISTEN: No one wants to die. No one knows what it means. We threw her from the edge and she fell a long way. She'd be gone before she hit the water.

RODGER: You threw her down the well and she drowned.
(Silence.)

MIKE: Can you hear? *(Pause)*

RODGER: Nothing.

CHRISTEN: A body hitting water,

RODGER: There is a well here, right in the center.

MIKE: It is a deep well, made of mortar and rocks and who knows what. The walls are four feet high above ground. Color: Gray. A bucket and a rope. We've all seen these wells, in paintings, in the movies, in the Bible. The desert well. The Ancient well.

RODGER: We haven't pushed her over yet.

CHRISTEN: No!

RODGER: I don't think so.

MIKE: Let's try again.

RODGER: When I was a boy I could sense what was going to happen: endless, deepening suffering for which there was no cure. This is the same with this imaginary "Well" into which Naomi has yet to be pushed.

MIKE: I'm not following this.

CHRISTEN: You never follow anything. You're like a donkey on a loop.

MIKE: What was that supposed to mean?

CHRISTEN: We're talking about the inexpressible *Now*. That which cannot be said.

RODGER: Wittgenstein.

CHRISTEN: Right.

RODGER: She leans over the wet wall and falls. She slips and falls. She loses her grip, first over the rope, and then the bucket. She falls. No sound.

WOMAN'S VOICE: (*Off*) I'm falling! Help!

RODGER: **SOUND** of her body hitting the water.

CHRISTEN: This is how the world ends. First with air and then with water. Gravity pulled her all the way down. She watched the stone walls go by without much interest.

RODGER: **Sound** of her body hitting the water. (**Splash**)

MIKE: At the bottom of the well.

CHRISTEN: She has a thought and it's immediately gone.

WOMAN'S VOICE: (Off) Help!

CHRISTEN: *Silence.*

RODGER: It's sand now. It's a desert. Fire grows in the cracks. Not life, *Fire* growing in the cracks. The Earth is as hot as the Sun. The Earth is a satellite of the Sun.

SOL: They had a shmuck for President and he lost the air and the water. That's one way to look at it.

RODGER: Right. (A **knocking** at the door. Everyone freezes. CHRISTEN stands.)

CHRISTEN: God, I wish he'd stop saying that. (*Sits*)

RODGER: He could not Reason and the water evaporated and the atmosphere became carbon dioxide. Oxygen had already burned up the surface of the planet. That was pretty much it. We died where we were, gasping for breath. (*Another knocking at the door, CHRISTEN stands. Pause. CHRISTEN Sits down, another knocking, LOUD, CHRISTEN stands, another knocking, insistent. SOL stands up. Another knocking, even LOUDER. CHRISTEN cries uncontrollably.*)

THE END

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