

Whatever Happened to Julie Christie?

A Play

By

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CHARACTERS:

JETHRO: Retiring Academic; 70s; Chairman of Sociology Dept. Memory and logic of associations lately becoming frayed. Uses a walking stick to get around.

TYRONE: Jethro's colleague and friend, not much younger; a Socialist Poet/intellectual.

AMANDA: Tyrone's sexy 21-year-old daughter.

BETSY: Jethro's good-looking, androgynous, smart assistant; 35.

CONSTANZA: Handsome, dark, Greek woman; in her late 20s.

BRAD: Rich young American man who made his money in Social Media apps. A digital wizard.

TRENT: Played by the same actor as BRAD, but with a wig, etc. An evangelical Christian youth.

LADY IN WHEELCHAIR: (LADY) Heavy-set, dark, older looking, over-bearing.

THE SET: Brightly lit, shiny floor, with several chairs.

Speeches in *italics* are delivered Out, to the audience. Avoid entrances or exits. Scene breaks are indicated by asterisks.

Lights up and everyone is there, in place.

TYRONE: What's going on, Jethro?

JETHRO: I had a bad dream last night. It was ominous and scary. You may remember, back in the day, there was a clutch of fat women in wheelchairs who were selling dope on the corner, near the old Department. There was a little parking lot there where they hung out and sold drugs and the cops let them be for a while. You remember that?

TYRONE: Yes.

JETHRO: It was heroin, Tyrone. Mainly. You'd see them rolling in from all directions, and they had a loyal following -- dope fiends and the handicapped and the mentally retarded. Finally, I had to get the city involved. Those crippled women were ruining the neighborhood. We couldn't have it. A flotilla of fat women in wheelchairs selling dope.

TYRONE: I had a dream myself, Jethro. Not much, really. I was on another planet, staring down into a ditch. I was way up there. Down below was a man, a creature, staring back up at me. He had no face, but it was very expressive, very sad, staring up at me. The creature was all black and furry, with big white dots on him everywhere, and he was standing next to a perfectly wood-paneled ditch. *(Pause)* I don't sleep much anymore. It's like I want to get moving into the day.

JETHRO: Well, we've work to do, and time is running out. This is a task that will get you out there, Tyrone, break the solitude, and ease the embarrassed loneliness you suffer, daily.

TYRONE: Don't tell me things, Jethro.

JETHRO: Someone with your background and size and shape. I don't know why I'm laughing. I know it's painful at times. I know the feelings -- failure and isolation. Hurtling toward oblivion. We need the data: Is it as bad as we think? Where are we headed?

TYRONE: We're headed for a breakdown, Jethro if history is a guide. Or, personally, a confinement somewhere hostile to our interests. I guess it will be good to have the data.

JETHRO: The first person I had in mind for you to interview is a young woman with whom I am acquainted.

TYRONE: What's her name?

JETHRO: Her name is Constanza. A student of mine, Constanza Toomey.

TYRONE: I will speak with her.

JETHRO: Good.

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CONSTANZA: Are you following me?

TYRONE: Yes.

CONSTANZA: What for?

TYRONE: I'll tell you.

CONSTANZA: Tell.

TYRONE: We're making a study.

CONSTANZA: Who is "We?"

TYRONE: It's a University Seminar. Dr. Jethro.

CONSTANZA: You're lying.

TYRONE: No, I'm not.

CONSTANZA: I can tell by listening to you.

TYRONE: Involution. The declining of faculties.

CONSTANZA: Whose?

TYRONE: Ours. The Species.

CONSTANZA: Mass murder abounds.

TYRONE: Yes.

CONSTANZA: Could happen anywhere, anytime.

TYRONE: True.

CONSTANZA: For example, I hate men. No telling what I might do. Sometimes I think I have a tail. You expect to figure that one out?

TYRONE: No.

CONSTANZA: Next one who bothers me, I'll cut his head off. No, I'll cut his prick off.

TYRONE: I'm an Associate in the Social Studies Department.

CONSTANZA: Why me?

TYRONE: You were highly recommended.

CONSTANZA: Oh. What for?

TYRONE: Data.

CONSTANZA: Such as?

TYRONE: What kind of music do you like?

CONSTANZA: Jazz.

TYRONE: John Coltrane.

CONSTANZA: Yes. You might say in your report that some people are born happy, and then they stay happy for the rest of their lives.

TYRONE: How so?

CONSTANZA: For no known reason.

TYRONE: Are you one of those?

CONSTANZA: No. Some people are just happy. I'm a contemporary, hipster type of person. So, I keep a limit on white people. I'm a migrant. It's easy.

TYRONE: What kind of games do you like?

CONSTANZA: I like shooting galleries and cheerleaders. Shooting I like because you can tear a person apart with a gun. Cheerleaders I like because of the way they jump up and down and tumble around and shake their little butts and wag their stupid powdered faces and phony smiles covered with lipstick.

TYRONE: Oh.

CONSTANZA: What you must do now is pay me.

TYRONE: No. No money changes hands. Don't even think about it. You want to participate or not?

CONSTANZA: Not. You have a girlfriend?

TYRONE: No.

CONSTANZA: What's her name?

TYRONE: I'm single. A widower. Her name was Rose. She was a social worker. I have a daughter, Amanda.

CONSTANZA: My Grandmother and two aunts were social workers, here and in Greece. You know what "Auntie" means in Greek? Thea. Divine. In those days it really meant something. They visited people and took care of people. And they were political. On the Left. So am I. I don't care what you think. I want to get that out of the way. Capitalism is bad for Mankind.

TYRONE: I tend to agree with you.

CONSTANZA: And so does the hatred of women and girls. It's all pervasive. It's in the yellow air we breathe. So, soon there'll be a war. Between us and you, between the women and the men.

TYRONE: There'll be no one left on Earth.

CONSTANZA: There'll be a war, on Marxist principles, but organized by gender as well as class. It's on its way. Wait and see.

TYRONE: If you say so.

CONSTANZA: I do. Something tells me you're a Greek, like me.

TYRONE: Yes, Greek. I'm an Associate Professor, not a social worker. And I'm a communist, as well.

CONSTANZA: Good for you.

TYRONE: Too late now.

CONSTANZA: Not to me it isn't.

TYRONE: We missed the mark, historically.

CONSTANZA: I don't think so. People continue to lie and cheat. That's why I'm a Communist revolutionary. For real. White slaves don't matter.

TYRONE: Excuse me?

CONSTANZA: Especially the boys. The girls have some taste at least.

TYRONE: Where's this?

CONSTANZA: Right here.

TYRONE: When?

CONSTANZA: Now.

TYRONE: Sounds awful.

CONSTANZA: Pretty soon I'm going to buy a gun. And a sword. Watch out for fascism – it sneaks in there to protect the fat, rich, industrialist types. They bring in the heavy hitter racists and bankroll them. If I were you, I'd investigate that.

TYRONE: I do investigate it.

CONSTANZA: You don't investigate hard enough. Your good days are over.

TYRONE: Thank you.

CONSTANZA: Take my picture?

TYRONE: No.

CONSTANZA: You don't have a camera?

TYRONE: Not on me.

CONSTANZA: A phone?

TYRONE: Jethro thinks the cell phone is a disease.

CONSTANZA: No video or movie camera?

TYRONE: He doesn't believe in film. He thinks movies are ephemeral. And that they steal souls.

CONSTANZA: And you?

TYRONE: I don't agree on everything with Jethro.

CONSTANZA: What's your name, sir?

TYRONE: Tyrone.

CONSTANZA: What's the connection to the past, Tyrone? The real mimetic past?

TYRONE: I give up.

CONSTANZA: The movies, Tyrone! The movies! (*Pause*) You seem stunned by that.

TYRONE: Which movies?

CONSTANZA: That's it for me, Pal. Move on.

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JETHRO: She's a trip, isn't she, Constanza?

TYRONE: She's dangerous.

JETHRO: There could be a screw loose there.

TYRONE: A fervent communist.

JETHRO: Like you.

TYRONE: More than me. And a moviegoer.

JETHRO: Have you seen a fat Lady in an electrified wheelchair following you around?

TYRONE: No.

JETHRO: You haven't seen her?

TYRONE: No.

JETHRO: We used to have them clustering on the corner here years ago. They were dope dealers. Heavy-set women in wheelchairs selling dope.

TYRONE: Right. You mentioned.

JETHRO: One of them wants revenge.

TYRONE: How do you know?

JETHRO: It's the spirit of the thing. We were talking old age and death. We were talking about money. That's when you have problems. People rope burning tires onto you and throw you into the sea.

TYRONE: Who's that, Jethro?

JETHRO: They were elected by the people.

TYRONE: Okay.

JETHRO: Why we sent you out there, Tyrone, to take the temperature. Listen to the people.

TYRONE: Maybe it's the same as it always was.

JETHRO: Yes. People just plug in to other people's heads and repeat what they hear there.

TYRONE: I'll tell you a great line, a masterful line, by Amos Oz, may he rest in peace. It goes like this, "What is it in me that makes me want to die right now?"

JETHRO: Quite right, Tyrone. You look into their eyes and -- there's nobody in there. It's like they're waiting for Mad Max on the roads, raiding and roaming, hunter gatherers with trucks and motorcycles and armor. Something unforgiveable has happened. And all the medicines and plastics and bad TV, they've had an effect, a cellular effect, in our bodies. The part of the brain that makes moral, purposeful decisions, is no longer there. Constanza -- Connie -- she pointed something out -- the only happiness is in the TV commercials. Everyone is smiling, everyone is having a good time. A heavenly America is in the commercials. So, everything 's A OK. The citizens go on as though the myths of America are all true and operate somewhere in the sky. *(BETSY joins them.)*

BETSY: It's the system, Tyrone, and we're on the verge

TYRONE: I'm aware of that.

BETSY: Time for your meds, Jethro.

JETHRO: Thank you.

BETSY: Jethro takes his meds. There are pills for high blood pressure, cholesterol, anxiety, arthritis in his hip and back, painkillers, and pills he's not sure what they're for. Pills to wake up, pills to go to sleep. He takes them all at once, guiltily, and proudly -- guilty in that he knows he's some kind of junkie, proudly because he's doing

something for his health. But I must remind him, or he'll forget entirely. His attitude is ambiguous. He thinks the profusion of drugs and alcohol and other fixes now define the human condition.

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BETSY: Keeping secrets, Tyrone?

TYRONE: No.

BETSY: There are hidden things.

TYRONE: Definitely.

BETSY: I feel like there's an aura of menace.

TYRONE: Where?

BETSY: Around.

TYRONE: Whom have you met with so far?

BETSY: I met with this guy, Brad

TYRONE: Yes?

BETSY: He lives in the wilderness.

TYRONE: You want to go outside? Sit in the sun? Have a conversation? *(They change seats.)*

BETSY: I'm not that interested in sexual relations. Period.

TYRONE: I know.

BETSY: I want to keep my job with Jethro. So, tell Amanda to stay clear or I'll cut off her lips.

TYRONE: My daughter has a competitive nature. She competes for attention.

BETSY: We will have to do assassinations, sooner or later. Like the Russians know all about this. They have poisons, you only must be in the vicinity and **boom**, you're gone. OR we get some aliens down here finally who can straighten it all out.

TYRONE: Personally, I think it's the wiring. We do what we do because we can't do anything else.

BETSY: That's dark, Tyrone. I pray to my higher powers in the hope of salvation.

TYRONE: Tell me more about Brad.

BETSY: So, I drive out to meet this guy. Brad. He roams around wilderness areas and wants a companion. He's got a lot of money. He was formerly a digital tech person, whatever that is. It's too soon to know his thinking, if indeed he has any. Strikes me as a numbers guy. They pop up an algo rhythm and make a billion bucks.

TYRONE: Capitalism triumphs.

BETSY: I'll kill them all.

TYRONE: Take it easy.

BETSY: I don't know why I said that.

TYRONE: Anything more about Brad?

BETSY: He hasn't suffered enough. The mistakes and the disasters and the inevitable desperate endings. This is what happened. Observe:

BRAD: You must be Dr. Jones?

BETSY: No, I'm not.

BRAD: How'd you find me?

BETSY: I have higher powers.

BRAD: No, I made myself available.

BETSY: Tad, the all-American boy.

BRAD: No. Brad.

BETSY: Hello, Brad.

BRAD: If you're not Dr. Jones, then who are you?

BETSY: Who is Dr. Jones?

BRAD: He's modeled on an old Bill Burroughs character from an earlier generation. He, Burroughs, wrote a book called, "Junkie."

BETSY: Cool. Now he's a therapist?

BRAD: Not Burroughs, Dr. Jones.

BETSY: Got it. Dr. Jones. Let's get to work. You want to talk about junk, or sex?

BRAD: If you're not him, where is he?

BETSY: He's dead now, unfortunately.

BRAD: Oh.

BETSY: Actually, he's a character in a book.

BRAD: Oh. I thought he was a real person.

BETSY: Where have you been, Indonesia?

BRAD: No. Why Indonesia?

BETSY: What do you want with Dr. Jones, who is not here and of whom I am not?

BRAD: Sex therapy.

BETSY: I am not a therapist. And I don't like sex.

BRAD: What are you?

BETSY: A social scientist.

BRAD: A socialist?

BETSY: No. Are you always this stupid?

BRAD: I do think about sex all the time.

BETSY: Why don't you go get some?

BRAD: I live alone in wilderness areas.

BETSY: I'm a pagan myself.

BRAD: Oh?

BETSY: I believe in the stars.

BRAD: Nice. Come live with me, I'm rich, and I think you're cute.

BETSY: Forget it. I am a serious-minded person in need of social contact and intellectual stimulation.

BRAD: I too contemplate the stars. I seek wisdom. But for you, I'll change my solitary ways.

BETSY: What do you do, fantasize, and jerk off?

BRAD: You are not Dr. Jones, so I'm not telling you.

BETSY: Listen to this: "Dear Julie. And so, when I began to put myself together, so to speak, created my Platform, wired up my Data, and plugged in, my existence, my identity, was tuned to you, Julie. You were my model, my paradigm."

BRAD: Who is Julie?

BETSY: Julie Christie. An actress. Try this: *Betsy goes into Jethro's office and sits down at his computer like she owns it. He follows, sighs with resignation, and sits across from her on the couch. He likes the office a certain way, so he knows where to find things. She ignores him and puts things anywhere. He can see her slim, little feet under the desk and stares at them for a moment, pretending objective interest to deflect her thinking that he wants to get into her pants. He's not always horny, but when she has a certain wistful look in her eye his sexual apparatus is suddenly activated, which stimulates his imagination. Her skin is smooth and white and silky and freckled. She could be the Princess of Norway. Full sensuous mouth that would make any old man think of magical blowjobs. Pink tongue. She beckons him over to look at one of her computer accomplishments and he bends over behind her so that his cheek brushes hers, so soft and downy and inviting.*

(A **SIREN** wails.)

"Reproduction," he thinks, a moment later, "on the Planet Earth."

BRAD: That was disgusting:

BETSY: You didn't hear it all.

BRAD: Where 'd you get all that?

BETSY: There are thought tapes. I just plug in.

BRAD: To what?

BETSY: An outlet.

BRAD: Where are the outlets?

BETSY: In the atmosphere.

BRAD: What was the siren?

BETSY: That was the Thought Police.

BRAD: I see.

BETSY: I could blow on you and you'd vaporize.

BRAD: Go ahead.

BETSY: I'll save my breath.

BRAD: And the aliens?

BETSY: Don't condescend. I could turn you into a wisp. They must come down special ladders, you know, and save us from ourselves and each other.

BRAD: Special ladders?

BETSY: Special ladders.

BRAD: What are the ladders made of?

BETSY: Light.

BRAD: I see.

BETSY: No, you don't.

BRAD: I'm just saying – we'd want to be available. The best chance of that happening is in the woods, or on a mountain, or on the ocean.

BETSY: The ocean is not the ocean anymore. It's a plastic garbage dump.

BRAD: If they're coming at all. I mean, the aliens.

BETSY: You don't believe me?

BRAD: No.

BETSY: Well, you don't know. You may never know.

BRAD: What do they look like?

BETSY: What do you think? They're Spiritual Beings. Maybe you can't see them at all. They vibrate.

BRAD: They vibrate?

BETSY: They vibrate. FAST. And they're blue.

BRAD: Blue?

BETSY: Blue. You know who Plato was?

BRAD: Plato?

BETSY: Plato.

BRAD: No.

BETSY: Plato was a Greek philosopher. A forbear.

BRAD: Never heard of him.

BETSY: I want to be ready when they come. Not the Greeks, the Aliens.

BRAD: I think the best thing is to stay out of the cities. I need a companion. I have a lot of money and no one to play with. You won't have to worry for the rest of your life.

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BETSY: And then I'd about had it, Tyrone, I said goodbye, Pal, have a nice life. And then I ran into another guy who resembled him hanging around on the campus. His name was Trent:

BETSY: Do you stalk?

TRENT: Stalk?

BETSY: You know, **stalk**.

TRENT: No.

BETSY: I'm afraid you're a stalker.

TRENT: I'm not.

BETSY: I had a stalker. I told him I was through, and he wouldn't take No for an answer. He 'd turn up in the oddest places. Across the street. Behind the aisles in the supermarket. Texts on the phone.

TRENT: Wasn't me.

BETSY: It was someone who looked a lot like you. I tried to get a court order, but the police always showed up two hours late.

TRENT: What was his name?

BETSY: Tad, or Todd. I told him I wouldn't fuck him, and he got weird. I don't fuck anybody.

TRENT: Too bad.

BETSY: What kind of person are you anyway, Trent?

TRENT: Normal. If you think the world is going to hell, why don't you do something about it, instead of asking people questions?

BETSY: I'm a social worker. I help people.

TRENT: There's no such thing as a social worker.

BETSY: What about all those fires? The ocean is on fire. I hope it wasn't you that started all those fires.

TRENT: I don't start fires.

BETSY: My survey question is this: Do you think we have like a new species?

TRENT: Possibly.

BETSY: Say more.

TRENT: I think it's like being in a new species. Crawling around the earth in search of meaning.

BETSY: I'm hoping for an intervention from above, myself.

BRAD: Stargazers. We lie all the time. This and that and let the Devil take the hindmost.

BETSY: I just made a long and dirty speech.

TRENT: For no apparent reason.

BETSY: Wrong, I was a mere vehicle for voices from above. Let's move on, Puritan. What do you do with your time?

TRENT: I travel around from place to place in search of meaning, in search of solace. Now I need a wife.

BETSY: Not me, Pal. I have a job to do.

TRENT: Who do you work for?

BETSY: Dr. Jethro is the head of the department. Jethro is a good guy. And he's an intelligent old hipster. But he's gradually losing his marbles and he can be dominated. He's starting to see things that aren't there. Soon he'll need refuge.

TRENT: You should come with me. We'll go places and meet new people.

BETSY: I don't want to have anything to do with it. *(He makes a grab for her.)* Don't touch me!

TRENT: You have beautiful eyes.

BETSY: Don't touch me. Don't call me. Don't text me. Don't stalk me. You do and I'll break both your arms. You got that?

TRENT: Yes. I do,

BETSY: Good. Say Goodbye.

TRENT: Goodbye.

BETSY: The survey is all a game to save Jethro from an Alzheimer's home. Or to put him into one and leave him there and forget about him. He can't figure out whether it's to save him or abandon him to the horrors of nothingness or, more than likely, the mere exercise of Ego and power on the part of his employees. In addition, he thinks, or he imagines a mad old woman in a mechanized wheelchair plotting and scheming to take away his rights. She seems vaguely familiar, a lot like one of his ex-girlfriends. He sees her occasionally racing up and down the garden paths of his L.A. condominium, an official briefcase in her lap, but he can't for the life of him remember her name, so he thinks he's dreaming. And maybe he is.

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BETSY: You see the situation with this dufus -- Brad?

JETHRO: I think I do, yes.

BETSY: And Trent? They keep on texting me. And I've asked them not to. So, I'm going to call it quits. I'm going to put them both out of their misery.

JETHRO: That's entirely up to you.

BETSY: Brad thinks the next world will be virtual, and the people will be robots. Or holograms. He thinks people won't have bodies. They'll just think their way around.

JETHRO: What about your aliens?

BETSY: They'll have bodies. Blue. Hard to see in the sky on a good day.

JETHRO: I think of it as more of a moral/ethical question. Which means real people living bodily lives.

BETSY: I know. But you see what's going on there? It's indifference and selfishness and who cares. It's the common attitude. You can't find a stand-up man anywhere. I can't. It's a desert out there.

JETHRO: I understand.

BETSY: No, you don't. You don't believe me.

JETHRO: People do fall in love. It's a real phenomenon. Probably a genetic adaptation connected to –

BETSY: The survival of the species.

JETHRO: Right.

BETSY: There's a whole new kind of male person out there, I can tell you that, Jethro, based on the interviews.

JETHRO: Give me more of an example.

BETSY: The Army, the Air Force. Space people. Techies. The men who can tell you what's happening, but who won't say anything interesting. They play their seduction game with phones and computers and have no time for real romance, so they're a pain in the ass, and I won't fuck any of them. Even if I wanted to, which I don't.

JETHRO: I see.

BETSY: There isn't a good male person out there.

JETHRO: You're too negative, Betsy.

BETSY: There's no Romance.

JETHRO: What about Brad?

BETSY: Brad is a subspecies type of man who wanders around like a lost predator.

JETYRO: Trent?

BWTSY: Trent is the same or worse.

JETHRO: You can't get angry. You can't act superior. Even if you're good-looking, even if you're smart.

BETSY: It's all so Random. I wish the Aliens would come down and take me. Get me out of here. I don't like it here. There's no culture anymore. Only con-men and circus barkers and imbeciles. And techies. They're like robots, programed to take advantage.

JETHRO: Let's talk about Brad.

BETSY: I don't want to talk about Brad. Or Trent.

JETHRO: Forget it, then.

BETSY: Brad. What a name. Brad. It sounds like cold shit.

JETHRO: Brad.

BETSY: He's anti-social, maybe even a sociopath. That's what I think. Hanging out in the woods. A huge drag. A nerd psychopath. Calls himself a Christian. There's your new subspecies, possibly.

JETHRO: Maybe you'll give him another shot, find out about his political opinions.

BETSY: He's a right-wing asshole. No question.

JETHRO: See him one more time. Confirm.

BETSY: Then that's it?

JETHRO: Agreed.

BETSY: I do know one thing.

JETHRO: What's that?

BETSY: He hates dogs.

JETHRO: People who hate dogs are not necessarily right-wing psychopaths.

BETSY: No, but they usually are.

JETHRO: Thank you, Betsy.

BETSY: Why? I didn't give you anything.

JETHRO: They're not up for it, the hard business of Life. Brain confusion. Leaves one in a permanent negative association. Like Betsy. I see no hope for it to change any time soon. "Fuck you if you don't like it." I'm glad to get to say it now, as I've seen the worst of the worst from what's supposed to be the best of the best: The Chosen People. People with a mission. Personally, I have been completely (one could say deliberately) confused about my worth as a human being and the value of intelligence and talent. Revenge holds no way out, though I'd like to find one. Won't work. There's no self-knowledge, no sense of personal responsibility for anything by anyone. Like these girls have been saying. We need people in the streets. The youth. The young women. Armed, maybe. A restoration of justice and equality.

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CONSTANZA: What's wrong with you?

JETHRO: Nothing.

CONSTANZA: Don't blow in my ear, Sir. Don't stand so close.

JETHRO: You know Betsy?

CONSTANZA: Yes.

JETHRO: She believes in aliens.

CONSTANZA: So what?

JETHRO: You have other things in common like Communism. Revolution. Aberrant sex. Good things all.

CONSTANZA: I'm not a Communist. I'm a Social Democrat. She just doesn't like people.

JETHRO: She says there are Saviors from Above. On their way.

CONSTANZA: That's crazy.

JETHRO: Reports had it that you were a crazy person yourself, armed to the teeth.

CONSTANZA: I was gathering data on your boy, Tyrone, who was gathering data on me.

JETHRO: For example. You could be another species, for all I know, sneaked onto this planet after dark. No moon. No stars. Strange objects descending in a blue light....

CONSTANZA: Far as I'm concerned, I came out of my fuckin' mother and father, literally. Fuckin' sperms penetrating eggs. Quite primitive, really.

JETHRO: You curse a lot.

CONSTANZA: I'll tell you what they're thinking right now, the Owners, they're thinking we're crude and rude, and negative and hopeless, and should be shot. And one of these days, they'll open fire. I think we should all get ready to move.

JETHRO: And do what?

CONSTANZA: Organize. Build a fort or something. Print flyers, blow up bridges, fight like we're the Resistance.

JETHRO: The Resistance was a group of Jewish teenagers in Paris, lined up against a wall and machine gunned. The wall splattered with blood....

CONSTANZA: Okay. That's it then. I'll cope.

JETHRO: How do you cope?

CONSTANZA: I count. I count everything. How many times. How many boxes, how many squares, how many spirals. How many triangles. Nature is consistent and uniform. That's why I'm not an old-time Communist. It's pointless because we're rogue.

JETHRO: Rogue?

CONSTANZA: We don't fit in.

JETHRO: That's it for me, for the moment.: I can't seem to find the next question.

CONSTANZA: The sun comes up; the sun goes down. Man stays the idiot he is. Nothing is learned. Just tearing each other's guts out. If not by gun, then by phone.

JETHRO: Thanks, Connie.

CONSTANZA: You're welcome.

JRYHRO: I might want to talk to you again.

CONSTANZA: What for?

JETHRO: More of the same, I fear.

CONSTANZA: I'd come armed if I were you.

JETHRO: I think I will.

CONSTANZA: Bring your mind as well.

JETHRO: It comes with my head.

CONSTANZA: That's not where your mind is. Your mind is in your chest. It's called Heart. Bring your heart. You don't know much, do you? For an old sociologist?

JETHRO: No.

CONSTANZA: And you're going around taking a survey. How the degenerates are degenerating. I think that's awfully ironic. They'll be laughing at that one all the way home.

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TYRONE: Would you lie, Jethro?

JETHRO: Yes. Of course. We live with lies. Mainly it was genocide and a land grab and slavery what made the American economy. They plundered the resources, land, and sea, mountain, and prairie. Sacrificed the natives. Sugar and cotton. Black Man's Labor. Raise the alarm!

TYRONE: No one will hear you, Jethro.

JETHRO: Poisoned water and bad food and snarky air and bombs falling on children.

TYRONE: We're obsolete.

JETHRO: Cynical attitude, Tyrone

TYRONE: Our students think we're dystopian.

JETHRO: We are.

TYRONE: Speak for yourself. They want to put you away in a home. Or jail.

JETHRO: I won't let them.

TYRONE: Make sure you have Power of Attorney.

JETHRO: I do. It's you.

TYRONE: Not me.

JETHRO: Betsy.

TYRONE: They'll find us under a parking lot in a thousand years. Charred bones. That's where they find people like us, prophets and schemers and twisted madmen.

JETHRO: Not you, Tyrone. You're an innocent. You died to yourself years ago. I watched it happen with my own two eyes.

TYRONE: And you?

JETHRO: Someday I'll have to shut up because the mechanism won't work. I can't keep a straight thought, as it is. I think that sucks. And I thought you were a friend of mind. I said "mind". I meant "mine".

TYRONE: Gotcha, Jethro.

JETHRO: So why don't you answer me?

TYRONE: What was the question?

JETHRO: I don't remember now. Amanda will be showing up with a bunch of demands. She's going to want money and presents. She thinks it's all meant for her personal consumption. All the products in all the American stores. Here she is now.

JETHRO: I'm just an old hipster who's lost his way. I guess that was Amanda. Where is she?

TYRONE: She was here a minute ago.

JETHRO: I missed her.

TYRONE: Slippery little waif.

JETHRO: Stand in one place why don't you.

AMANDA: Betsy called me a thief, Jethro, and that's not right!

TYRONE: Amanda?

AMANDA: Hi, dad.

TYRONE: Let's step aside for a second.

AMANDA: You want to hassle me about the future?

TYRONE: No.

AMANDA: I want to work for Jethro as a steppingstone to higher things.

TYRONE: Don't tease him.

AMANDA: I don't.

TYRONE: He's a horny old man.

JETHRO: Are you talking about me? *(They move away.)*

TYRONE: What higher things?

AMANDA: Eventually I'll run a restaurant.

TYRONE: Seriously. I'm not going to be around forever.

AMANDA: Where are you going?

TYRONE: I'm going for a walk.

AMANDA: Stick around, Dad.

TYRONE: I want you to be safe.

JETHRO: Tyrone!

TYRONE: Why are you yelling?

JETHRO: Why? Like Wild Klansmen cavorting on TV.

TYRONE: Excuse me?

AMANDA: He's lost it, dad.

JETHRO: Make a report, Tyrone.

TYRONE: Well, people are thinking all kinds of thoughts, like the Earth is flat and God loves the evangelicals and Jesus will save you, whatever you do, such as burning down prisons, thoughts like that.

JETHRO. Like a conspiracy? Are there meetings, committees, do they publish papers?

TYRONE: We must move on, with more sophisticated data, to another level. Wait. Here comes Brad for his second interview. Let's ask him. Brad?

BRAD: Quantum Theory. You know quantum?

JETHRO: No.

TYRONE: No.

BRAD: The idea is two.

JETHRO: Two?

BRAD: Two versions of the same thing. In different spaces. Or side by side. Could lead to time travel.

JETHRO: We need to pursue a line of thought there.

BRAD: It's just a question of Time.

JETHRO: Ah! Listen to this tape I made for the future beings on Planet Earth.:

BRAD: No.

JETHRO: Don't move. Pay attention:

America: The land of boobies and Anti-Semites. Future Donald Trump Land. A liar, a thief, and a con. The chickens are coming home to roost. What to do? And the contradiction here is how much I still care. What is it all about? Must be natural to the species. We built a slave economy and killed off most of the native population and put the survivors on "reservations." They are there to this day. And the right-wing

white guys are worried about the demographics. Does it mean a war? Could be. People don't reason or empathize, so it's likely, given the low level of the culture. The whites will try and kill off the coloreds. Likely attacks and bombings and massacres. Everybody thinks he's right.

JETHRO: What do you think?

TYRONE: I think that's right.

JETHRO: Brad?

BRAD: The idea is to win. It's all in the numbers, digital and otherwise. But you got to win, you got to get there first. The internet opened all these possibilities.

TYRONE: Do you read?

BRAD: Sure, I read. I read the Book of Nature. That's what I like. I stay out of the cities, anywhere too populated. Now I'm looking for Betsy.

TYRONE: Why?

BRAD: The woman is strange. Something metallic about her, something pure.

TYRONE: So why are you chasing after her?

BRAD: I can take care of her. I have money. We can have a nice time in the wilderness.

TYRONE: She's not that type.

BRAD: She can learn.

TYRONE: Professor Jethro here thinks the species has changed. The human species. He thinks there's a new organ in the human being, maybe, that is processing data.

BRAD: I think he's got a point there.

JETHRO: Yes! It has affected our intelligence and our morality. Somewhere on the planet right now somebody is getting their head chopped off.

BRAD: But the data stream is immense, streaming around the planet, an endless stream of electronics and information and imagery and thoughts and songs and God knows what, rolling around the planet like a ball of yarn. Or a skin.

JETHRO: Exactly right! It's another atmosphere or something, like the wind or the weather. Bands of Data swirling around the Earth.

TYRONE: So, we've developed this organ to deal with it. According to Jethro. A new organ. A secret organ. An unknown organ.

BRAD: What is it?

TYRONE: It's a Data Receptor.

BRAD: I think he's right.

TYRONE: Or a lying acceptor. What do you think?

BRAD: Yes! A cloud of corruption, emanating from the very constitution itself. It's in the machines. That's why I like to stay away from society.

TYRONE: Dr. Jethro doesn't think it's limited to machines. He thinks it's a sensory organ, or a gland, inside us, born into us. Or drummed into us.

BRAD: Where is it?

TYRONE: We don't know. But we do use it to signal to one another through aggression and violence and the misunderstanding of simple things.

BRAD: Do you have one of those new organs?

TYRONE: I probably don't have it. Do you?

BRAD: I probably have it.

TYRONE: And then, there's the phones. What's their main intention, Brad?

BRAD: I don't know.

TYRONE: Take a guess.

BRAD: To make money.

TYRONE: No.

BRAD: What then?

TYRONE: To bury conscience.

BRAD: And Dr. Jethro?

TYRONE: It could go every which way. It's day to day. He sees all kinds of signs and omens and portents. We got three different pre-op programs for Jethro already up.

BRAD: On tape?

TYRONE: Everything is on tape, Brad, even before it happens.

BRAD: That sounds correct to me.

TYRONE: I just made that up, Brad. Ordinarily, I don't talk to people like you.

BRAD: Thanks.

TYRONE: You're a twit.

BRAD: Thanks, again.

TYRONE: Betsy tells me you're a Christian.

BRAD: No. Not me.

TYRONE: Jethro thinks the worst has already happened. Not for the better, for the worst.

BRAD: I can't get into any of that.

TYRONE: It's too much for anyone to think about.

BRAD: How much money you got?

TYRONE: I don't need no money where I'm going. I do agree with Jethro. Old man on crutches, what's he going to do? What's he got to live for? *Me?* I'm thinking I'll take a pass and shoot up or take a walk in the woods.

BRAD: Dr. Jethro?

JETHRO: No joke. There's a species now, they can't go deeper, they can't reason, it's Darwin going backwards. I'll bet he never thought about that.

TYRONE: He thought it was random enough.

JETHRO: No, he was some kind of optimist, taken in by the diversity and the beauty of English life. He wasn't thinking of the American Babbitt as Sinclair Lewis had it. Who remembers Sinclair Lewis anymore? Now it's all virtual reality and commercials. People like Brad here, without a social conscience.

BRAD: I just want to stay away from people.

JETHRO: I don't blame you.

TYRONE: Jethro, do we have enough Data?

JETHRO: I think we do. But we'll continue. We won't stop now. Let's mix it up. Find the oddballs, the straight arrows, when we can, like we're doing, and then we'll graph it up and publish. When the time comes.

BRAD: What about the working class?

TYRONE: They think alike. All the same.

JETHRO: Why we concentrate on the eccentrics and Bohemians, poets, and actors. Artists. Here's the thing: For every person, there's another one, just like him. It's like quantum. Types. Same vibe, two places, two bodies. They may look alike, or not, but they're the same.

BETSY: Truth is, Jethro knows nothing about quantum theory aside from the word, "quantum," and the huge significance of the word in his wobbly mind. It stands for the doubling effect of mediocrity and species decline. The same is true of the theory and practice of Romance. Aside from the occasional fantasy, Jethro's romantic life is over. Tyrone has pointed this out to him many times and, for the most part, Jethro is glad to be rid at last of the species obligation to woo and to bed.

JETHRO: I don't know where I got that quantum idea. I don't believe in it. It could be Plato for all I know.

TYRONE: Plato what?

JETHRO: I'm not sure why I said that.

BRAD: I'd like to see Betsy again.

TYRONE: Sure, but she doesn't want to see you.

JETHRO: You're a special type, Brad, speaking of types. Conscience free. When were you born?

BRAD: 1986.

JETHRO: You go to the movies?

BRAD: Occasionally.

JETHRO: You ever see *DR. SHIVAGO*? It was made before you were born.

BRAD: No.

JETHRO: Julie Christie is in it. In those days, you know, they tried to make movies that had meaning, that had an aim of some kind besides making money – in this case, it was about the Russian Revolution, but it was really a romance, a romance about a fallen woman, Lara, played by Julie Christie. There was something about her that went right into my heart. It wasn't just her beauty – those clear blue eyes, that sensuous mouth – it was her poise, her dignity, her carriage, her walk. Her intelligence. I felt a yearning and a sorrow I haven't felt in years – that a human being such as she could live in this corrupt world with utter, absolute decency.

BRAD: I'm sorry.

JETHRO: No, you're not. See the movie.

TYRONE: I'll get back to work now, Professor.

JETHRO: Good. Onward, Tyrone.

JETHRO: I saw a lot of movies as a kid. I saw every picture coming through. Each reel got smaller and smaller as it rolled from theater to theater and the films got spliced at every single one. And I got a little jaded about the movies, which is true to this day – they hardly corresponded with my actual life. Obviously, as a medium, it never could, frozen in Time as it is. On the other hand, people model their behavior on what they see on screens. It's called mimesis.

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BETSY: Trent?

TRENT: Yes.

BETSY: My name is Betsy.

TRENT: Are you following me?

BETSY: Yes.

TRENT: What for?

BETSY: I want to get to know you.

TRENT: Why?

BETSY: I want to know how you think.

TRENT: Why?

BETSY: It's an assignment.

TRENT: From whom?

BETSY: My teacher. His name is Jethro.

TRENT: Well, goodbye and good luck.

BETSY: I'm not going.

TRENT: I think you should go.

BETSY: No.

TRENT: I'll call the police.

BETSY: Call.

TRENT: Okay, what do you want?

BETSY: Just to talk.

TRENT: Talk.

BETSY: How do you think?

TRENT: I don't think.

BETSY: You don't think?

TRENT: No.

BETSY: What do you do?

TRENT: I react.

BETSY: You react?

TRENT: Yes. I have feelings.

BETSY: Such as?

TRENT: I like people and I hate people.

BETSY: Both?

TRENT: Yeah.

BETSY: How so?

TRENT: I hate people who think they're superior. I like people on my own level.

BETSY: And me?

TRENT: I don't know yet.

BETSY: How do you know when you know?

TRENT: That's a dumb question.

BETSY: Don't answer it.

TRENT: It's a feeling.

BETSY: I like people who are not afraid to lie.

TRENT: I'm not afraid to lie.

BETSY: Tell me more.

TRENT: You'll have to pay me if you want more.

BETSY: No. We have no money. We're a social studies program.

TRENT: Not another word.

BETSY: Come on. I'll make sure you are mentioned by name and get a lot of credit for honesty and sincerity.

TRENT: I'll say one more thing.

BETSY: Great.

TRENT: Free.

BETSY: Shoot.

TRENT: I like people who love themselves and don't try to hide it.

BETSY: Why?

TRENT: I don't know why.

BETSY: You must know a little why.

TRENT: They make me feel safe. And at my level or slightly above.

BETSY: Makes perfect sense.

TRENT: I think so.

BETSY: Anything more to say?

TRENT: They respect my status and care about my income.

BETSY: How do they know your income?

TRENT: I don't know how they know. Or, I know, but I won't say. That is to say – the banks. People know. They look at your standard of living, and they know.

BETSY: Should everyone have the same income?

TRENT: No. That's Communism. Some people are better or smarter than others and should have a higher income.

BETSY: Who are they?

TRENT: People who run the country, and make products, and that's all I'll say.

BETSY: What else, Trent? Remember, you're being recorded for posterity.

TRENT: White people should have more than Black people.

BEYSY: Why?

TRENT: They're still tribal.

BETSY: The Whites or the Blacks?

TRENT: The Blacks. And that's all I'll say. Except the Jews should go back where they came from.

BETSY: Where did they come from?

TRENT: That's it. Nobody knows. They're aliens.

BETSY: They're aliens?

TRENT: They're aliens.

BETSY: Sounds like they're my kind of people. I must have some of that Jewish blood. Why should anyone, like the White people, have more money than you, for example?

TRENT: Because they take care of me and have my interests at heart.

BETSY: Good, Trent. I'll make sure the right people hear about this.

TRENT: I'll tell you one more thing, because you look harmless to me, a harmless female.

BETSY: Tell, Trent.

TRENT: The second coming. It's arriving soon. You can hear the rumblings from the East. We evangelicals are preparing the way. First the Jews must be defeated and scattered, and then the Christ will be here on Earth again. And those of us who are pure will rupture up to Heaven. I mean *rapture*. Up to heaven.

BETSY: You jerk. Trent? I'd like to chop your stupid head off.

TRENT: Try it.

BETSY: Never mind. I'll just think you away in a few minutes. Less energy. By the way?

TRENT: Yeah?

BETSY: You look just like Brad. Is there a reason for that?

TRENT: I don't know no Brad.

BETSY: Look in the mirror sometime. You'll see Brad. If Brad looks in the mirror, he'll see Trent. Weird. You're toast, Trent. Your cue, Tyrone.

TYRONE: *"Marching, Marching 's the thing. We don't have enough of that. We need to be in the streets. Don't break windows or start fires – march. March through the barricades. March for the right to be decent people against all odds. March over the police and the army and the galactic robots. March! What happened to the marchers, the heroes of the Left, the bearers of conscience? Where are they? Where have they gone?"*

CONSTANZA: We have a new class of people. A new primate type: Masters of the universe stuck up the Junk hole.

JETHRO: That's overstating it, Connie.

CONSTANZA: I was never impartial. I was' depressed, but not impartial. My ego is a monster from the deep. Why? Because I felt superior to my parents.

JETHRO: Tyrone?

TYRONE: Yes?

JETHRO: They'll be coming for me, as in the days of old.
It's the Wheelchair Lady. Knocking on the door. Banging on the door. You hear?

TYRONE: No,

JETHRO: Take your wife and kids and flee to the country.

TYRONE: I have no wife and kids. Just Amanda. Amanda is all I have.

JETHRO: Sorry.

CONSTANZA: I did hear of a Lady in a Wheelchair hanging around.

JETHRO: For what?

CONSTANZA: She claims you have done her personal harm.

JETHRO: And?

CONSTANZA: She's out to get you back.

JETHRO: Where did you hear about her?

CONSTANZA: At a meeting.

JETHRO: What kind of meeting?

CONSTANZA: School.

JETHRO: School?

CONSTANZA: School.

JETHRO: Our school?

CONSTANZA: Yes. Last days.

JETHRO: What does she look like?

CONSTANZA: Normal, except for the wheelchair.
She's overweight. Also, I think there's a loose pebble in there. A scruple.

JETHRO: Find out her name. Get her Data. And I'll tell you why. She's been in my dreams lately. Either that, or I've seen her sneaking around. A fat Lady in a wheelchair, stacked with dope and armed to the teeth.
Don't tell me anymore.

TYRONE: You still want to know her name?

JETHRO: No. I know her name. *FATE*. It's just Fate. *Nemesis*. The Greeks knew, so you should know.

CONSTANZA: People don't realize the danger. They don't see what's happening. It'd all be just another event. No one sounds the alarm. All the news is happy/neutral. No change of tone. Never mind. I was just guessing at your thoughts. Boring. Books to read. Tests to take. Bullies to kill. So, bye, bye.

*

AMANDA: What would you say is wrong with you, Jethro?

JETHRO: Someone else asked me that to me, recently.

AMANDA: Who was it?

JETHRO: I think it was your father, Tyrone.

AMANDA: He should know.

JETHRO: He does know.

TYRONE: We all have problems.

AMANDA: What's wrong, Dad?

TYRONE: I feel like an idiot.

AMANDA: You're not an idiot.

TYRONE: I am an idiot.

AMANDA: What happened?

TYRONE: I telephoned your mother. A student of ours, Constanza, knew somebody who knew somebody who had her number. I don't know what came over me. I was delighted. I didn't pause to think it over, and I called:

LADY: Who is this?

TYRONE: Tyrone.

LADY: You're kidding.

TYRONE: No, it's me.

LADY: Fifty years later and you call me?

TYRONE: How are you?

LADY: I can't talk.

TYRONE: Why not?

LADY: I'm a tired old woman and my brother is dying.

TYRONE: Amanda is around here somewhere.

LADY: Hang up. Don't call me. It's absurd. I don't want to hear your voice. Goodbye.

TYRONE: Wait! It's confirmation, or validation, that we were married once in the real world. And have a daughter.

LADY: Give my love.

TYRONE: I will.

LADY: Take a hike, Tyrone. Vanish quietly. *(Pause)*

AMANDA: I'm sorry, Dad.

TYRONE: We went to Oaxaca together for the Party. We went to Mississippi for SNICC. We went to rallies and demonstrations and stood up to the cops and the rednecks and the hard hats. And now? All gone.

AMANDA: Do I look like my mother?

TYRONE: Yes.

AMANDA: Don't cry Dad.

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AMANDA: So, Jethro. Betsy is ripping you off every chance she gets.

JETHRO: How do you know?

AMANDA: She has a thief's nature. She likes grabbing things. Like CDs and books. Am I right?

JETHRO: You fuck around too much.

AMANDA: I'm a virgin., Jethro.

JETHRO: Of course.

AMANDA: You ought to know.

JETHRO: Born in an egg, die like a piece of paper.

AMANDA: I'm afraid you're deluded.

JETHRO: So what?

AMANDA: Imagine: the exchange of all those sticky bodily fluids.

JETHRO: So?

AMANDA: I meant to say that earlier.

JETHRO: A thousand bucks.

AMANDA: No.

JETHRO: Then I'll go into permanent exile. The mysterious disappearance of an eminent old academic -

AMANDA: -- Died with his pants on.

CONSTANZA: (*Nearby*) May Interrupt?

JETRO: No.

AMANDA: Tell Betsy to chill. I don't want the job anymore.

JETHRO: No?

AMANDA: You're paranoid, among other things.

JETHRO: What other things?

AMANDA: Deluded, like I meant to say earlier.

JETHRO: You did say it.

AMANDA: I'm done then.

JETHRO: Have a heart.

AMANDA: No.

CONSTANZA: I'm going to plot a revolution. Join me. It'll start with a mass killing of white males. Move on from there to fat women in wheelchairs. And snotty teenage girls.

AMANDA: Include me out.

ACT TWO

JETHRO: So, God took a molecule and cut it in half and that's how we got two sexes, as the molecule divided and multiplied and we live through the inevitable joys and terrors caused by the situation, the sufferings of completion and loss, rancor and regret, happiness, and sorrow, and so on and so on. Race got in here somewhere along the lines of history and geography and sheer accident. We will not see the end of it in my time, for sure, and not in your time, either. As far as the Jews are concerned, hatred of and the blaming of the Jews has become as much a part of the planet as lava moving up through the cracks and volcanos exploding -- hot and endless -- a part of the meaning of the Earth. The Planet Earth, a blue rock covered with oceans circling the Sun. The Ontology of Mankind. The irony, of course, is that the mission of the Jews, according to God's instructions to Abraham, was to civilize the two-legged pagans of the planet and teach them the ways of the Almighty.

TYRONE: Let's run the Data., Jethro.

JETHRO: No. Not yet. Let's get through this guy Trent. Have you seen Amanda?

TYRONE: No.

JETHRO: She was just here.

TYRONE: She's taking a pause.

JETHRO: Why?

TYRONE: I don't know why.

JETHRO: Okay. Trent.

TYRONE: He's coming over.

JETHRO: Here he comes.

TYRONE: You talk to him.

JETHRO: I don't know the guy.

TYRONE: Get to know him. Trent?

TRENT: Yeah?

JETHRO: You seen Amanda?

TRENT: No.

JETHRO: She was here a minute ago.

TRENT: I haven't seen her.

JETHRO: You seem troubled.

TRENT: I'm not troubled.

TYRONE: What's the problem, Trent?

TRENT: Jews will not replace us.

TYRONE: I don't get it.

JETHRO: Who wants to replace you? You are perfect automatons as it is.

TRENT: I'll say it again: Jews will not replace us.

TYRONE: What is that supposed to mean?

TRENT: What it says.

TYRONE: I still don't get it.

JETHRO: I'm a Jew, Travis, and I wouldn't mind killing you right now. With this club.
(*A walking **stick** he keeps by him.*)

TYRONE: Hang on, Jethro.

JETHRO: No.

TRENT: They think they're better than us.

TYRONE: Who? Me?

TRENT: No. The Jews. Like him.

JETHRO: Maybe we **are** better than you. Get your head together, Travis.

TRENT: **Trent.**

JETHRO: Or your life 's in danger.

TRENT: I said my say and that's it and that's all.

JETHRO: Drop it, dope-head, and I'll tell you something about humanity. There's smart ones and dumb ones. The dumb ones resent the smart ones because the smart ones make all the money.

TRENT: I don't know if I followed that.

JETHRO: And then there's culture, Trent, of which you have none.

TRENT: We have a Christian culture, Jesus-oriented.
It's a new American battle cry.

TYRONE: Nonsense.

JETHRO: My friend, Tyrone.

TYRONE: We've met.

JETHRO: He's a Greek Communist.

TRENT: No excuse.

TYRONE: It's barbaric, this so-called religion of yours.

JETHRO: Not the way to go, Tyrone.

TRENT: We're tired of the Jews.

TYRONE: The guy on the wall over there is a Jew.

TRENT: Where?

TYRONE: (*Pointing*) Right there.

JETHRO: What's your problem, Trent?

TRENT: I don't have no problems.

TYRONE: Nothing personal.

JETHRO: Just a data point is all.

TRENT: We can do our own civilization – white and pure.

TYRONE: Good luck with that, Travis.

TRENT: **Trent.** We got you people figured out, Mr. Jethro. You go back to the Neanderthals.

JETHRO: Yikes.

TRENT: Yeah, and you're one of them, too, Tyrone.

TYRONE: I'm an atheist. Greek. Rational.

TRENT: What do you believe?

TYRONE: I believe in nothing.

TRENT: Nobody believes in nothing.

TYRONE: Except Communist Ideals.

TRENT: Ha! The true whites of the land will find you out.

TYRONE: And then what?

TRENT: We'll take serious action. We'll take measures.

JETHRO: Let's kill this hater right now.

TYRONE: Not worth it.

JETHRO: You're excused, Mr. Trent.

TYRONE: You look just like Brad.

TRENT: You must mean, Tad.

TYRONE: No, I mean Brad.

TRENT: I don't know no Brad.

TYRONE: Maybe it's Travis, then.

TRENT: I don't know no Travis.

JETHRO: Never mind. Go over there, Trent. (*TRENT moves away to another chair.*)

TYRONE: I'm scared, Jethro.

JETHRO: You should be.

TYRONE: Maybe we drop the inquiry and run for the hills.

JETHRO: One or two more interviews.

TYRONE: Why?

JETHRO: Data.

TYRONE: I can't do it anymore.

JETHRO: Why not?

TYRONE: I can't act innocent. I'm cynical and corrupt.
Like the country.

JETHRO: No, you're not.

TYRONE: And I'm tired and shaken. This person Trent is a menace.

JETHRO: One more.

TYRONE: And then, that's it. I'm done.

JETHRO: Take a break, Ty. I'll handle it from here. (*TYRONE moves away.*) Come back here, Trent. (*TRENT returns.*) I'm not through with you, Trent.

TRENT: Who cares?

JETHRO: It's a good thing we have police and an army. So that order is kept, and justice is done.

TRENT: That's a joke.

JETHRO: And public schools thrive, and garbage collectors make a living wage.

TRENT: The Government is not legitimate. They hire blacks and Chinks and Mexicans and Arabs who don't even belong here. And the Jews run the whole thing plus the media. I'm not giving any of my money to support that. And it's the Mafia that controls garbage collection. Guineas and Jews. An unholy alliance.

JETHRO: I'm going to turn you in, Trent.

TRENT: Go ahead.

JETHRO: I'm going to have you arrested.

TRENT: This country should be all white and everybody who works for the Government should be white.

JETHRO: I'm a Jew, but I don't do anything Jewish. I was born a Jew and I identify with it and feel superior about it. Where would the world be without the Jews? Think it over. And I wear a Star of David, as Above, so Below, and have revenge fantasies about the Germans. Otherwise, I live the academic, secular life.

TRENT: Good for you.

JETHRO: And I'm about to retire. So. To continue: What's your personal history?

TRENT: I'm an all American kid, I played ball and obeyed my parents and listened to my all white teachers and went to church and hated the minorities and the immigrants coming over to steal our jobs our money and our women.

JETHRO: Okay. Thank you. Tell me more about your parents, Travis, if you don't mind.

TRENT: **Trent.** They're white.

JETHRO: I don't mean that – tell me about their brains.

TRENT: Are you implying that they're stupid, or what?

JETHRO: I'm saying that they may be an adaptation. An adaptation to the changing conditions of life. The environment.

TRENT: I don't get it.

JETHRO: Mutants, Travis.

TRENT: Mutants? That's outrageous! Come over to Idaho sometime, Pal. I'll show you some mutants you won't believe!

JETHRO: I think I'll stay right here in L.A.

TRENT: Well, don't make any plans. Because L.A. won't be here much longer.

JETHRO: Where will it be?

TRENT: It'll fly off into space, like a burning movie. Take my word for it.

JETHRO: A burning movie?

TRENT: I don't know where that came from. Wow.

JETHRO: Still waiting for Amanda, Trent?

TRENT: Yes, I am.

JETHRO: Why?

TRENT: The movement of the stars. A congruence of celestial bodies. The music of the spheres.

JETHRO: How clever. Tyrone?

TYRONE: Reminds me of the time, down in Macomb, Mississippi. I was starting to crack up from the anxiety and tension – so I decided to make a little escape for a few hours and followed a narrow path on the Manning place which led deep into the woods. After a while, I began to hear music. The music was nothing like I'd ever heard – not in East New York or Downtown, or Harlem, or anywhere. And I'd been in some heavy-hitting Black Gospel churches. This music was celestial and got louder as I followed the path. Not only was this place hidden in the woods, but it was also somehow powered up by a secret cable connection to an outlet or a pole somewhere. The place was an electrified barn, and everyone was jumping to the vibe, the musicians and congregation joyously dancing and singing -- no whites were there but me as I

crept closer, and no inhibitions whatsoever. There were guitars of every kind, all electrified, horns, drums, tambourines, flutes, all on the same wild, happy page. And a preacher on the mic singing at the top of his lungs. My heart was pounding, and I thought I should leave them to their private holy celebration, but a dancing old lady saw me and waved me into the back of the room, where I stayed until dark, when it was time to return to the Manning House. They were still going strong in the barn when I left. God willing, I'll never forget that joyous afternoon. In the barn. In the Mississippi woods.

JETFRO: Thank you, Tyrone.

TRENT: That was painful.

TYRONE: Oh, fuck off, Trent.

JETHRO: Here's Amanda.

AMANDA: Why are you standing there, Travis?

TRENT: I have rights.

AMANDA: We have the data, so you can go home now.

TRENT: I'm in love with you.

AMANDA: How strange. We've never met. And I'm a virgin and I plan to stay that way.

TRENT: I'm a virgin too.

AMANDA: How nice for you. But I don't entangle with antisemites. So, forget it.

TRENT: You're not Jewish.

AMANDA: I'm Jewish in spirit.

JETHRO: Amanda!

AMANDA: Take a hike, Travis, my boss is calling me. Bye, bye.

TRENT: You'd best disentangle from the Jews, Amanda, they'll drag you down into hell. I'm trying to warn you. The end times are coming, and you will be left down here to drown in a ditch. *(AMANDA picks up Jethro's walking stick.)*

AMANDA: You see this club, Travis?

TRENT: I see it.

AMANDA: I'm going to bludgeon you with it now, you dumb racist sonofabitch, and then I'll bury you in a dung infested ditch, maggots and all.

TRENT: Don't hit me!

JETHRO: He'll burst like a poisonous insect.

AMANDA: Get out of my sight! (*TRENT ducks away.*) Answer me, Jethro.

JETHRO: What are you asking me?

AMANDA: I want you to fire Betsy.

JETHRO: I thought you refused the job.

AMANDA: Get rid of her.

JETHRO: Why would I do that?

AMANDA: She's taking advantage.

JETHRO: How?

AMANDA: Flirtation and dissertation.

JETHRO: That's the wrong usage of the word – you mean desertification --but go on.

AMANDA: She's been diddling you and dissing me. Is that what you want?

JETHRO: No.

AMANDA: I'm not trying to be hard on you.

JETHRO: Yes, you are.

AMANDA: No, I'm not. As my father has been trying to tell you: You will never, ever get laid again.

JETHRO: Thanks a lot, but this woman, Betsy, is androgynous. She has no interest in sex whatever. So, I have other plans. I defy you all. I still have dreams. I still have imagination. Something awakes in me, like a Japanese lizard monster. Women enjoying sex. Makes me wistful and insecure. (*Pause*) Do you find any of this interesting?

AMANDA: No.

JETHRO: I been meaning to tell you a story. A morality tale.

AMANDA: Oh, no.

JETHRO: It's your father's. Tyrone?

TYRONE: Well, I was living on the Lower East Side in a two-room slum. Bathtub in the kitchen. I was still a virgin when I was nineteen. I never knew she had a crush on me. Karen. I was a good-looking guy then. One day she looked me up in the city and we made love for two days. I was too insecure to make anything out of it.

AMANDA: Another of your many romantic regrets.

TYRONE: Yes. A year goes by, and she comes again to tell me there'd been a child. I feel bad about it to this day.

JETGRO: Your father 's too radical by a country mile.

AMANDA: So am I.

TYRONE: Listen. Sex, the act of reproduction, can be stoked by fraud and delusion and deception.

AMANDA: I've heard all this before, Dad.

TYRONE: And bad outcomes.

AMANDA: Yes. Like people born with four arms and five eyes. And it's us, America, leading the way. Look at the tv commercials and the cheerleaders. It's frightening.

TYRONE: It is.

AMANDA: There's no right and wrongs no more.

TYRONE: No.

AMANDA: What was I expecting? What was I thinking?
Disgusting American Capitalism. Sorry. Not your fault. What am I trying to say?
They take advantage.

TYRONE: I know.

AMANDA: So, I worry.

TYRONE: Don't worry.

AMANDA: I worry about you.

TYRONE: I can't change now. It's too late now.

AMANDA: They take advantage.

TYRONE: You said that.

AMANDA: Fire Betsy.

TYRONE: It's not up to me. You do, too, you know. Take advantage. Like games with Jethro. Taunting and incitement. Titillation. Yes, or no?

AMANDA: Yes.

TYRONE: Seedy of you.

AMANDA: Sorry, Dad.

TYRONE: Somehow, it's all my fault. I spoiled you. I never said, "No."

AMANDA: I understand what Betsy gives you guys. Charm and youth and company. What does she get in return? Money. Yes. It's a transaction, like everything else.

TYRONE: I don't pay her. Jethro does.

AMANDA: She's got your number, Dad.

TYRONE: Oh?

AMANDA: Femininity, drugs, hard rock and old timey jaxx..

TYRONE: Those days are long gone.

AMANDA: Yeah, but you like the vibe. She gives you the vibe, metallic though it is.

TYRONE: Occasionally. The libido fades. And she's asexual.

AMANDA: You're still susceptible to her feminine charms.

TYRONE: Yes, I am.

AMANDA: Jethro flirts with me now.

TYRONE: He doesn't mean it.

AMANDA: The nicest girl with the nicest background, she goes away to the city and two years later she's a whore.

TYRONE: You watch too much television. Don't do anything stupid.

CONSTANZA: I thought I saw the wheelchair lady sneaking out of the building.

TYRONE: She seems to think that certain crimes have been committed. And that Jethro and I are the criminals. Mainly Jethro.

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JETHRO: Apropos, An old nemesis of mine comes around and I realize I can't stand her because I can't stand myself. Just a stupid emotional habit, which I'm getting rid of at last. No more of that self-put down stuff that happens by itself, automatically. But I'm starting to catch it now, at the source, which has continued to reshape my self-image, which is mainly nothing. Like the stupendous ego, arisen in childhood. There's these four or five topics I constantly ruminate over. That's about it. Same five topics, over and over.

CONSTANZA: I heard again from the Lady in the Wheelchair,

JETHRO: Oh? What else did she have to say?

CONSTANZA: It was voice mail: "No more. No more fantasizing, no more wooing, no more sex". What's that all about?

JETHRO: We'd had an affair, back in the day, when she was still whole at the time.

CONSTANZA: Really?

JETHRO: No. I just made that up. Sorry. There was a tribe of them, buying and selling dope. I called the cops.

CONSTANZA: Turns out she wants you to drown yourself in a *mikva* or retire to a rest home.

JETHRO: Oh.

CONSTANZA: What's a *mikva*?

JETHRO: It's a ritual bath. I didn't want to be hurt. All those little cuts. When I knew the Lady, she offered sex, and I took it. Then she thought she owned me. I didn't think so and ran.

CONSTANZA: Makes perfect sense.

JETHRO: I was young at the time.

CONSTANZA: You just made that up, Jethro. That's okay. Dream on. Nature rules. Nature decides. Take note: War is bubbling up out of the culture, the politics. You can build a thousand-mile wall and Nature will flick it with her little finger into the darkness of space. You can hide in a deep hole, and she'll dig you out with an earthquake and hang you from a whanging telephone pole.

JETHRO: Thank you.

CONSTANZA: You got to watch out because people don't necessarily know what they're doing. They can think they're saints or great warriors and they're just little shitballs running around and getting in your ears.

JETHRO: What are you up to, Connie?

CONSTANZA I might do anything, like shoot up a bunch of working cheerleaders at a Texas High School Friday night football game. Stay tuned.

*

JETHRO: And suddenly, I'm losing my temper and yelling things. I'm yelling things, and limping along with a cane, and wearing a fedora – elderly Academic, hobbling along.

TYRONE: At least we're not chasing after people and compiling data on them, which is the last thing I want to be doing.

JETHRO: They're planning it now, Tyrone. The right-wing thug heads and fatheads are drawing plans onto paper bags. As we speak. Paper bags and paper towels and napkins and notebooks and pamphlets, and other war-like Actions.

TYRONE: Actions?

JETHRO: Yes. How about armed insurrection?

TYRONE: Seems unlikely.

JETHRO: Connie Toomey was just here. She likes you.

TYRONE: That's nice.

JETHRO: And what do you recall about the Lady in the wheelchair?

TYRONE: We turned on her in one fine winter's day. Years ago. Remember? They put her in an ambulance. It was snowing. She struggled mightily, like a force of nature. Now, vengefully, she wants to confine us to a rest home or some other facility for the old and infirm. Or die.

JETHRO: *Nemesis*, like I told you.

TYRONE: After that my ex inserted me into a Rehab facility in Malibu..

JETHRO: Foolishly.

TYRONE: They invited me to stay, and I stayed, despite the contradictory data. They told me I wasn't an alcoholic but was certainly medicating myself. They took the money of course. I lived a different life in rehab. The wise old man on the hill. Alone. All my friends were no longer my friends. Not a single person called. Not even you.

JETHRO: I was busy at the time.

TYRONE: Yeah, yeah.

*

JETHRO: Betsy?

BETSY: Yes?

JETHRO: You want to play a game?

BETSY: No.

JETHRO: Beautiful flowers.

BETSY: Aren't they nice? What kind of game?

JETHRO: I don't know. Cards, maybe? Or dice?

BETSY: My clothes stay on, no matter what.

JETHRO: Oh. I know. What flowers are they?

BETSY: Some kind of Lily. Did you walk today?

JETHRO: A little bit.

BETSY: You must walk. A little more each day. Knock yourself out.

JETHRO: I know. I tried.

BETSY: Exercises, as well?

JETHRO: Yes.

BETSY: Good. What do you want for lunch? Chicken salad, yogurt and berries.

JETHRO: Sounds good.

BETSY: Good.

JETHRO: Amanda.

BETSY: Amanda?

JETHRO: She wants me to hire a bookkeeper, a pro.

BETSY: And fire me?

JETHRO: Yes.

BETSY: And who pays for that?

JETHRO: She will.

BETSY: She thinks I'm trying to rob you.

JETHRO: Correct.

BETSY: I'm not!

JETHRO: Your life is already too complicated by strange ideas, like space aliens, and I'm the one who finances it. And not only that, but you also measure my vodka – you sneak in here and measure how much vodka I drink before dinner, two fingers, three fingers, whatever, and then you tell the world about it!

BETSY: I don't tell anyone anything, Jethro. I'm not innocent, but I'm not doing anything harmful or selfish. You need to be monitored. You could have a convulsion or a heart attack and fall over dead. Who made such an arrangement of parts, where people stick their slimy bodies into each other? Reproduction? It's disgusting. Listen, I have some news for you, Jethro. You want to hear it or not?

JETHRO: Not.

BETSY: There's this guy, Brad, he wants me to go out into the wilderness with him.

JETHRO: There is no wilderness no more.

BETSY: He wants to give me massages and play chess with me.

JETHRO: What's he paying you?

BETSY: I didn't agree to go with him yet.

JETHRO: I'll double it, whatever he's paying you.

BETSY: Never mind. Don't worry.

JETHRO: Is there a subject named Trent?

BETSY: There is. He followed me around. He kept staring at me in the laundromat. I said to the person next to me: "The culture of the United States has deteriorated markedly." How so? Your private parts are no longer private. They are available for scrutiny to any cowboy who looks at your crotch." I don't think that's right. Everything becomes genitalia. It's repulsive. Why do the Arabs imprison their women in Black? Why? Because all they can see is undercover, deprived of air. They're pussy-whipped, the whole lot of them. Putting their women in black fabric, houses without doors.

JETHRO: That's stinking clothes in the night. That's got to be in our report, how the Arabs treat their women.

BETSY: Uh, oh. Here comes someone in a wheelchair. I don't think she likes you.

JETHRO: It can't be!

LADY: It's me, Jethro, your living nightmare. Remember the hardhat hiding in the sewer –

JETHRO: Who?

LADY: The battle under the City of New York for power and influence, while the ocean rises to snatch you.

JETHRO: What hardhat?

LADY: You have one choice. Kill yourself or die in a home. And tell your friend Tyrone to take his fateful exposition into the void.

JETHRO: Wait! What hard hat?

LADY: A battle in the sewer with a giant rat. Ha, ha. *(Returns upstage.)*

JETHRO: You saw her?

BETSY: I did.

JETHRO: You heard what she said?

BETSY: It's mystifying.

JETHRO: I told you about those ladies in wheelchairs selling dope in front of my meeting.

BETSY: Yes.

JETHRO: Became quite a gathering place for the down and the dirty. Big fat ladies in mechanized wheelchairs selling dope on the corner.

BETSY: Right.

JETHRO: Then there's the men in hard hats, resenting the elite. So, she's harping on an image of them, maybe, reminding her of hated masculine power. Which is not me -- I'm a harmless intellectual. While the Radiomen spew their stupid lies for money.

BETSY: Radiomen?

JETHRO: Daily! Shooting their mouths off! Creating chaos!

BETSY: Calm down.

JETHRO: They should be lined up against a wall and shot. And that's where the Lady in the Wheelchair gets her ideas. The radiomen. I'll tell you, it's retaliation. Why?

BETSY: I give up. Why?

JETHRO: She offered the greatest sex possible on this Earth and I turned her down, period. What do you think of that?

BETSY: I don't know what to think, Jethro.

BETSY: He's dreaming while thinking. Keeping his dick covered. Backing away. There are demonized sub-species in her sub-imagination. Hardhats and Radiomen. Jethro. I hate to say it. Your personal decline is not the species' decline.

JETHRO: I think it is. People are grown more stupid with time apparently, electing a criminal con artist sleazebag to the presidency of the United States. The orange-haired President is just a symptom. A pig in garbage. Lies fill the air like carbon.

TYRONE: There was a man in my childhood who lived in a clearing in the woods, Mr. Cross, he'd been a social studies teacher at the high school and now he was living in a stinky clearing in the forest. And there was another man I knew, a mild-mannered professor, a quiet, intelligent guy. One day he vanished. They said he'd walked down a path into the wild and was never seen again.

CONSTANZA: I have data on the wheelchair Lady -- She's a cripple with a lot of political power apparently, The banks. The lawyers. The card accounts. She thinks she's in charge of the government - clowns running into the front of the bus and running out of the back of the bus. And the bus is going down into the crevices of the earth. The data is winding around the planet like Yarn. Pretty soon it will strangle Mankind. Drugs and alcohol and old age and driving at night in the rain.

TYRONE: I'm nearing the end and I have no money.

CONSTANZA: One problem is loneliness, and another is fear. I keep all my doors locked and I'm buying a dog. People don't realize all the poverty in this land. People sleep in their cars or under bridges. I'm lucky I got my little house here. You think I'm joking about the Commies, but I'm not. People don't know how to talk to each other. I don't blame you, Tyrone. Your life is coming to an end. It's either walking away or opening fire, randomly.

TYRONE: Thanks, Constanza.

CONSTANZA: Facts are free. Facts are for nothing. There is not enough sense out there to make change from a dollar, especially American or Indonesian, and I could go on. All they know how to do is rob and steal and get blood flowing out of people and into pipes and ditches.

TYRONE: Dark, Constanza.

CONSTANZA: Facts, Tyrone.

BETSY: I guess your dad is about ready to move on into a cave and long days and nights of meditation.

AMANDA: I guess. They couldn't be more different, Jethro and my dad.

TYRONE: You grew up a rich kid, Jethro, a mama's boy, a smart Alec. An elite type of Jew. Me, I'm trash. I got lucky. I had good teachers, they pushed me forward, they found a path for me. But we will always be estranged, you and me. No harm, no foul, but the class thing is like an invisible membrane separating us for good.

JETHRO: It's called resentment, Tyrone.

TYRONE: It's called self-love, Jethro, self-love, and condescension. I'll be on my way, Amanda. You know how to take care of yourself. You know what's what. No drugs, no haphazard sex.

AMANDA: Yeah, yeah.

TYRONE: I won't be in touch, but you'll feel me.

AMANDA: That makes no sense, dad.

BETSY: I'm up for a truce if you are.

ANANDA: Definitely.

BETSY: Maybe we'll run into each other again.

AMANDA: On the barricades.

BETSY: There you go.

*

JETHRO: I have trouble sleeping. Bad dreams, aching an invisible bone, a disturbed mind. As though a judgment was looking down into my soul like the old Hebrew God, implacable and close. I see all my lies and mistakes and fat ladies in wheelchairs selling dope and torture in the deserts of the spinning Earth. Spinning. And then, for a moment, as the Sun was starting to rise, I saw that all was energy, all life and movement was Energy, Life was Energy, the Universe was an expression of Energy, which cannot die, and I slept the sleep of Angels for a moment and haven't yet completely forgotten.

TYRONE: A word to Elaine, my first, and Diana, of the silky skin, and Zoe, her keen sensitivity, and Arlene, and Judith, and Amy of the green, silk dress, and all those I've since forgotten. I loved you all.

JETHRO: I'm sure they will all appreciate your parting comments, Tyrone, with tears and laughter.

TYRONE: Fuck you, Jethro.

*

CONSTANZA: I've interviewed a lot of people, Jethro, a lot of people, and I have to say that I'm depressed by it all. Incidents people have told me -- shit hard to believe. I don't want to discuss it. Born into hellholes. Raised by ogres. Cutting up bodies. Alive. Live bodies.

(LADY IN WHEELCHAIR. APPROACHES.) Uh, oh.

LADY: Time's up.

CONSTANZA: Why?

LADY: He's a junkie and an alcoholic.

BETSY: No, he isn't.

LADY: And a blowhard Preacher to boot.

CONSTANZA: No, he isn't. He's Jewish

LADY: It's that or suicide.

JETHRO: Oh, come on.

LADY: Look at your erratic behavior, going around asking people things.

JETHRO: We're gathering data.

LADY: Data, indeed. I'd like to see him confined in a safe place, like a hostel or a prison. I do have the power to put people away. Where they belong. Why? Because the world is led by a bunch of uncircumcised dickheads.

CONSTANZA: Is that it, Lady?

LADY: No. I have more. I have opinions. I have ideas. I have money. I have taste. I have connections. I have wants and desires.

CONSTANZA: Congratulations.

LADY: Nothing 's wrong with me. I have a loose pebble in my knee. I'm a junkie. I live happily in a wheelchair. I sell junk to my people. I get money from the Government. I used to be beautiful, but now it's pointless. You'll be glad and Jethro will be glad. That you interviewed me, that you found me lounging in his territory, but there's no use in filing a report.

CONSTANZA: Thank you, very much.

LADY: Don't thank me. I hate that. In the meantime, his love life turns to mud, his income evaporates, he becomes confined to an old age home, and suicide is his only other option. Furthermore, I am a walking tirade.

Mankind is on its last bowel movement. And these are the Last Days.

JETHRO: Wait. I had a dream last night. I don't know where I was. Seemed like New York City. Somewhere dark and dangerous, but full of promise. I was there for a purpose which was somehow connected to a marriage. There was a beautiful woman there, still young, light-haired – face indistinct, but radiant with the promise of Happiness and Love. It was she who was getting married. It was unclear what I was doing there exactly, but there was an unspoken implication that I was there for her. I could never see her face. It was vague, indistinct, like I said, but loving. Then things began to get in the way or to go awkwardly wrong. It's like we were sliding toward each other, but a wall of gravity kept us apart. There was an invisible wall between us, and we couldn't make it through. We kept trying for a while, rolling around and losing force, until somehow the entire image faded heavily into the dark.

*

TYRONE: *Jethro thinks about his situation. It's a kind of light mourning for all our losses. The disappointments and failures, the lack of love in his life. Disillusionment and ego fantasies. Real talent realized too late. The psychological damage. Like growing up under a lid instead of a sky. You will lose and you will fail, that's the way it is, beneath the words, beneath the ideas or the pictures and all the rest of the phony solutions, including women and drugs and therapies and the constant American pathetic stupidities of which he was an inevitable tiny part. And now it's all lost to degenerate animals. What good did I do? You want to die deaf and dumb, Tyrone? In this horrible place?*

AMANDA: *My dad walked. He took the last of his pills, drank a glass of red wine, hitched up his trousers, put on his good boots, and walked. My mother almost broke him-- Get the fuck out you piece of shit!*

LADY: You police of shit!

TYRONE: They let me out of re-hab early and I disappeared for a while, putting humpy-dumpty together again. I had just enough self-esteem. Back in Santa-Monica she said they were going away. and I said I'm not going with you. And they left. Amanda waved to me though the back window of the car. I remember standing there amid the boxes of books and papers and trash in the empty living room. Standing there.

AMANDA: Bye, bye.

TYRONE: I tell my students, persevere, remember yourselves, you'll catch murder and mayhem out there in the field.

LADY: Remember, fool.

JETHRO: To sum up. I give it ten or fifteen years before the planet burns to a cinder or the water runs out and there's not enough oxygen to breathe. This is because the right-wing in America is triumphant and they can't see what's happening around them. And the voting patriots in the Midwest are too dumb to notice what they're doing when they support these people. So much for Democracy. And they're ugly, these people, men and women both. So, get in your good times, but don't go crazy. Saw a TV show last night about the Sacred, a lot of it was about the fear of Death. Handle it that way. Energy cannot die, basically. There's a certain amount and you got some and so you get to go on. Think of it accordingly. So much for the data:

TYRONE: Cold. Want to be in someone's arms. It was cold. Freezing air came down straight from the Arctic, down through the Catskills, and into the Brooklyn canyons. I'm thinking of Rockaway Ave. in particular. IRT. New Lots. And now I'm overcome, I can't go on.... Snow was over my head. Wind was blowing into my face. Slush was in my galoshes. I had to change at Atlantic Ave. and go back the other way, toward Flatbush. Cold zigzagged trip on the fucking subway. Nowadays, nearing the end, I have a new direction and a new aim.

JETHRO: They took me for a blood-test the other day. The girl behind the counter was speaking her thoughts out loud. She wasn't discerning, what she should say or not say. Talking, talking. Then a little Mexican guy wearing red shorts comes in and starts cursing about a fax. He's got welts and boils on his legs. He's cursing and cursing, in broken English, and nobody reacts. Not the girls or the nurses or the people waiting for their blood tests, like they're waiting for their fixes. Quiet, patient, motionless. This is all going on and nobody looks at anyone else. Nobody seemed to know anything about themselves. They were taking care of their bodies, and that's all they knew. And of even that, they weren't sure, because the body changes. It gets sick and breaks and then they're buried in the ground. They were bewildered. The guy in the red shorts, seeing that nobody was paying attention to him, started yelling into his phone.

(Blackout)

THE END

Murray Mednick

Los Angeles

4/15/20

5/14/24

