

**PRODUCED BY NEW GEORGES, NYC, 2006.**  
**PRODUCED BY DOG AND PONY THEATRE, Chicago, 2006.**

**DEVELOPED WITH:**

The Public Theatre, NYC 2005

New Georges, NYC 2004-2005

The Lark Theatre, NYC 2003-2004

**DEAD CITY**

(A modern riff on Joyce's *Ulysses*)

**DEAD CITY was commissioned by Playwrights Horizons with funds provided by The  
Harold and Mimi Steinberg Commissioning Program.**

Sheila Callaghan  
646-283-3473  
sheila.callaghan@gmail.com  
<http://www.sheilacallaghan.com>

Copyright © 2007  
**All Rights Reserved.**

## DEAD CITY

SAMANTHA	female, mid-forties (optimistic, cheery, round, good-natured, attractive)
JEWEL	female, 22 (undernourished, broody, bad teeth, a poet and intellectual)
GABRIEL / HANK / HOMELESS MAN / SAM ONE	male, mid forties (sexy-as-hell)
BEATRICE / WOMAN ONE / NORA / SAM TWO	female, mid-late twenties (bull-like, loud, hot shit)
HENDRA / ROSALIND / GLORIA PIPER / A.A.M. / SAM THREE	female, mid-thirties (sharp, together, very stylish)
VOICE / MAN ONE / JACOB / WOMAN TWO / SAM FOUR / CABBIE	male, 45-55 (somewhat crusty and lecherous)
CHILD / YOUNG MAN / ERIK / WAITER / SAM FIVE	male, mid-twenties (an adorable boyish young man)

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue. When the stroke is not immediately followed by text, the next line should occur on the last syllable of the word before the slash— not a full overlap but a concise and intentioned interruption.

Also, the VOICE should be miked the entire show.

## DEAD CITY

*Dates, times, and settings will be projected above the stage, or on a screen, or on the proscenium wings, or on the floor, or wherever is most effective for viewing.*

**PROJECTED: June 17, 2004—The day after.**

0. Samantha dreams of Jewel walking along the pedestrian path near the West Side Highway, towards Tribeca. 5:45am, sunrise.

SAMANTHA appears, dreaming of JEWEL.

JEWEL clutches a bag from McDonalds. She is slightly jaunty... she has been walking all night.

got my Patti Smith walk my Patti Smith knees  
sausage-egg-n-cheese-sausage-egg-n-cheese-sausage-egg-n-cheese

She smells her bag of food desperately. She continues.

the Hudson choking up its morning rot  
Momma stopped smoking but her lungs did not  
sausage-egg-n-cheese-sausage-egg-n-cheese-sausage-egg-n-cheese

She smells her bag of food desperately once again.  
Sound of traffic... she has reached the West Side Highway.

...the west side highway is now laid across my lap and the crossing is all that lies between myself and this day's most absurd parade and if I could levitate I would choose this very moment but I cannot so I wait for the sign to stop blinking and I wrap my mind around a single image that continues to open into itself in an infinite stumble through space don't walk and it is forever changing shape in my mouth the brittle bones the paper hand don't walk the ashen breath rosary beads don't walk and the hunger in the pit of my core that all the sausage-egg-and-cheeses in the five boroughs might be able to quench and she's...

JEWEL tears into the McDonalds bag and jams an entire sausage egg and cheese into her mouth. She eats ravenously. She screams though a mouthful of food.

GOOD MORNING, TRIBECA!!!

**PROJECTED: June 16, 2004—The day before.**

1. A spacious, tidy apartment on the Upper East Side. The day before. 8:00am.

SAMANTHA is preparing breakfast happily in her kitchen. She wears an expensive and tasteful black business suit. Pale orange light streams through the window.

Behind her in the bedroom, GABRIEL sleeps soundly on a luxurious satin-sheeted bed.

We hear a VOICE from the radio.

VOICE

You're listening to NYPR, New York Public Radio. It's 8AM and we have a sunny June morning outside, and the smell wafting off the East River is delightful. However, expect clouds and murkiness with patches of barometric gloom, right... about... now.

The light through the window turns grey.

In today's news, Samantha Blossom is preparing a breakfast tray for her lovely sleepy husband. He was out so late last night....

SAMANTHA butters toast.

Not too much I-Can't-Believe-It's-Not-Butter, you know how he is about his figure. Will he take tea or coffee? Tea for his vocal chords, coffee for his mood....

SAMANTHA pours coffee into a mug.

Ahhh. Fresh ground organic blend from the bulk coffee aisle...

She lifts the tray and begins to head toward the bedroom.

Oh, don't forget the mail. Baby likes to read his mail while he eats his gluten-free toast.

SAMANTHA places the tray back down and exits. She returns with two envelopes. She examines the first.

Elizabeth... nineteen next month ... must email her...

SAMANTHA moves onto the next letter. The envelope is much different...

Mr. Gabriel Blossom. Embossed parchment. Long flourish on the G. Return address, A.A.M...

She smells the envelope.

Jasmine.

SAMANTHA freezes a moment, in a panic.  
GABRIEL calls from the bedroom sleepily.

GABRIEL

Sammy?

VOICE

Shake it off, woman ... deep breath. Deliver that letter. Coffee, toast, tray, hands, feet, breathe. You're listening to NYPR, New York Public Radio. Support for NYPR comes from Hawk Pharmaceuticals, making chemical dependency a vital part of YOUR life/

SAMANTHA turns off the radio and enters the bedroom with the tray. GABRIEL raises his head. He wears a satin lavender beauty mask and silk pajamas. He pulls a pair of earplugs from his ears.

SAMANTHA

Good morning sleepy...

GABRIEL

Mm... time is it?

SAMANTHA

A little after eight...

SAMANTHA places the tray on the bed.

GABRIEL

Tea?

SAMANTHA

Coffee.

GABRIEL

Perfect.

GABRIEL begins eating.

SAMANTHA

How was the show?

GABRIEL

A drag. First the rain, couldn't get a cab to 44<sup>th</sup> to save our lives, subway was a mess, the F was running on the C track, got there forty-five minutes late and couldn't do sound check so the levels were completely off for the first number, had to stop and re-do levels in the middle of the set.

SAMANTHA

Oh dear...

GABRIEL

But it was a good crowd. Sober, engaged.... They listen harder at the expensive places...

GABRIEL begins to look through the letters.

GABRIEL (cont.)

Elizabeth. Nineteen next month, hm? Should write her a letter...

SAMANTHA

Why not shoot her off an email? You so rarely email her...

GABRIEL

Those tiny letters make me go cross-eyed...

SAMANTHA

You can change the font size, you know. In your browser preferences.

GABRIEL

The what?

SAMANTHA

In the drop down menu at the top of the screen, under appearance...

GABRIEL

I prefer ink and paper. It's more, it's more, like...

SAMANTHA

Utilitarian

GABRIEL