

Bleed

By
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THE STORY

Something creepy, disturbing and utterly ridiculous is happening to everyman Alex. Much to the inconvenience of his daily routine, his body has quit. Despite his healthy diet and well-balanced living, his body is dissolving. As he makes his way through the day, Alex doesn't find much sympathy. In fact his vanishing seems to bring out the worst in family and friends. Faced with imminent death, Alex begins to discover a key ingredient to life: letting go. "Bleed" is a dark comedy about what happens when a disappearing man tries to make one last stand at mattering.

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. ALEX DAFLEUR - a regular every man pushed too far.
2. TOM - magical Black janitor. Sweet, home-spun and very non-threatening.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

The rest of the characters make no more than one appearance. They can be played by an ensemble of 5-7 actors.

PROLOGUE

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR comes out whistling and moping the floor. As he cleans, he spits chewing tobacco into a tin can. The lights rise and he jumps, startled by the audience.

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

Oh, hello dere. Snuck up on me. My, my, my. Look at all dem purdy white folks out dere. Nevah seen dis many Caucasian in one place without a rope. I'm just kidding...a little. Don't mind me. Just moping up the last of dis here mess. A janitor's job is hard. And if you're a Magical black janitor -and I am- then your work is nevah done. Why look at "The Legend of Bagger Vance," "The Green Mile" and -my favorite- "Driving Miss Daisy." The story is never quite about us and neither is this one. We sweep, mop, tap dance and, of course, be of service in narrating while offering deep-fried nuggets of down-home wisdom like... 'the sun always comes out after the rain,' or 'diamonds are valuable, but love is the most precious jewel in the world' or... 'sometimes white does make right.' But more of dis country wisdom later. For now, you probably came to see a story. This happened a little while ago and it'll always stick out in my mind as a tale that's pretty...well, fucked up. Here is our hero.

(ALEX, 30 and reasonable sort of guy, enters and crosses to the kitchen. He whistles.)

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

This is Alex. Just a nice fella of sorts. And Alex is in need of my assistance. He just doesn't know it yet. His problems began at the start of an otherwise pretty normal day.

SCENE ONE: I love you

KITCHEN. ALEX chops up two healthy salads with croutons and balsamic vinaigrette. The knife slips and he cuts his finger. After waving it a few times, ALEX puts the bleeding finger in his mouth. He sucks on the cut as he yells...

ALEX

Clarence and Tamara!

(ALEX packs their lunch and sucks on his finger.)

ALEX

You guys are gonna be late. Lets head 'em up, move 'em out.

(ENTER CINDY on her cell phone. She's wearing a bathrobe and slippers. She's significantly larger than ALEX in height and girth. They hug, or rather he tries to wrap his arms around her football frame.)

ALEX

Morning, Sugar bear.

CINDY

(in disbelief to the phone)
Shut up! Just shut the hell up!

ALEX

Oh, how 'bout a little sugar-

CINDY

(shoving him away and talking into phone)
Noooo...shut up! No, he didn't...I can't believe it.

ALEX

Honey, are you excited about today?

CINDY

Just a minute...(to ALEX) What?

ALEX

Today?

CINDY

What about it?

ALEX

I've rented a boat for us this evening.

CINDY

Why?

ALEX

Don't you know what today is?

CINDY

Did you put the garbage out by the curb?

ALEX

Well...yes, but...

CINDY

Thanks baby. (pecks him on the cheek) Are you coming home for lunch?

ALEX

No, why?

CINDY

Just wondering.

ALEX

Did you want me to bring you something?

CINDY

No. Fucking South Beach diet.

ALEX

How about tonight we forget about all of that and go out for a nice Italian dinner?

CINDY

Alex, you know I can't eat carbs after 1:15.

ALEX

Just thought we could do something a little special.

CINDY

Why would I want to do that?

ALEX

I don't know.

(CINDY goes back to talking
on the phone.)

CINDY

Anyway...no...get out...get the
fuck out of here? He said
what to who way back when?
Where? Oh, I was there!

Noooooo. Get out...get the fuck
out...I can't believe it...if Alex
ever asked me to do something
like that, I would...I would...

ALEX

...Cindy...what about the kids?

BEAT

I thought you were taking the
kids to school...I took them
yesterday. Ummm, Cindy, could
you put the phone down...

CINDY

Alex, what?!?

ALEX

Nothing, I just thought you were going to take the kids to
school.

CINDY

I'm coming down with a migraine. Can't you take 'em?

ALEX

I don't think I'm in a good place with them.

CINDY

A good place? Where did you hear that from?

ALEX

Just a book by Dr. Spock.

CINDY

Do you always have to quote crap. Alex, they're kids. You
can't be in a bad place with them. Just slap 'em around.

ALEX

I actually don't think that's the way to raise kids.

CINDY

That's what I always do.

ALEX

That's the way my dad treated me.

CINDY

Well you see: you turned out fine.

ALEX

Actually I think I've suffered some-

CINDY

-Alex, the kids love you. You're their favorite stepdad.

ALEX

Oh...really?

CINDY

Yeah, remember that gift I made them buy you on stepfather appreciation day.

ALEX

The t-shirt that said 'the best fake dad in the world?'

CINDY

Exactly. (starts laugh) God, that was funny.

ALEX

Yeah, are there any band-aids left in the cabinet. I cut myself.

CINDY

(waving him off)
Go check. And then hurry up: they're going to be late for school. (back to phone) Okay, go ahead...mmhmmm

ALEX

Thank you, baby.

SCENE TWO: Quality Time with the Kids

CAR. ALEX drives his two kids, TAMARA and CLARENCE, to school. He's sweating and wiping his head profusely. They're twins. TAMARA plays a video game. CLARENCE bounces a ball off ALEX's head.

TAMARA

Daddy?

ALEX

Yes, dear?

TAMARA

What does the word, 'cuckold' mean?

ALEX

Um...why do you want to know that word, sweetie? Clarence will you stop that!

CLARENCE

But Alex, it's fun.

ALEX

And stop calling me Alex.

CLARENCE

But that's your name.

ALEX

You are supposed to call me father. Or dad. Or daddy.

CLARENCE

(rolling eyes)
That's sooo gaaaay.

ALEX

I can't drive like this.

CLARENCE

I don't care.

ALEX

How would you like it if I crashed this car, huh?

(CLARENCE shrugs.)

ALEX

How would you like it if I crashed this car right into a speeding tractor trailer? Headed in the opposite direction at 70 miles per hour. Headed right for us and I couldn't see it because you keep bouncing that ball on my head, huh? And this whole thing crumpled up like a used accordion, and our bodies shot out onto the highway like little dying sparks flailing around on the lava-hot asphalt. How would you like that?

BEAT

TAMARA

We'd miss school.

CLARENCE

Cool. You'd do that for us, Alex?

TAMARA

Then maybe I wouldn't have to go to lunch.

ALEX

What's the matter Tamara?

CLARENCE

Kids at school keep calling her a cuckold.

TAMARA

They do not.

CLARENCE

Do too. Bertha said her father called Tamara a cuckold child.

TAMARA

Not true.

CLARENCE

Yeah, it is. Face it, Tam-Tam: you're like the milkman's baby.

TAMARA

There's no such thing as a milkman.

CLARENCE

Well whatever. So maybe you're mailman's or the video store dude or the smelly Armenian janitor. (sing-songy taunt) You are a cuc-kold.

ALEX

Now...uh, Clarence

TAMARA

Quiet, stupid.

CLARENCE

You are a cuc-kold, You are a cuc-kold.

ALEX

Clarence, be quiet.

CLARENCE

You are a cuckold, you are a cuckold!

ALEX

Clarence stop it!

TAMARA

You're the one who's a cuckold!

ALEX

Tamara!

CLARENCE

Pssst, I don't care.

TAMARA

You're like the baby of the PE teacher.

CLARENCE

Awesome. I could play games all day. I'd never have to do homework. And Alex, Mr. Kritzer's wife is hot. I'd get to sit in her lap and snuggle my head between her bozooms. She'd feed me candy and cakes all day.

TAMARA

Hey, no fair. I want to be Mr. Kritzer's cuckold child too.

CLARENCE

And when Mr. Kritzer got home we'd go out and he'd show me how to pitch and throw a tight spiral with a football.

ALEX

I toss the football around with you.

CLARENCE

But you throw like a girl, Alex.

TAMARA

No way. I throw way better than daddy.

ALEX

You do not.

TAMARA

Do too!

CLARENCE

But if I was Mr. Kritzer's son, I'd get to be quarterback and pitcher and everyone would like me and I wouldn't have to eat these crappy bag lunches and I'd have friends who didn't hit me and-

ALEX

Clarence, be quiet.

CLARENCE

But Alex-

ALEX

WILL YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP! YOU ARE MY SON. I DON'T GIVE A FLYING SHIT IF YOU THROW A FOOTBALL LIKE RICHARD GODDAMN SIMMONS. WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, BOTH OF YOU ARE MY CHILDREN.

(Severely wounded and depressed by the news, CLARENCE and TAMARA slump down in their seats. ALEX pulls into school.)

ALEX

Well, here we are. You kids have a good day. (pause) Say, how bout I pick you guys up after school and we go get some ice cream? Do kids still eat ice cream these days?

TAMARA

You cursed.

CLARENCE

Oooo.

ALEX

Now kids...

CLARENCE

Imma tell momma.

ALEX

Now, lets not be too hasty. I thought we agreed what happens in the Oldsmobile, stays in the Oldsmobile.

TAMARA

-she's gonna be pissed.

ALEX

Now there's no need for that.

CLARENCE

She's gonna be fucking pissed.

TAMARA

Fucking fuckety fuck pissed.

ALEX

Hey!

CLARENCE

Hey, what? I learned it from you. That's what I'll tell the teacher. If I happen to drop the f-bomb 14 or 15 times today. I'll just say 'hey bitch. Lay off my nutsack. My dad taught me this.'

ALEX

You will not do that.

CLARENCE

And you'll have to come to the principal's office. Parent-teacher conferences. I cry very easily.

ALEX

Clarence.

CLARENCE

Alex?

ALEX

...Please.

CLARENCE

I need some money for lunch.

ALEX

But I fixed you, your lunch. (they look at him) All I have is \$20.

CLARENCE

That'll do.

(ALEX takes the bill out and
CLARENCE snatches it.)

CLARENCE

Cool. Blackmail really does work.

ALEX

Now, Clarence: share it with your sister.

TAMARA

Thanks dad.

(They dump their bagged
lunches in his lap and begin
to get out of the car.)

TAMARA

When do I get my half, Clarence?

CLARENCE

When I feel like it, tuna lips.

TAMARA

I want my cut now.

CLARENCE

Tuna lips.

TAMARA

Stop it.

CLARENCE

Come on, tuna lips. Quiver for me. Quiver. That's right, Robin Quiver, the Indian Giver. Why don't you quiver a river.

(TAMARA begins to quiver and tears well up. CLARENCE imitates her quivering lips.)

CLARENCE
Quiver, little girl...are you going to cry now? You going to cry and quiver like a little nibbling tuna. Quiver. Quiver!

(TAMARA runs off, a quivering mess.)

ALEX
Clarence, you are going to give her half, right?

CLARENCE
Course. I was playing around.

ALEX
(weakly laughing and wiping away sweat)
I knew that.

CLARENCE
Jesus, Alex. You're sweating like a pig.

ALEX
I know. I'm just coming down with something. Clarence?

CLARENCE
Yeah, Alex?

ALEX
(awkwardly trying to hug him)
...Um...I love you, son.

CLARENCE
Alex...

ALEX
Yeah?

CLARENCE
Why do you have to be such a faggot all the time?

(And with that gem of advice dispensed, CLARENCE runs off to school.)

SCENE THREE: Water Cooler Conversation

OFFICE. Jim and Alex are by the water cooler in their suits with their coffee mugs. Jim is yapping endlessly while Alex stands there, zoning out. Unbeknownst to both of them, Alex has already started to bleed from his abdomen. Parched, he drinks profuse amounts of water.

JIM

It was me. I was the one. There were 12 other contractors. All of us were trying to get our claws in. Well I stood up and gave my bid. Can you guess what I said? Guess how much I bid...4.5. 4.5, which is ridiculously low. Can you believe it? (laughs) Sometimes I can't believe the size of my own testicles. Now I'm aware...4.5 is the basement...well lets be honest: it's financial suicide. It's probably so low that we'll lose money. But that's not what's important. What is lost in money is gained is trust, Alex. Trust. That's the end goal. (BEAT) That and a vicious business war of attrition. Starving our competitors. Cutting them off from even the smallest contracts, private owners and the start-ups. Then once we have a monopoly we jack up the prices. Rob all the mom-and-pop fuckers blind, and verticalize our strangle-hold. Scorched earth business tactics. Some people would call that cruel manipulation of capitalism, or claim that we're a bunch of market Machiavellians. But you know what we've got that most don't? Trust. Establishing dependable relationships between two floating entities and...and...Alex?

ALEX

Jim?

JIM

What's that on your shirt?

ALEX

I don't know.

JIM

It's right there. On your shirt. It looks like blood.

(JIM points to it. Alex becomes aware of a red spot. He puts his finger to it and slowly looks at the red mark. He guides the red finger into his mouth and tastes it.)

ALEX

I think it is.

JIM

Someone else's?

ALEX

I don't know.

JIM

Take off your jacket.

(ALEX removes his jacket. He is wearing a red soaked shirt. A massive of amount of blood.)

JIM

Alex...

ALEX

Oh...

JIM

...oh my god.

ALEX

...jeez. This is so embarrassing.

JIM

Alex you're bleeding.

ALEX

Yeah...isn't that funny?

JIM

You're bleeding a lot.

ALEX

Yeah, Jim. It looks that way.

BEAT

JIM

Well anyway, so I'm sitting there with all these other contractors after my bid. 4.5. Everyone turns and looks at me with this amazed expression like, "4.5! What are you, nuts?" (laughs) I mean nobody bids 4.5. It's unheard of. They almost took a dump in their Sears business suit.

ALEX

Jim...

JIM

Yes.

ALEX

Could you get me a napkin?

JIM

A napkin.

ALEX

Yes.

JIM

...Alex, am I boring you?

ALEX

No, I just think I should do something about all this blood.

JIM

Oh. We're back on you now, are we?

ALEX

No, I just-

JIM

-no, no no. Alex wants to talk about himself. Here (hands him a napkin). We'll talk about you if you want. Don't have to be so rude. Just say so. Well...what have you been up to? I see that you're bleeding at the moment.

ALEX

Hope this comes out with some bleach.

JIM

Alex, are you some sort of homo now?

ALEX

What?

JIM

Are you a homo? One of those people who bleeds a lot. A homophobe.

ALEX

I don't know what you're talking about. Jim, I have a wife and kids. I am not a homophobe.

(BOSS and SECRETARY enter.
The BOSS is a big and
blustery man, carrying too
much weight and hair. The
SECRETARY walks with short
duck-like steps.)

BOSS

Jimmy! Jimmy my man. My main man.

JIM

Sir-

BOSS

Mr. 4.5...very very sharp of you. You have real business...

JIM

Testicles, yes, thank you. Just doing what I can for the company. I consider you guys like my own family.

BOSS

Son, you're going to go places. Oh, hello Alex. Didn't even see you there.

SECRETARY

What's wrong with your shirt?

BOSS

Good, lord man. I didn't even see that. Those colors look awful on you.

ALEX

It's blood.

SECRETARY

Blood!

BOSS

Blood? (baffled) Why?

ALEX

Why? Because I'm bleeding.

BOSS

I know, but... what's that all about?

JIM

Sir, I was just thinking the same thing.

ALEX

I don't know, sir.

BOSS

That's not good enough, Alex.

SECRETARY

Why don't you go home?

ALEX

I ran out of sick days.

SECRETARY

So use your vacation time.

ALEX

I wanted to save that for the end of year. My wife wants to go to Cancun for two weeks.

BOSS

Cancun. Yuck! Nothing but time-share condos, sand fleas, brown water, frat boys, and starving Mexican prostitutes. Not that there's anything wrong with time-shares.

SECRETARY

Send him home, sir.

BOSS

Fine, go home, Alex. I see what you're trying to do.

ALEX

Do?

BOSS

Very clever. Very very clever.

ALEX

I don't follow you sir.

BOSS

You are trying to say something.

SECRETARY

Alex, go see a doctor.

BOSS

Your sweat, tears and toil. Your blood. Your effort. Trying to upstage Jimmy and his deal.

ALEX

What?

JIM

Alex, how could you?

BOSS

Jealousy. It's so belittling. This kind of envy can poison an office.

ALEX

But I'm not trying to upstage Jim.

SECRETARY

Send him home, sir. He's going to mess up the carpet. And I just had it sowed in on the weekend.

BOSS

Sowed in?

SECRETARY

Yes, it's special carpet.

BOSS

Special how?

SECRETARY

It's woven out of hair.

BOSS

Really? That's why it's so soft? Yes, I feel it now.

(They begin taking off their shoes and squishing their feet into the floor. They are in ecstasy over the carpet as the SECRETARY extols its virtue.)

SECRETARY

Imported from Madagascar. The water and air is so pure there. Finest hair in the world grows in Madagascar. The hair of a Madagascan boy is the most soft and precious thing in the world.

BOSS

I want to make love to this carpet.

JIM

(whispering to ALEX about Boss)
Homo.

SECRETARY

Well he's going to bleed all over it.

BOSS

Alex go home. Go home now before you deface the people of Madagascar. Your poison isn't wanted here.

(TOM enters and helps change the set.)

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

Now any normal person on a normal day with a fairly normal health problem would go and see a doctor bout it. But you see this was no normal day and no normal health predicament. And Alex was no longer no normal person. Something had happened to him. And now being of unsound mind and body, he decided to do a very unwise thing: he went home.

SCENE FOUR: Home Sweet Home

Alex enters his home,
carrying two bags.

ALEX

Honey? Are you home? I've got some good news and bad news.
I got you some choco-loco Atkins bars and a wheat germ
smoothie. The good news is that they let me go home early.

(MAN enters in boxer shorts.)

BEAT

(They stare at each other.
They're both scared. The MAN
more than ALEX.

(After a few moments, the man
creeps around ALEX and takes
his clothes off a chair. He
sits down, never taking his
eyes off ALEX. He puts on his
sneakers and stands. Then he
remembers he still doesn't
have his pants on. He sits
back down and takes off his
shoes. He laughs,
embarrassed. Then shaking his
head he puts on his pants,
slips into his shoes and then
his t-shirt. Next he grabs
his jacket.

(Getting more confident, he
stares directly at ALEX. He
walks around, circling him,
sizing him up. ALEX shrinks.
MAN gently takes bag from
ALEX. He looks inside and
takes out an Atkins bar. The
MAN pockets it and puts the
bag down. The MAN backs ALEX
into a corner, waiting and
wanting him to do something.
Alex shrinks. They stare at
each other.)

BEAT

(The MAN shrugs. He puts on his jacket. He's the EXTERMINATOR. He begins to exit, but stops and turns back around.)

EXTERMINATOR

She's in the shower.

(EXTERMINATOR exits. Alex stands there.)

SCENE FIVE: Den of Iniquity

ALEX stumbles into GORDON'S DEN. The sound of a very heated porno can be heard on the TV. A girl violently wails and shrieks. Her voice shakes as she's being pounded. Two guys can be heard grunting.

ALEX

Gordon?

(Toilet flushes. GORDON comes out of the bathroom. He's chomping on a Philly cheese steak sub and licking his fingers.)

GORDON

Hey, Alex. How come you're not at work?

ALEX

Boss told me to go home.

GORDON

Why?

ALEX

I don't feel so good today. My whole body feels...I don't know. What are you watching?

GORDON

It's my new job. Landed a gig at Adult World News as a freelance reviewer. No more goddamn 4pm deadlines. They got about 10 of us and we're assigned to different divisions. Mine is felching, fisting and bukkake.

(They stare at the TV.
Hypnotized and repulsed.)

GORDON

Yeah. So that's what I've been doing.

ALEX

What happened to the Post?

GORDON

Canned. Seven years and not even a watch, Alex. Can you believe it? The editor just patted me on the back and took me out for lunch...a cheap Chinese joint. I ordered an orange glazed chicken thingy. That was my last supper at the Post. This dry d-grade chicken, drowned in this gluey, glooby neon orange candy sauce. He doesn't even apologize. Just shrugs his shoulders and says 'you know how it goes.' And I'm eating this neon orange chicken byproduct and I'm just getting so thirsty. The chicken is dry and hard, but the sauce is heavy and saturated with this salty-sugary MSG shit. And I'm just pounding back sake, getting blitzed on the company's bill. At the end of the lunch, my face took a swan dive into the plate. Must've looked like this shiny orange clown.

ALEX

Her face looks like a glazed doughnut.

GORDON

Yeah, men get off on the whole pump and dump scene.

ALEX

Pump and dump?

GORDON

(picking and sucking at teeth)
Sorry, got some meat stuck. Yeah, pump dump is like the gang bang but more degrading. Using someone like a rag and then finishing right on them, that's bukkake, it's Japanese for cum in the face.

ALEX

Japanese?

GORDON

Yeah, they're fucking sick, right? It's very big now. Are you into pump and dump, Alex?

ALEX

No.

GORDON

Well it's probably just a fad. Porn ebbs and flows with public sentiment. Right now we are in the golden age of the gang-bang. Humiliation and degradation are in. Ever talked about it to, Cindy?

ALEX
...huh?

GORDON
Cindy, your wife?

ALEX
No.

GORDON
Ask her. You might be surprised.

ALEX
I don't think I would be.

GORDON
So what brings you here?

ALEX
I just needed some place to go and clear my head.

GORDON
Why not at home?

ALEX
Cindy is helping out the exterminator. Besides you're my best friend.

GORDON
I am?

ALEX
Well we never really hung out that much. You were always racing to meet a deadline. But I felt like we were...you know...close...

GORDON
Huh, well you learn something new every day.

ALEX
I don't quite know what to do right now.

GORDON
Why not?

ALEX
I'm a little bit off today.

(He absent-mindedly takes off overcoat and jacket to reveal a bloody shirt)

GORDON

Holy motherfucker!

ALEX

Oh yeah. And I'm bleeding.

GORDON

Alex, what the fuck happened?

ALEX

I just started bleeding.

GORDON

How did this happen?

ALEX

I don't know.

GORDON

Lemme see.

(ALEX lifts up his shirt. GORDON spins him around. His lower abdomen and chest are covered in blood.)

GORDON

Holy shit.

ALEX

What are you looking for?

GORDON

The hole.

ALEX

I don't think there's a hole.

GORDON

There has to be. This is your blood.

ALEX

I think so.

GORDON

You think so?!?

ALEX

I don't recall cutting anyone today.

GORDON

But it could be someone else's blood?

ALEX

I guess. I spaced out this morning. I'm sort of embarrassed about the whole thing.

GORDON

Embarrassed? You're fucking embarrassed? Alex, you gotta go to the hospital.

BEAT

ALEX

Can't I just sleep it off?

GORDON

What?

ALEX

Here. Maybe if I take a nap and...

GORDON

YOU CAN'T FUCKING SLEEP OFF BLEEDING!

ALEX

Gordon, why are you yelling at me?

GORDON

Because you're so fucking calm and nonchalant!

(GORDON runs off and returns
with a leather girdle.)

ALEX

Well I really don't see the point in getting worked up about it. Not going to make things any better.

GORDON

Put this on.

ALEX

Gordon. I don't quite know how to take this-

GORDON

-it's to stop the bleeding! It's coming from your abdomen. Maybe it'll restrict the blood flow. Like a tourniquet.

(ALEX puts on the leather girdle. He looks kinda cute.)

ALEX

Now what?

GORDON

Well...we gotta get you to a hospital.

ALEX

I left my car at home. Can you drive me?

GORDON

Sure...ooh.

ALEX

What?

GORDON

I just remembered. My reviews are due today.

ALEX

Reviews?

GORDON

For Adult World. I'm about 7 flicks behind.

ALEX

Can't you drive me to the hospital first?

GORDON

Well...

ALEX

Gordon?

GORDON

Alex, these people are entrusting me with a big task. My plates already full. I gotta finish Bukkake Boston Babes 3, and then move into the Freddy Fists series.

ALEX

Can't you just make up the reviews?

GORDON

No, Alex. You can't fool people with porn. Believe me, I would if I could, but it can't be done. Porn is just too...scrutinized. Can't you ask any of your other friends?

ALEX

Gordon, you are my only friend.

GORDON

That's not true. What about, ummm...no, that's Cindy's friend...hmmm, no...she hates your guts...oh, I just remembered!

ALEX

What?

GORDON

Roth is dead. He was your friend, right?

ALEX

Who?

GORDON

Roth. You remember. Fat guy, bad ticker, history of cancer. Croaked a few weeks ago. Lyme disease. Who would've thought?

ALEX

Well...okay. So you see: you're the only one I can trust.

GORDON

I can't, Alex. It just simply can't be done. I...have to stay...here.

ALEX

But I thought you said I might be dying.

GORDON

Hell, what do I know? Maybe it's just a flesh wound. Hey, I'll give you money for the cab.

ALEX

But Gordon-

GORDON

-Sorry, Alex. I've got deadlines to meet.
(GORDON hands him a \$20
before sitting back down to
Boston Bukkake Babes 3).

ALEX

All right. I'll...seeya around...(exiting)

GORDON

(eating)
You know it, pal. Any other time and place, and I'd be on
it. Next time your bleeding, I'll be there for you.

BEAT

GORDON

(looking at video)
Her face does look like a glazed doughnut. (shakes head and
laughs)...crazy fucking Japanese.

SCENE SIX: Helping Hands

HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. ALEX sits alone, bundled in his jacket and overcoat. ALEX goes up to the desk, where a nurse plays Tetris.

ALEX

Excuse me?

NURSE

...hmm

ALEX

I wanted to know when I could see a doctor?

NURSE

(losing game)
FUCK! It's piling up...shit, shit...(game over) MOTHERFUCKER!

BEAT

ALEX

Nurse?

NURSE

Fucking communist.

ALEX

I've been sitting here for over an hour.

NURSE

What?

ALEX

I've been waiting for over an hour to see a doctor.

NURSE

No shit. Well this *is* the waiting room.

ALEX

When can I see a doctor?

NURSE

What's the problem?

ALEX

A lot of things. Among them being that I'm bleeding.

NURSE

Really? Well how did that happen?

ALEX

I don't know.

NURSE

You don't know?

ALEX

I don't know.

NURSE

You don't know why you're bleeding?

ALEX

No, that's why I want to see a doctor.

NURSE

We don't hand out free drugs.

ALEX

Excuse me?

NURSE

Is that what you want?

ALEX

Well...

NURSE

Are you high right now?

ALEX

-actually I'm feeling a little dizzy. Could I please-

NURSE

If this is some trick to get drugs you can forget. Because I'll be damned if I let some junkie get one-up on me while I'm on watch. You can go back to your crack house and pay for your own fucking drugs, Mister. I am a goddamn tax-paying American citizen and I'm sick and tired of you fucking addicts. So you can go haul your ass back to Junkietown!

ALEX

I'm not a junkie.

NURSE

Are you 14th floor nutjob or hospital fetishist?

ALEX

I just really want to see a doctor.

NURSE

ID? (Alex hands her ID) Social Security number? (he writes it down). Insurance card.

ALEX

This is a little old, but...

NURSE

...oh. You're insured by...'them.'

ALEX

Yes. What does that mean?

NURSE

(distastefully)
Nothing. You can have a seat. It's gonna be a while. (NURSE goes back to Tetris.)

ALEX

Excuse me...excuse me?

NURSE

What?

ALEX

But what if it's serious. Like 'serious'?

NURSE

I don't follow you.

ALEX

Well, what if I bleed...to death?

NURSE

Why would you want to do that?

ALEX

I don't.

NURSE

Sure you're not some sort of a junkie-whoremonster freak?

ALEX

No, I just want someone to attend to me. You're a nurse, right?

NURSE

Yeah?

ALEX

So can't you...nurse me?

NURSE

You into that sort of thing?

ALEX

No! I just want someone to look at me.

NURSE

(loses Tetris game and sighs)

Fine. Take off your coat and let me see the wound.

(NURSE takes out some
paperwork. ALEX removes his
coat and jacket. He remembers
he's wearing a girdle, but
too late. They both stare at
the girdle. NURSE puts back
the paperwork.)

NURSE

You can have a seat. A doctor will be with you shortly.

(ALEX quickly puts back on
his coat and jacket. He jumps
into a seat.)

SCENE SEVEN: Doctor Doctor

EXAMINATION ROOM. Alex lays on a table, still wearing the girdle. Enter DOCTOR, with head buried in the charts. He reads and circles around ALEX, who props himself up.

DOCTOR

Mmmhmmm...mmmm...huh...yes...hmm...(smirking) hmmm...(laughing a little)...hmpt...hehe...hehehe...ha! (laughter fades into a content sigh)...Hmmm...

(Doctor takes out a stethoscope and puts it to Alex's chest. Then taking out a small rubber hammer, he taps Alex's knee. Then the Doctor removes a giant rubber hammer and taps his knee. Then he pops it quite hard.)

ALEX

Ow.

(Doctor looks up stunned. Offended and annoyed, he writes something nasty in the charts while glaring at Alex.)

(He notices the girdle and the cone breast cups on his chest. The DOCTOR puts his hand on one of the Viking cups. He feels around the edges of the cup. The DOCTOR tries to get fresh and grope his boobs. ALEX slaps his hands and pulls back. Wagging his finger, Alex straightens out his girdle. The Doctor writes something flirtatious in the charts, while smiling and winking at him.)

(Finally the doctor pulls up a stool and looks at Alex. He clears his throat, like he's about to make a grand pronouncement.)

DOCTOR

You're bleeding.

ALEX

Doctor-

DOCTOR

You're bleeding a lot.

ALEX

I know. That's-

DOCTOR

No, no, no! Can I talk? I mean, if you don't mind, can I finish, please? Hmm? How about letting me get a word in edgewise, huh? Huh? Since I have the degree and everything, how bout you just sit there bleeding and let me talk. I'm the doctor, okay? Just out of common courtesy, Mister Know-It-All, Mister Rude-Dude, interrupting me all the time.

ALEX

I just wanted-

DOCTOR

Wait, what? What is that noise? Is that an echo? Is that an echo of my own voice? Well it has to be because no one else is supposed to be talking. (very emotional and teary-eyed) I'm the only one with authority, right? I'm the one in charge. Me, me, me!

ALEX

Sorry.

DOCTOR

-They don't just hand these coats out to anybody, huh? Do you have a white lab coat? I don't think so. Just me, me, me! So what do you have to say to that?

BEAT

DOCTOR

Ahh, silent all of a sudden. (looking at chart) We have done extensive test and determined that you, sir, are bleeding.

BEAT

DOCTOR

Well. What are you going to do about it?

ALEX

Me?

DOCTOR

Yes. It is your body. What do you intend on doing with it?

ALEX

Well I'd hope that you could...help me.

DOCTOR

Alex, have you ever thought about volunteering your organs?

ALEX

What?

DOCTOR

It's a new program called, Organ Volunteering.

ALEX

You mean donation?

DOCTOR

If you want to use that term, fine. Yes, organ donation.

ALEX

Doctor, I just-

DOCTOR

Come on, guy. We'll take anything you got. Anything, man. Any excess weight you wanna dump? Didya know you have two kidneys?

ALEX

Yes.

DOCTOR

Wow. That's a cornucopia. Two. Why do ya have to be so stingy? God has given you a bounty. Why not share? Kidneys, gallstones, bladders and livers. We need 'em all. Entrails, fingernails, we'll even take skin. We are recruiting volunteers from all across this world. Why do you know the story of the boys of Madagascar? (Alex shakes head no) No? Have you thought about OV? Teeth, hair, the Abdullah medulla? Enlisting your heart and hands in the struggle?

(DOCTOR grabs ALEX'S hands
and grips them tight. There's
a crazed look in his eye.
Alex is scared.)

ALEX

The struggle against what?

DOCTOR

Why the struggle, of course. The eternal struggle, the battle we've been fighting since the beginning. Imagine it, the eternal human. Every time something stops working, we pop in a new part. Like legos. Kidney failure? We got one coming right up. Piping hot and fresh, straight from a little Welsh boys. Eyes covered in scales? No problem Cataract Cathy, because we got a brand-spanking new pair from an obese Turkish opium dealer. Legs don't work? We got plenty from Africa. And those people can run!

ALEX

No thank you. I think I want to go-

DOCTOR

Alex, we need your body. We need it. You can live for ever! Attila says you can live forever. You just need to believe in him. Believe, Alex! Believe! BELIEVE!

(TWO NURSES run in. The
DOCTOR is obviously a
deranged patient. They try to
chase him around the office.
But the 'DOCTOR' throws his
white coat at one of them and
escapes.)

SCENE EIGHT: Real McCoy

The real doctor, P.T. PECK,
stands by him shaking his
head and laughing about the
whole 'incident.' ALEX stares
at him, with a tinge of
bitter impatience.

PT

(sighs)
...I'm sorry about that whole thing.

BEAT

PT

-mental ward on the 14th floor. Loons, trainables, wack jobs
sometimes get loose and...well you know.

BEAT

PT

But you gotta admit: they keep you on your toes. Sometimes
you gotta just learn to laugh at things.

ALEX

...yeah, sure...

PT

So, no hard feelings?

ALEX

No.

PT

Put 'er there.

(PT puts out hand for a
shake. ALEX takes it and gets
zapped by a hand buzzer.)

Gotcha. Everybody likes a funny doctor, right?

ALEX

No.

PT

Name is PT Peck. But people sometimes call me Patch. As in
Patch Adams, because I like to keep it light around here. I
think laughter is the best therapy. I model myself after

PT (cont'd)

the Patchmeister. Gotta keep the laughs coming. My kids bought it for me on stepdad appreciation day. Well anyway, lets take a look at your charts.

(PT grabs his charts. He looks confused. Then he realizes the chart is upside down and flips it over.)

Oh. Much, much better. Let's see what we got. Hmmm... Alex...

ALEX

I know! I'm bleeding.

PT

Yeah, I noticed that too. Got any ideas?

ALEX

About what?

PT

The whole thing your body is going through...

ALEX

(sharply)

I thought that was your job.

PT

Ouch. Zing! You nailed me on that one. Hahahaha. Well tell me, Alex: you feel any sharp jabs inside your stomach recently?

ALEX

No.

PT

Get into any fights?

ALEX

No.

PT

Ate anything...funny?

ALEX

No.

PT

Inhaled or touched any strange chemicals?

ALEX

No.

PT

You're not deeply religious are you?

ALEX

That's none of your business.

PT

Ever felt a rush or excitement in cutting yourself?

ALEX

I did not do this to myself.

PT

Sure. Sure, I believe you.

(He writes something
suspicious in his charts.
Then he smiles at ALEX and
whips out a garbage bag)

Well here. Put this on.

ALEX

What is it?

PT

It'll help.

ALEX

It looks like a garbage bag?

PT

What, this thing?

ALEX

Yes.

PT

Why would you say that?

ALEX

There's a little red Hefty cinch line around it.

PT

Alex, this is not a garbage bag. This is a CTPed. A complex, thermodynamic plastic epidermal device. It's an insulating, antibacterial, light-sensitive biomedical gear. Or as I like to call it: a thingamajiggy.

ALEX

Will this stop the bleeding?

PT

Well...no, Alex. We don't quite know how to stop the bleeding. But this will 'contain' the bleeding.

ALEX

Contain? So basically you're saying this will keep the blood from spilling on your floor?

PT

It feels really good, Alex? Like you're getting a massage.

ALEX

What's going to happen to me?

PT

Well, first we gotta get you into this bag. Then we will monitor you. Give you some liquids, a warm bed, nice quiet room, we got cabled installed last month.

ALEX

A room and bed. Is that all you got for me?

PT

Yeah...um...I don't follow you.

ALEX

Can't you do...more?

PT

More? Alex, CTPed cost \$11,753.45.

ALEX

It's a garbage bag.

PT

...okay, so it may be plastic. And yes, it does have a draw string around the sides of it. And yes, Hefty may be the

PT(cont'd)

producing company of the CTPED and charging us \$11,000 for a one-cent garbage bag. But don't worry about it, Alex. Your insurance covers almost half of it.

ALEX

I'm not worried about cost, I... (thinks) wait, half?

PT

So just slip into this nice little snug thing. It's anathesized with Diazepam and Dilaudid. Don't you like hydromorphines, Alex? Sure you do, I mean who doesn't-

ALEX

Is this all you have? All your degrees and million-dollar microchip, fiberoptic, nanotechno, biomedical hype and hysteria. And this is all you've got? An overpriced plastic bag?

PT

Now, Alex...

ALEX

What good are you? What good is any of this? All your experts, specialist, researchers, the whole system! I'm sick of nobody being able to do anything. Why can't you do something? Cut me open, fish around in there. A catscan, MRI, something! Nuke me with radiation, put me under a microscope! Treat me! You, you...(like it's the worst thing in the world)...doctor... God! I'm beginning to suspect that you're all a bunch of frauds.

BEAT

PT

Ouch. Zing! Hahaha, I can show you my degree if you want?

ALEX

Can't you do anything?

PT

Alex, I like you. You're a funny guy.

ALEX

-No, I'm not-

PT

-So I'm going to be honest with you. From the charts it looks like things...don't look too promising.

ALEX

What are you talking about?

PT

What I mean to say is that your body...has quit. Your arterial walls, your cells, your bones have gone on strike. What you have isn't just a leakage of blood. We tested the liquid coming from you. And Alex: it's everything. Blood, marrow, sodium, hair, bile, semen. All coming out of you at once. In slow leaks everywhere. Look at this chart. You see that? There are little holes inside of you. And the little holes are growing. Getting bigger, expanding out. And its happening all over. Alex, you are sort of...dissolving.

ALEX

Can you...I mean, will I...I can't go on like this, can I?

PT

We can take the pain away.

ALEX

And then?

PT

Rest...we'll make it easier for you.

ALEX

Easier for me to what?

(PT puts the bag in Alex's lap. Almost forgetting his bedside manners, PT takes out a giant lollipop, hands it to him, before slapping him on the back.)

SCENE NINE: God Mops Up

HOSPICE. ALEX lays under his bedcovers, drowsily. He's wearing the CTPed and hopped up on morphine. He sings softly to himself like a drunken man. A MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR enters. He has a halo of light. He talks like he's from the 1940s and looks a lot like Uncle Ben. He spits chaw behind him as he mops. He hums a negro spiritual.

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

(spits and wipes mouth)
Howdy, son.

ALEX

Howdy.

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

Whatcha doin' wearin dat dere garbage bag?

ALEX

Ha! Shows how much you know...

MAGICAL BLACK JANITOR

...Tom. Named after my great great great granddaddy, Mr. Jefferson.

ALEX

That shows how much you know, Tom. This here isn't a garbage bag. It's a C...T...a 'P' and then a 'ED.'

TOM

(spits)
A whose-a-whatchacallit?

ALEX

A C...T...PED. It's the best they've got. I should feel privileged to wear this \$11,000 bag, Tom. This is the height of Western science and technology.

TOM

Don't know nothing 'bout no science. But I do know a garbage bag when I see one. And you're wearing it.

ALEX

It takes the pain away. And it catches all the blood.

TOM

Wait! Hold my dead mammy Sally's horses! You dat guy!

ALEX

What guy?

TOM

That guy dey been talkin' bout. Who's coming apart like cotton candy.

ALEX

I'm the guy.

TOM

Pleasure to meet you. Everyone callin' ya some kind of miracle. Well not miracle. What be like a miracle, but really bad?

ALEX

...disaster.

TOM

No.

ALEX

Catastrophe.

TOM

Dat be you. Sho' nuff. Da' catastrophic polymorphic.

(TOM titters to himself. Then
he coughs up a massive amount
of red tobacco juice and
wipes his lips.)

Why they got you wearing a bag?

ALEX

To catch the dissolving 'me.' Keeps me off the ground.

TOM

Sounds kinda grim.

ALEX

Well at least I don't dirty the floors. Makes your job easier.

TOM

Sho nuff. My job is plenty hard. Floors never seem to get clean enough.

(TOM and ALEX laugh. Then TOM spits red chaw on ALEX'S sheets. BEAT)

ALEX

Was that you or me?

(ALEX and TOM laugh even more.)

No, but seriously was that you or me?

TOM

What they got in store for you, Poly?

ALEX

The end.

TOM

Sorry to hear that. Hospital hasn't been this jumping since a bunch of headless hobos were stacked like a pyramid outside the ER. How much time you got?

ALEX

Doctors said a few hours...

TOM

...and then?

ALEX

Put me in the books with the headless hobos, Tom.

TOM

The end, huh? Well I guess today's as good a day as any.

ALEX

Today. It was supposed to be...special...I bought a chocolate cheesecake, made dinner reservations, rented out a boat...

TOM

Why?

ALEX

Why? Nevermind. It was my special day.

TOM

Then why are you just sitting there?

ALEX

I don't know what else to do. I...

(ALEX starts crying. TOM
drops his mop. He walks over
and tries to console ALEX,
without having to touch him.)

TOM

With all this beauty in the world, you're going to spend
your last breath staring at the yellow hospice walls?

ALEX

The world is not that beautiful.

TOM

Sho' it is, poly. Sho it is. Look 'round you, son. Every
cloud has a silver lining. You just gotta look up at the
stars and make a wish.

ALEX

I don't understand.

TOM

You know the world is beautiful. All you have to do is
watch two puppies tangled in a bed sheet, or watch a little
girl and boy smother each other with kisses of pure joy.

ALEX

(stops crying and looks up confused)
...what?

TOM

Have you ever smelt the air after the grass has been cut?
Tasted the life in every breath and savored it. Seen a baby
walk for the first time or watched children blow bubbles in
their cereal? Or a couple walking down a boardwalk, holding
each other by the tip of their fingers. And you see them
and you know: that love does exist. It's the only thing
that makes this little bitty world go 'round.

BEAT

ALEX

You're pretty fucking cheesy.

TOM

Well, don't know bout that.

ALEX

No. You are. It's kind of disgusting.

TOM

Don't you mean, 'heavenly?'

(Choir of angels sing and
halo shines a little brighter
around him for a second.)

ALEX

No, I'm pretty sure I mean disgusting.

TOM

I seen a lot in my time, Poly-

ALEX

-and stop calling me Poly.

TOM

I know you're in a lot of pain, son. But trouble don't last
more than a night. And in the morning, a bird in the hand
is worth more than two in a bush-

ALEX

-Will you shut the fuck up.

TOM

Now, Poly. Why you getting worked up in a tizzy?

ALEX

Because what you're saying doesn't mean anything.

TOM

I'm talking 'bout a win-win situation, here. Now good
things come to those who wait, right? Well then, keep
believing in tomorrow. Another day and another dollar. You
just gotta believe. Put your faith on the dotted line.

ALEX

Put my faith on the dotted line? That doesn't even make
sense.

TOM

How 'bout life is a game of inches. Play your cards close to your chest. Children are the future-

ALEX

Aahhh, no more!

(ALEX leaps out of bed. He paces around, agitated.)

ALEX

Today was supposed to mean something.

TOM

Every day is special in the eye's of God, son.

ALEX

Are you real?

TOM

Now why would you ask a question like that?

ALEX

Because you don't seem...human.

TOM

I am whatever you want me to be.

ALEX

O my god. You're not real. Are you an apparition? A fairy godfather? An angel? No, I don't believe in God. Wait! You're...in my head. Right? This is my mind? These are my thoughts? So, is that it? I'm being passed over...

TOM

That reminds of the time my Jewish friend, Moisha, invited me to Pass Over. Or was it Pesacht? It was one of those events with food...I can't remember if it involved foreskin or not...actually it was a weekend in the Hamptons. Oddly enough, though...I do remember foreskin being involved. Now you want to talk about heads-

ALEX

-I'm going to disappear, then. Like empty words into some great gray nothingness. There isn't even going to be a trace of me left behind, is there?

TOM

Now don't be so harsh, Alex. You was nice.

ALEX

Yes. Nice. That's how I'm gonna be remembered. The sum total of all my work: nice. But...no. I am not a disposable rag. My life means more than these...empty niceties. I have to get out of here.

(ALEX is light in the head
and stumbles a bit.)

TOM

Don't you think it's too late?

(ALEX takes off his CTPED.
He's wrapped in red-stained
gauze tape.)

Now, Alex what you be doing to your body tampon?

ALEX

Shedding it. You wanna know something, Tom? I thank you. I had given up. Comfortable enough to lay there and wait. But, then I found something inside me.

TOM

What? Love? Compassion? Beauty?

ALEX

No. There's something behind this blankness. As I laid there listening to your bleeding gums rattle off that insipid horse-shit philosophy, laced with your asinine aphorism, and your putrescent and puerile pontifications, I felt...alive. It was like with every idiotic idiom you were stabbing little holes in that white wall. And I feel like all this light is coming out of the holes in me. Rage, Tom. It is very purifying. Kicking and clawing and screaming inside my chest. Blossoming like some poisoned fruit, gorged and erect with blood. Is this what life feels like? I've never felt this before.

(ALEX overturns the bed and
rips the sheets. TOM tries to
intercede but gets head
butted. Alex proceeds to the
beat the shit out of him.)

TOM

Lawd Jesus. Save me from this here crazy-ass cracker.

ALEX

No one is gonna save you from this crazy-ass cracker, Tom! Ask your dead mammy Sally who saved her? But she probably prayed and counted her pathetic blessings every day. Because they killed her rage. And when they killed that, her life was gone. But I still have something left in me.

(ALEX jumps up and grabs
TOM'S broomstick he wields it
like weapon)

TOM

Whatcha gonna do?

ALEX

Breaking out of this place.

TOM

And then what?

ALEX

Hmmm. I don't know exactly. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to kill somebody?

TOM

No.

ALEX

Sure you have, Tom. Everyone has dreams.

TOM

You're not serious.

ALEX

Maybe not, but I am alive.

TOM

Alive or not, you can't do anything looking like the way you is.

ALEX

I can't? No you're right I look pretty fucking ridiculous, I guess.

TOM

That's right. Now why doncha put back on that Hefty bag there-

ALEX

I need a disguise.

TOM

Disguise? Now where you going to find something like-
(ALEX sticks the broom into
TOM'S throat)

ALEX

Give.

TOM

Why me?

ALEX

Because you're standing there. And that's as good a reason as any in this world. Jesus, I'm kinda upset, huh? I guess I've been storing it all up. I am not a nice person. In fact, I never was. Give.

(TOM undresses as he talks to
the audience.)

TOM

Well, it appears as if our little tale is taking a slightly different route. This was supposed to be the point where our Everyman realized something beautiful and true in death. His life montaged before his eyes in a beautifully edited segment. This was supposed to be the point when he remembered his childhood in Lexington, Virginia. The crisp mountain air rolling down the cliffs and into his nostrils. Filling your lungs with mother nature's goodness.

ALEX

I'm asthmatic. Shoes.

TOM

Or his college years and the first girl he fell in love with.

ALEX

She gave me crabs.

TOM

That's it, the little gifts of love. Some lovers get puppies or birds. And then there's those who give seafood. Lobsters and crabs and other crustaceans.

ALEX

Don't you have an off switch?

TOM

No, sir. I'm just a poor lil old backward janitor from Alabama. And I know I don't know nothin' bout no fancy city folk, but I do know pain and suffering. But no matter whatcha going through, poly: you gotta try to live.

ALEX

Gimme your keys, that boxcutter in your pocket and get in that closet over there.

TOM

Now...poly...how would you like to talk about this over a nice pipping hot cup of Joe?

ALEX

Tom, how would you like to lose the cartilage in your knees?

BEAT

TOM

You want me in the broom or the linen?

ALEX

Which one is bigger?

TOM

Broom.

ALEX

Fine. Get in the linen. Now march.

(ALEX marches TOM off-stage and locks him in. He runs back on-stage and wheels the cart off. He quickly dresses. TOM's voice is muffled.)

TOM

Poly? You still there? Poly, there ain't no reason why you can't find Jesus in your last precious moments here on this itty bitty spinning ball we call earth. Yessuh, ain't no reason. God forgives son. And he saves. God loves each and every body and he saves. He also sometimes scourges. Awful

TOM (cont'd)

awful scourges. Then there's the whole slavery thing. Famine, war, holocausts and little children with hacked-off limbs dying of perfectly treatable diseases that could be cured with a two-cent shot...Alex. I'm scared of tight dark places. Kinda silly considering we all came from dark tight places, but still...chest feeling a little tight.

(ALEX is long gone.)

TOM

I know you're still thinking it over. Let me assure you, God is like a janitor. Moping up the sorrows and troubles of today. Why, look around you. Read the paper or watch the news. See how good God mops up? How can you say you're not loved, Poly? Just look at the world around you. Can't you feel the love? (singing) Can you feel the love tonight/hmmm, hmm...mmm...Just sit real tight, folks. We gonna get this thing right back on track in a second. Poly, I ...I...can't breathe. Like I'm...hyper-gesticulating. Lawd Jesus, save me.

SCENE TEN: Saying Goodbye

SOCCKER FIELD. JANE KRITZER
cheers the kids on and talks
to her husband. WHISTLE
BLOWS.

JANE

That's right honey. Let's try to have a good time. Keep it clean, keep it fun. Biff... no, what are you doing? No. No, what did tell you about biting? We spoke about that young man. Honey talk to him about that. Only at the dinner table, Biff. Does his arm look like a roast beef? No, I don't think so. Baby, he's going to ruin his braces. Biff you are going to ruin your braces! And then you are going to have an overbite, get chronic lockjaw and start having headaches like your daddy. And then you know what happens, Biff? Guess what happens, son? You die. That's right. Nice and slow of a brain tumor. And when you're dying some agonizing slow death, don't run to me young man. Cause you know what I'm going to say?

(ALEX ambles in, dizzy and
light-in the head. He's
sweating and holding his guts
in with his hand. He walks up
to the fence.)

I. told. you. so...no, Biff. Clawing is not better than biting. You know what happens when you claw at someone young man. Well, I'm going to tell you...

(ALEX stumbles and staggers into JANE.)

JANE

Hey, watch it!

ALEX

Sorry.

JANE

Are you drunk?

ALEX

No.

JANE

You look drunk. (to Biff) Biff, no clawing!

ALEX

I'm just a little sick.

(JANE inches away from him.)

JANE

Why don't you go home?

ALEX

Because I want to see my son.

JANE

(overlapping)
Hey...no fair. Don't you try to hold my Biff. (to Alex) I'm sorry, what?

ALEX

I just wanted to see my son, Clarence.

JANE

Which one is he?

ALEX

He's right there. (calling) Clarence...come here, son.

JANE

The one on the ground?

ALEX

Yeah.

JANE

With the wedgie?

ALEX

That's my son.

JANE

I'm sorry about that. Biff sometimes gets excited.
(calling) Way to go, Biff.

ALEX

So does, Clarence. He's really working up a sweat laying there on the ground.

JANE

Actually I think those are tears.

ALEX

Same difference. Clarence...daddy wants to talk to you for a second...

JANE

Maybe you should wait until after the game.

ALEX

I can't wait. Clarence! Daddy has something important to say...this is going to be our last bonding moment...

JANE

I don't think he can hear you.

ALEX

No, he just enjoys pretending he can't. A little game we like to play called 'Invisible Stepfather.' Clarence! Your father has something important and life-changing.

JANE

Foul, that's illegal, honey.

ALEX

CLARENCE! CLARENCE, I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME.

JANE

All right, just calm down. (calling) Clarence, your dad wants to speak to you. It sounds serious.

ALEX

Yeah, so you have to do as your told. How do you know I don't have something important to say like...your mother's dead. Hmm? Maybe she is, I can't tell you until you come over here.

JANE

She's not really dead is she-

ALEX

CLARENCE GET OVER HERE BEFORE I RUN OUT THERE AND DRAG YOUR HIDE ACROSS THE FIELD! LOOK AT ME, ACKNOWLEDGE, I AM YOUR FATHER. I EXIST! THINGS ARE GOING TO GET UGLY IF YOU DON'T OBEY ME, YOU ASSHOLE! OKAY FINE HAVE IT YOUR WAY.

(ALEX takes off shoes and
gets ready to sprint out when

COACH KRITZER runs toward them.)

JANE

Hey, honey.

COACH KRITZER

Hey babe. Sir, what seems to be the problem?

ALEX

Nothing, I'm just going to kidnap my son. Excuse me...

JANE

I don't think that's legal.

ALEX

Course it's legal. I own him. You feed them, clothe them, try to impart some nougats of wisdom on the little fuckers and this is how they repay you.

COACH KRITZER

Sir you can't talk that way to the kids.

ALEX

I'm not talking that way to just any kid. I'm talking that way to my kid.

COACH KRITZER

Oh. Okay. Still, you're sort of scaring everyone else. Now if you'll just wait 'till-

ALEX

-I've been waiting my whole life. I don't have any more time!

COACH KRITZER

Excuse me?

JANE

I think he's drunk.

ALEX

You ever feel like you absolutely have to talk to someone? Before...something or someone slips away, before everything passes and you forget what you want to say, or maybe you'll just be forgotten?

COACH KRITZER

Sir, I have to get back to refereeing this.

ALEX

My name is Alex. I'm the father of Clarence. Just bring him over here. For a second, please.

COACH KRITZER

(exiting)

I'll see what I can do.

ALEX

I am not drunk.

JANE

Whatever you say.

ALEX

And I am not crazy.

JANE

Nooo.

ALEX

I am just a man who wants to leave something behind. Who wants to be of substance.

JANE

Substance?

ALEX

And I don't mean drugs.

JANE

Of course not.

ALEX

Stop being sarcastic.

JANE

Who me?

ALEX

Don't look at me like that. Everyone is always looking at me, watching me, taking pieces of me. Don't you understand?

JANE

Well...

ALEX

Please tell me you understand. You see what I see, you feel something for me.

JANE

Why don't you take my card?

ALEX

(reading)
Jane Kritzer yoga guru?

JANE

I run a meditation center. Yoga, chakrah, energy zones. I help people with stress.

ALEX

That's all you think I am? A ball of stress that needs release?

JANE

You're holding a lot of tension in your abdomen.

ALEX

You want me to meditate?

JANE

It takes years off your appearance. Just look at me. And we're getting better at it, Alex. I hold morning classes on the beach. The place of true nature. I think the soul is birthed from earth and must live purely so that it can return to the soil. So it must be renewed by nature.

ALEX

I was supposed to go with my wife to the beach tonight.

JANE

Yes, it's something innate inside. The beach is where it all begins.

(COACH KRITZER runs back with
a note.)

ALEX

Where's my son?

COACH KRITZER

Said he was busy but he wrote you this note.

ALEX

(reads)

Fuck...off.

COACH KRITZER

That kid's gotta the mouth of a drunken sailor. Too bad he plays like a little Dutch girl.

ALEX

That's it?

COACH KRITZER

'Fraid so. But the kid has had a rough day. Some junior high punks beat him up and took his lunch money.

ALEX

Really?

COACH KRITZER

Yeah, but it's good for him. Toughens him up. Besides whatever doesn't kill them makes them stronger, right? Anyway (blows whistle) Play on!

(COACH KRITZER runs back out
on to the field.)

JANE

Go Biff...keep it above the waist.

ALEX

So that's it?

JANE

Hope to see you soon, Alex.

ALEX

What?

JANE

Maybe even this afternoon. We can get you in some yoga classes and relieve all that tension. And we're affordable. You don't have to rob a bank or anything.

ALEX

Rob a bank...hmmm? (thinks) Well why not. I'll see you later.
(exits)

JANE

See you. Remember to feed your inner-child. (back to game)
Hey, what the hell?!! How about a whistle, honey? Biff!
Next time he does that to you, you do have permission to
bite.

SCENE ELEVEN: Loyal Customer

BANK. Teller sits filing her nails. Still locked in the closet, TOM narrates the story.

TOM

Hello? I'm in here. I'm locked in the closet! Somebody, lawd, somebody hear this poor ol' janitor's cries. They said I wuz 'ppose to be some kind of Jimminy Cricket narrator in dis herre story. How can I be the voice of God when I be locked in dis closet? This be the last time I sub in for Morgan Freeman. Next time they want some old black man to be da noble negro in some cracker's life they can dig up Bojangles or Canada Lee. Dis was 'ppose to be da point in da story where Alex goes and confesses his sins to a priest. Guess dat didn't happen, did it? Well I'm sure things gonna get back on track in a little bit. And Alex'll be right back to his usual self. And den he'll see the light and become passive lil lamb again.

(Alarm erupts)

ALEX

(running in with box cutter)
Freeze! This is a stick up!

TELLER

Now, sir...

ALEX

That's right. 'Now, sir.'

TELLER

Just calm down-

ALEX

'Now. Sir.'" Two words I never thought I'd here at a bank: immediacy and respect. Keep that in mind because that's how we're going to operate today, okay?

TELLER

But we're closing in two minutes.

ALEX

Then we'll be quick since we wanna get you home.

TELLER

Fine. What do you want?

ALEX

A free calendar. What do you think I want?

TELLER

You want money.

ALEX

Correction, I want other people's money. You want to know why, Miss?

TELLER

So you can buy stuff?

ALEX

No. Well, that's a part of it. But when you have other people's money, Miss, they remember you. You suddenly stop being invisible. In fact, you become quite visible and very wanted.

TELLER

Okay, we'll see what we can try to do. (types into computer) I'm going to need a minute with this.

ALEX

Why? (look at her screen) What! Get off AOL!

TELLER

Okay, let me just finish this IM to...

ALEX

NOW!

TELLER

Okay. BRB Tonya.

ALEX

No. No BRB. You will not be right back. How about some freaking respect? I'm a living breathing person standing in front of you and I'm holding a box cutter that could slice your head off. TTYL, Tonya. Tell her you will talk to her later. TTYL.

TELLER

Ttyl, Tonya. There. Are you happy?

ALEX

Yes. Now the money.

TELLER

The alarm system shuts down any withdrawals without an account number.

ALEX

(takes out card)
Fine. Use this.

TELLER

You have an account here?

ALEX

Yes.

TELLER

And you're robbing us?

ALEX

Yeah, I'm a loyal customer. Hurry up.

TELLER

(looks at card)
Alex DaFleur. So you want a withdrawal?

ALEX

No, I said I want other people's money. Everything you've got. (takes out CTPed) Put it in here.

TELLER

There's blood on it.

ALEX

Among other things.

(TELLER takes bag and
retreats to vault. TOM calls
to him; he's still locked in
the closet)

TOM

Poly...

ALEX

Who is that?

TOM

You know who I be, Poly?

ALEX

I thought I locked you in the closet.

TOM

You can't lock the voice of God in a closet.

ALEX

You're not God.

TOM

Den how come I can talk to you?

ALEX

You're in my head.

TOM

Isn't that good enough?

ALEX

You're just some recycled movie cliché.

TOM

I'm the closest thing to God most people'll ever know.

ALEX

I am not going to have a theological debate with you, Tom. You are just a janitor locked in a hospital linen closet. I am done with you and now I'm robbing a freaking bank.

TOM

You ain't following the script, Poly. These are your last few hours on earth. Think about how you want to be remembered.

ALEX

That's just it, Tom. No one is going to remember me, so I have nothing to lose.

TOM

So I guess you not robbing this bank to give that money to an orphanage?

ALEX

Orphanages don't even exist any more?

TOM

There's one downtown on skidrow by the Bowery.

ALEX

That's a weed-filled lot.

TOM

How do you know that area?

ALEX

Because it's where I'm headed.

TOM

To the orphanage?

ALEX

There is no orphanage! Shut up and get out of my head.

TOM

So whatcha doing this fer?

ALEX

For Courvoisier.

TOM

Liquor, Alex. I thought you was above dat.

ALEX

Courvoisier is not just a liquor, Tom. And I'm not above anything anymore.

TELLER

(re-entering)
Who are you talking to?

ALEX

A magical Black janitor in my head.

TELLER

Cool. Here's the dough.

ALEX

(snatches bag)
This is it?

TELLER

That's the vault.

ALEX

This doesn't even cover the money in my account. Where's the rest of it?

TELLER

We're low.

ALEX

But you're the bank. You're not supposed to get low.

TELLER

Hey, it happens. You can come back tomorrow and try us again.

ALEX

I'm not going to be here tomorrow.

TELLER

Sorry. Got cleaned out before you came. Two dying cancer patients. Bet you don't feel so original now, Mr. Robber?

ALEX

So that's why you don't have any more?

TELLER

Well...don't tell anybody but we were just a little low to begin with...keep it under your hat.

ALEX

But you're the bank. You're supposed to have enough on-hand money to cover the deposits.

TELLER

What are you, the SEC?

ALEX

This is inexcusable. It's negligent, abusive and illegal.

TELLER

Okay, Mr. Bank Robber.

ALEX

(exiting)
Aaaaghhhh...

TELLER

Call ahead next time.

SCENE TWELVE: Fine Whine

SKIDROW. COURVOISIER stands swinging her purse and popping bubbles. She's a prostitute in a bad wig. PIMP ICE is adding up a tab and cussing under his breath. He's her pimp.

COURVOISIER

But I-

PIMP ICE

-Shut it. Not another word, Courvoisier. Stupid-ass hoes taking bathroom breaks. This coming out of your perdiem. Where do you think you are? Does this look like Red Lobster? Are you a waiter? Is a nigga wearing a bib with a motherfucking crustacean on it?

COURVOISIER

I-

PIMP ICE

Shut your silly little ass up. Ain't no bathroom breaks in hoeing. You piss on your time and you fuck on mine. When you're on the corner you hold it in. I don't care if you burst open or lay a golden egg. 'Bathroom break.' Does it say bitch-ass nigga on my back?

COURVOISIER

I-

PIMP ICE

Hey! I told you to shut the fuck up when PI is talking. This right here is exactly the problem in our society. The order of things is all ass backwards. In the old days you ain't have none of this casual Friday, cigarette break/bathroom run/coffee excursion/honey pot journeying bullshit. Everybody thinks they got a right to their own time and space. Because everybody think they got a right to relax. To sit back and talk, sip tea and shoot the shit. Bunch of hoes sitting 'round whining about their corns. That's 'bout as interesting as watching a bunch of retarded kids play basketball. Sure it's cute the first minute or so. But then you realize the motherfuckers don't even know how to dribble. So it's a waste. They could be picking up

PIMP ICE (cont'd)

garbage or pulling up weeds with their teeth. But no, someone decided they gotta relax and have fun. Worried about everyone's feelings. When I was a kid we didn't have feelings. And nobody was trying to have fun. Only thing you was trying to do was get fed, grow up and move out. So that one day you could walk back home and break your foot off in your old man's ass and say 'motherfucker, I got a wife, a Cadillac and a job. Now try and hit me so I can break my other foot off in your spit-dribbling Alzheimer's ass.' And that was the beauty of growing up. Do ya understand?

BEAT

PIMP ICE

Well? Speak up! Ain't you got nothing to say? Gonna let Pimp Ice hang himself out to dry like that? Ain't a motherfucker ever tell you that silence is rude. Especially when I'm over here having a moment about my pops. You just stand there and let me spill all over you?

COURVOISIER

I-

PIMP

Too late now, ho. I done already busted my emotional nut all over this sidewalk. Give me a hug.

(COURVOISIER hugs him)

No, bitch. Hug like you mean it.

(COURVOISIER hugs like she means it.)

And a kiss.

(COURVOISIER kisses him on the lips. He freaks out and rubs his lips.)

What the fuck is your problem? I said a kiss. I didn't tell you to make the fuck out with a nigga. Damn! What are you kissing me on my lips for? We're in public, ain't you got no sense of respect.

COURVOISIER

I'm sorry Pimp Ice.

PIMP ICE

You certainly is. You is one sorry-ass ho. No sense of style, your wig is crooked and you don't know nothing.

(ALEX enters. He sweats
profusely and wears
sunglasses.)

PIMP ICE

Way back when, people had respect for a motherfucker. Your
cherry-ass don't know the first thing about what it takes...
(COURVOISIER'S cell rings.
She looks at the caller ID
and motions for a moment.)

PIMP ICE

What the fuck?

COURVOISIER

Excuse me, Mr. Pimp Ice...(into phone) Hello?...Who is this?

PIMP ICE

(trying to remain calm)
Courvoisier...COURVOISIER?

COURVOISIER

Oh. Hey, girl. How you doing?

PIMP ICE

Bitch, get off the phone. Cu-cu...COURVOISIER-

COURVOISIER

...just a minute. (talking on phone)...go ahead...no, I ain't up
to much. Just chilling, you know...no. No, ain't nobody here.

PIMP ICE

Cu-c-Courvesier!

COURVOISIER

Ssshhh.

PIMP ICE

Are you shushing me? Bitch are you shusing Pimp Ice?

COURVOISIER

Don't get all heated, P'. You know how you start stuttering
having fits. And then you start crying.

PIMP ICE

Bu...bu,bu...bitch keep it down. You ain't nevah gonna amount
to shit in P.I's b...book. (whips out phone and speed dials).

PIMP ICE (cont'd)

G...give a nigga c...confidence problems. Ain't n...never seen something this ridiculous. I'm calling my therapist (exiting and talking into phone)...hello? Mom...

COURVOISIER

...go 'head...what? Fo' real? Oh, hell naw...that nigga ghet-toe! As in tow up from the floor up! Nothing...just started working this new job...gotta pay my credit card bills, student loans and shit...you know...

ALEX

Hello.

COURVOISIER

...right...Sallie Mae will fuck a bitch up...

ALEX

Hello, Miss.

COURVOISIER

...sorry, I don't have any spare change.

ALEX

Oh.

(ALEX begins walking away.
Then he stops and remembers
it's his last day. What does
he have to lose?)

ALEX

Courvoisier, aye yo...swing over dis way.

COURVOISIER

Girl, I gotta go. This might be a customer. (hangs up phone) Hey, sexy man.

ALEX

Get over here.

(COURVOISIER straightens her
wig and sashays over with a
smile. She wraps her hands
around his waist. He coughs.)

COURVOISIER

Hey sexy.

ALEX

Hey...

COURVOISIER

(thinking up something new)
Hey...sexy. Hey.

ALEX

Um, you already said that.

COURVOISIER

Damn...(scratching wig, thinking)...so...

ALEX

So?

COURVOISIER

...Hey...um...

ALEX

...sexy?

COURVOISIER

Yeah.

ALEX

(laughs and coughs)
I've known you for a long time.

COURVOISIER

You have?

ALEX

I've been seeing you for the past year. You just don't know it.

COURVOISIER

Have we...?

ALEX

No...well not in actuality. Just in my mind. You and so many other things. But today something is going to become real. I'm going...(coughs and gags)

COURVOISIER

Are you all right?

ALEX

Yeah. I'm fine. It's going to be great. I'm going to leave something behind. I'm going to feel something. One last chance and it's with you. (he continues coughing)

COURVOISIER

Cool, but you don't sound too good.

ALEX

No, I'm fine.

COURVOISIER

No, I don't think you are.

ALEX

YES I AM! Now listen you're not going anywhere. I'm a john and you're a prostitute, right?

COURVOISIER

Actually, I'm on my lunch break.

ALEX

Come on, Courvoisier. Make something in my life right. Make something real for me. (whips out bag) Look, I even got your money.

COURVOISIER

There's blood on that bag.

ALEX

Don't pay it any mind.

COURVOISIER

PI...I think we got a nutjob here.

ALEX

No, I'm not crazy. I'm just dying.

COURVOISIER

Stay way from me...PI?

ALEX

You can't do this to me. This is my last chance.

COURVOISIER

Get away from me, you sick AIDS fuck.

ALEX

I don't have AIDS. I'm just falling apart. I want to love one last thing, feel something of flesh for the last time. I'm not going to infect you. I've got nothing.

PIMP ICE

(re-entering)
What the hell's going on?

ALEX

I'm just trying to procure the services of this lovely lady.

COURVOISIER

Look at him, PI. He's a sicko.

PIMP ICE

You threatening her?

ALEX

No, I'm just like everyone else. No different, just like everyone else. I'll even pay double.

COURVOISIER

He's hacking up his guts and that bag has blood on it.

ALEX

It's not blood. It's me that's on this bag. My hair, my piss, cum, blood, sweat, skin. Everything.

COURVOISIER

PI, handle him.

PIMP ICE

But the guy is weird.

COURVOISIER

So what? You're a pimp. Do your job.

ALEX

Yeah, PI. Do your job and take my money.

PIMP ICE

Hey, I don't want your money.

ALEX

Sure you do. I'm just like everyone else, PI. I just need to fill something. And you need some money. Tit for tat. You got something I want and I got something you want.

PIMP ICE

I don't want anything from you.

COURVOISIER

Pistol whip him, PI.

ALEX

Take my money! Please!

(ALEX tries to shove the bag into PIMP ICE'S hands. The petty cash spills out and PI drops the bag. He runs off.)

PIMP ICE

Aaaah, blood! Stay the hell away from me!

COURVOISIER

(exiting)

Where are you going? You fucking coward! Get back here and whoop his ass!

(ALEX drops to his knees. He scoops the cash back into the bag, coughing and sweating. He pulls his jacket tighter to his body. Wearily he stands and trudges off down Skidrow with a bag of money.)

SCENE THIRTEEN: Final Voyage

SUBWAY. TOM walks out naked.
A bed sheet from the linen
closet is wrapped around his
body. He blinks at the light
and his lips are chalky.

TOM

I be fine, everybody. Don't worry 'bout me. Just spent the past several hours in the linen closet with no water or light. And thank you for your help, by the way. Well, our hero appears to still be rootless, wandering at the end of it all. But what do I know? I'm just a magical black janitor. But if I was more than just a stereotype I might be suspect to diagnose our Poly. If I were above my position in life, I might characterize Poly as someone freed from what Sigmund Freud called the death impulse. Unshackled, he moves without the restrictions of the superego. I might say Poly is now free to indulge in the insouciant and wanton id of the soul, if I were more educated.

BEAT

TOM

But since I'm not, I think I'll tap dance for you.
(Executes a series of ridiculous tap moves. At the end people applaud and he holds out his cap for money.)

TOM

Thank you, Thank you very much. Spare change? I'm Tom the tapdancer. You have a good evening.

(He walks down the aisle
collecting change from the
passengers before sitting
[TOM becomes PASSENGER 3
later on]. Everyone sits
hunched up with papers, Ipods
and other tools for ignoring
people. HOMELESS MAN staggers
in through the aisles. He
clears his throat and talks
in a robotic voice.

HOMELESS MAN

Excuse me/ every-body/My name/is Gus/And I/ am homeless/I
apologize/for interrupting you/on your bright/and sunny
day/I know/ many of you/ are headed off to see family/loved
ones/friends/But for just a second of your time/and the
change.../ in your pocket/you can make a difference/in the
pain/and suffering/in this world/...Let me begin by telling
you.../my life's story...

(PASSENGERS roll eyes and
curse under their breath in
exasperation.)

HOMELESS MAN

I ran away/from home/ when I was just a young boy/ Abused
by my father/Abandoned by my mother/ I fell in/with the
wrong crowd/and began using...copious amounts of drugs/ I
admit/I was/a 'junkie.'/I shot heroin/smoked crack/I was
bad/living the/fast life/leading nowhere but to more
pain/more anger/more drugs/Then I found savior/In a man by
the name of Doctor L. Ron Hubbard/I fell in with/an even
stranger crowd/ My life revolved around/dope/alcohol/and
dianetics. And my life continued/to spiral/out of control...

(HOMELESS WOMAN enters from
other side. She talks in a
strange sing-songy voice,
elongating words in odd
places.)

HOMELESS WOMAN

Brothers and sisters, sisters. Many peace and blessings dis
aftahnoon...my name is Samantha and I am homeless. But I am
not helpless. I'm asking for your help, help...

HOMELESS MAN

Hold up/ wait a minute...

HOMELESS WOMAN

...I am without a bed, but not without a head...on my shoulder.
Because I am a poet, poet.

HOMELESS MAN

Sa/mantha/this is my car.

HOMELESS WOMAN

You a poet?

HOMELESS MAN

No, I am/selling/egg sand/wiches/tuna salad/and
chitterlings.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Nourishment of the body is nice and fine but I am
nourishing the soul...poems...enlighten...

HOMELESS MAN

Bitch/you better/get out/of my car before/ I smack/the shit
outta you.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Make me...poems, getcha poems here...free your mind and you ass
will follow...you see I was sexually abused as a child/My
poems deal in explicit detail about my abuse and repeated
rape for 14 years...

HOMELESS MAN

...as a/recovering drug addict,
Scientologist and/Amway
salesperson/I know of the
mer/e/tricious/ spiral of
needles/pipes/and brochures..

HOMELESS WOMAN

...I was raped by my father.
Raped by my brother. Raped by
my next-door neighbor. I was
even raped by the mailman.
Wrote a poem 'bout it...

(ALEX enters. He stumbles to
a seat. HOMELESS MAN and
WOMAN descend on him.)

HOMELESS MAN

Excuse me sir/My name is Gus/How would you/

ALEX

No.

HOMELESS MAN

...an egg sandwich/ from a recovery methamphetamine/ user
trying to make/ his way back in/to the world?

ALEX

Leave me alone.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Fine and noble gentleman, man, how would like to partake of
my wonderful poems?

ALEX

I wouldn't.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Let me read you an excerpt from my epic poem-

ALEX

-don't-

HOMELESS WOMAN

About rape-

ALEX

-I'm warning you.

HOMELESS WOMAN

'I do not like it/Sam, I am/I just take it/Goddamn/Making
me feel like shit/Bit by bit-

ALEX

(handing her a fistful of cash)
Here, take it. Now get outta here.

HOMELESS MAN

Sir, I also have/mayonnaise sandwiches/whatever you can
give-

ALEX

(leaping up)
Motherfucker!

HOMELESS MAN

Sir?

ALEX

Can I get some peace? I just want to do one last simple
thing. Can't you leave me alone?

HOMELESS MAN

How about/quenching that on-the-go/thirst/with an egg
sandwich?

(ALEX whips out a boxcutter.
Everyone is startled.)

ALEX

I said, can't a man have some peace?

HOMELESS WOMAN

Sir, we didn't know...

ALEX

Look what you make me do, huh?

HOMELESS WOMAN

We, we...

ALEX

FUUUUUUUCCCCCKKKKKK!

BEAT

HOMELESS MAN

Maybe/another time then.

ALEX

All day. All fucking day long. Never any rest. Always with their hands out. I can't go for one block without seeing this shit. The scum rising up, coating my skin, like layers of soot and filth. Fucking up the air we breathe. On our way to work, on our way home, Busting our asses every day.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Right, sure.

ALEX

Don't move. Don't you fucking move because you -for once- are going to listen to me. How about that? How about I tell you all about my business? How about I interrupt breath, your thoughts to tell you all about me? How would you like to listen to the story of my whole life, huh?

(ALEX throws the woman over
to the side of the man.)

I said how would you like to listen to my life's story?

HOMELESS MAN

Sounds...fascinating.

ALEX

Nah. You're not worthy. You're not worth me wasting my breath, telling you about how I always stayed away from people like you. I could kill one of you and no one would even care, would they?

HOMELESS WOMAN

Now, you don't want to do that-

ALEX

The scum. The dregs of society. How about it folks? Who would like to see me waste one of these pieces of waste? Which one should it be? The drug addict dirtbag selling nasty botchilitis-covered food or the high-flattun no-talent poet who scribbles her pain into second-rate nursery rhymes? Well come on, people. What are you scared? Scared of little ol' me? I'm not going to harm you. I'm just talking about killing these...hobos, is that the right word for it? Homeless, derelicts, tramps, trash, garbage, gutter rats. I'm only talking about killing them, folks? Whaddya say? Which one should it be?

BEAT

ALEX

Oh. Indifference. How cosmopolitan of you. Well I guess they leave the choice up to me, eh?

HOMELESS MAN

Sir, we'll just be going on our way-

ALEX

(grabbing him)
I always was a sucker for tradition. Call me a chauvinist but it just feels more right that you should die.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Man, I don't know your name but just let him go.

ALEX

Why should I?

HOMELESS WOMAN

I don't want to see you kill Gus.

ALEX

But why not? Less competition for you, isn't it. Right Gus? I'd be doing her a favor.

HOMELESS WOMAN

You don't have to do me any favors.

ALEX

(laughing)

Oh, now I don't have to do you any favors, huh? A second ago, I had to save your fucking life, listen to your childhood, buy your shitty poems. Now you don't want any favors?

HOMELESS WOMAN

You can't kill Gus.

ALEX

Why not?

HOMELESS MAN

Please...please...

PASSENGER ONE

(while reading paper)
Kill the girl.

ALEX

Excuse me?

PASSENGER ONE

You should kill the girl.

ALEX

Why?

PASSENGER ONE

Her poetry is shit.

(ALEX lets the MAN go and
grabs the HOMELESS WOMAN. He
puts the blade to her neck.
Suddenly everyone lowers
their papers. They await with
anxious breath. BEAT.)

PASSENGER TWO

Well...

ALEX

Well what?

PASSENGER TWO

What are you waiting for?

ALEX

Excuse me?

PASSENGER ONE

You wanted our attention. Well you got it. This is your last chance.

PASSENGER TWO

Come on, Alex. Make your mark in this life.

PASSENGER THREE

I agree. Alex, this is your chance. We're rooting for you, buddy.

ALEX

Who's we?

PASSENGER THREE

The world, Alex.

ALEX

The world?

PASSENGER TWO

Of course. This is your chance to hold our attention. For one brief second you can be framed and remembered. We're all behind you.

ALEX

I've never had the world behind me.

PASSENGER THREE

Feels good, doesn't it?

PASSENGER ONE

This is your chance. She's a nobody just like you. But if you kill her, you'll both be remembered.

ALEX

Really?

PASSENGER ONE

Forever and ever.

ALEX

(to Homeless WOMAN)

How would you like to be remembered?

HOMELESS WOMAN

I...

ALEX

How would you like to leave a mark?

HOMELESS WOMAN

I don't know.

PASSENGER TWO

Time is running out, Alex. This is your last chance.

PASSENGER ONE

If you don't do it, someone else will. Make a decision.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Why not.

ALEX

What?

HOMELESS WOMAN

Let's be remembered.

PASSENGER THREE

Yeah, you heard her. Do it. The world is rooting for you, buddy.

PASSENGER TWO

(chanting)

A-lex, A-lex, A-lex...

PASSENGER ONE/TWO

A-lex, A-lex, A-lex

EVERYONE

A-lex, A-lex, A-lex, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX, A-LEX!

(For a moment, everything is still in anticipation of blood. Alex drops the boxcutter. He lets her go. Alex looks at his hands.)

ALEX

No.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Hey, what happened?

ALEX

What's wrong with you people? Is this what it takes? Is this what I have to do to get your attention? I thought I could do it, but...no. No, I don't want to be apart of this. I don't want any part of you, or you. Of this whole fucked up world. I don't want any part of it.

(ALEX walks away.)

HOMELESS WOMAN

Hey...don't chicken out. Get back here. Get back here and finish the job! We could be in the papers. Maybe even make the local news. Our faces and pictures everywhere. Hey, we'd be something, buddy. I don't want to be invisible any more. I want to matter. You fucker! You can't promise something and just take it away like that. It's not right. It's not moral. If you had a decent bone in your body, you'd slit my throat. Come on. Please. Don't let me live like this!

SCENE FOURTEEN: THE BEACH

TOM

Bit by bit. That's the way it all falls apart. Sometimes it's slow and sometimes -like today- it's before you can finish your business. But they will get to you. Termites, viruses, cancer, time. And bit by bit the last of our hero was eaten away. The holes opened wider, spread, and dug deeper until he was -quite literally- swallowed up. The void rose up his stomach, through his spine, caved in his chest and encircled his liver and kidneys. His eyes, beady and black, shrunk and fell back into his head. His legs withered like exhausted vines. And before that unnamable thing could take the last of him, our hero made it to his final destination. Where he had been heading the whole time.

(SOUNDS of the BEACH. It's dusk and high tide is rolling in. Seagulls can be heard. TOM throws off his sheet, to reveal a skipper outfit. He folds the linen and waits. ALEX stares out to sea holding his bag. He's weak and sickly.)

ALEX

Where it all begins. They say we slithered up out of the sea as primordial ooze. Then it should be possible to slither back, right? I think this is as good of a spot as any. Maybe I should've tried harder. I wonder if there's still time left. A few minutes. Say goodbye to Cindy. Give Gordon a call. He might be off-work by now. And I know Clarence didn't mean what he said. The kid has a good heart. I can give it another go. Maybe there's still time to...

TOM

No, there isn't.

ALEX

(turning around)
I'm sorry?

TOM

Sir, there's no time. We should get going.

ALEX

Tom?

TOM

I got the boat waiting for you.

ALEX

But you were...what boat?

TOM

The rowboat you reserved this morning.

ALEX

Wait, who are you?

TOM

I'm the skipper. My name is Tom, sir.

ALEX

The skipper?

TOM

Yes, sir.

ALEX

Of course. Well Tom: lead the way.

(TOM leads ALEX to a rowboat.
They get in and TOM starts
rowing out to sea.)

ALEX

This is strange. I'm starting to feel better already.
(laughs and then coughs) Maybe not better. I'm starting to
feel...less.

TOM

What a beautiful day, huh?

ALEX

Yes, it certainly is. A beautiful day to disappear.

TOM

I don't follow you.

BEAT

TOM

Where is the Mrs.?

ALEX

She couldn't make it.

TOM

That's a shame. Most people rent these boats out to be with their loved ones.

ALEX

Maybe I am with the one I love.

TOM

Uhhh...now, sir. I appreciate the compliment but I-

ALEX

-no, Tom. I mean me.

TOM

Sir?

ALEX

Me. I'm the only one that cares about me.

TOM

I'm sorry to hear that, sir.

ALEX

Why sorry?

TOM

Sounds like you're not doing too well.

ALEX

No, I think I needed to know this. It's easier to face the end.

TOM

Was it your anniversary?

ALEX

What?

TOM

The reason you were taking her out here. What was the special occasion?

BEAT

ALEX

My birthday.

(TOM stops rowing and turns around.)

TOM

Today is your birthday?

ALEX

(looks at watch)
Yep. Two minutes ago was the exact moment I came into this world.

TOM

Well happy birthday, sir.
(They blink at each other for a minute. The boat floats, the seagulls sing, and the waves roll in. The world goes by. At a lost for words, TOM turns back around and continues rowing.)

What a beautiful day.

ALEX

Yes.

TOM

No clouds, no humidity. Just a crisp, sparkling sort of afternoon.

ALEX

You're right. Haven't really paid attention. I've been on sort of a hiatus from the present. In search of...something. A drive. A passion. Wommen, friends, children. God. And it didn't matter. The only passion that lasts is for ourselves, I guess.

TOM

Look at that. The moon is making its appearance while the sun is still out. I wonder if anybody else notices the imperfection. Like the maker stitched the patterns of the beginning and end and this is that extra string. The leftover thread that sticks out from the covers of night and day. This crease in between time. The sun and moon. Night and day. Out at the same time.

ALEX

(standing in the boat)
Hey, Tom. How would you like to see a magic trick?

TOM

(ignoring him)
Hasn't been this pretty of a day at the beach in a long time.

ALEX

A disappearing act. Watch me.

TOM

I'm watching one right now. Look at it fade away.

(Light as a feather, ALEX
steps off the boat. He begins
walking away. Shrinking like
the sun, he just fades away
into the night.)

Inch by inch. All those creases of light just dissolving.
From yellow, to red, to purple to blue, and then the night.
Bit by bit. That's the way the day goes. (turning around)
It all just fades...away.

(TOM takes off his skipper
hat and stands up. He walks
out of the boat.)

EPILOGUE

TOM

And that's the way he went. A few fading streaks of him in the water and air and then, like that, he was gone. Returned back to the sea. And that's where our story ends. Our protagonist just plain vanished in the struggle. Don't quite know who he was fighting. Guess it was all of us. The body never washed up because there was nobody left. Just the night. But tradition is tradition and a funeral was held. Flowers were arranged, tears were shed. He was remembered fondly. And vaguely. When mourners mentioned his name, their eyes went up and off to the side, as if they were trying to think of something. Remember a part of him. The world was trying to make amends. But he wouldn't allow them to have that satisfaction of putting him in a memory bank. Our hero would not give them the relief of nostalgia. He refused to yield even the slightest thing for them to grasp on to. It was his revenge. So that by the time they drove from the church to cemetery he was just fog in their heads. Something to shake off or blink away. And that is all he would leave for them. A perpetual shadow that would darken their minds. A regret. The service was curt and neat. The casket remained closed. People whispered about his accident. That maybe his face had been scarred. Or his body mangled. A few kids joked that maybe there wasn't anything inside. There was that rumor, too. But there was something of him. Just a bit.

(TOM picks up the bag.)

TOM

All they needed was a few pieces. A few strands of hair. Some nails. A tooth. And they got it. Now admittedly that was all they got. No one ever found much. But then again, no one ever looked for more. But they did find something to fill our hero's grave. Hopefully they'll find something to fill your's. We'll just have to wait and see about that story. Thank you and have a good night.

THE END