

Shivah/Proper

m kennedy v o l c o f s k y

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Shivah/Proper was first performed June 19-22, 2003, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn NY at the performance space WAX.

Designed and Directed by the author.

The cast was as follows:

Six-Armed Woman on Six-Armed Cross: Karmenlara Brownson
Prayer: Jesse Goldberger
Doc: Matthew Seidman
eWoman: Stacia French
Figures: KB, MS, SF

Shivah/Proper was next presented, for 5 performances, in the 2004 NY International Fringe Festival, August 14-29, at the Schaeberle Studio Theater at Pace University, again Designed & Directed by the author.

The cast was as follows:

Six-Armed Woman on Six Armed Cross: Alexis Golightly
Prayer: Jesse Goldberger
eWoman: Stacia French
Doc: Vincent Dow
Figures: AG, VD, SF

Differences between the performed text and the written text: excision has been ~~struck through~~; revision has {bold brackets}.

Shivah/Proper

•Persons•

Six-Armed Woman On Six-Armed Cross

Prayer

Doc

eWoman

Figures

Cultural Notes

shivah: The Hebrew for *seven*.

The seven-day Jewish mourning period, observed upon the death and burial of a spouse or close relative. The act of mourning is to sit: *To sit shivah*. As a mourner one is forbidden to sit in comfort upon chairs or couches, and so one usually sits upon a low stool, box, or on the ground, while either shoeless or wearing non-leather shoes.

daven: Jewish praying. Rhythmic, rocking, mild or ecstatic.

Aria extracted from “Memoirs of My Nervous Illness” by Daniel Paul Schreber.

Shivah/Proper

Black stage.

Sound of breathing.

Blind Willie Johnson's instrumental blues "Dark Was The Night — Cold Was The Ground" begins playing in its 3 minute entirety.

~~Downstage left, a small potted plant, with a single burning candle stuck in its soil, atop a TELEVISION, off.~~

~~Seven tiny lights behind filled water glasses, high off ground, upstage right.~~

Lights up slow, to reach their top at the end of song.

The lighting as uterine as firelight as possible.

Upstage right a six-armed WOMAN ON six-armed CROSS, crucified. So the cross is three tiered. Naked but for loincloth. Eyes closed.

WOMAN ON CROSS breathes deeply, audibly, through the nose, into the abdomen, with long pauses between breaths. Her belly filling and rising, emptying and falling.

~~Wires strung from the cross's 6 arms, so it suggests a telephone or light pole and, more remotely, gives the suggestion of an acoustic guitar.~~

~~Resting on the ends of each of the cross's arms, and on the head of the vertical axis, a clear glass filled with water.~~

~~Behind each glass a tiny light, seven.~~

Downstage centerleft, an empty wooden crate, like those used for produce.

Turned bottom side up.

"Dark Was The Night — Cold Was The Ground" ends.

PRAYER, a man, barefoot, wearing pants and a teeshirt with the team-number 21 on the front, is PUSHED ON from offstage right.

Water pouring out his nose.

Freezing.

Pukes a bellyfull of pennies.

Sneezes.

Looks around for something to wipe his nose with, thinks about using his shirt, then notices loincloth.

Goes to the cross and pulls off the loincloth, blows his nose in it.

Oblivious of cross.

Drapes loincloth over his head, faces House and davens.

DOC, a man, dressed in white coat, stethoscope, black pants and shoes, ENTERS stage right.

He's holding a glass of water.

The TELEVISION flicks on with the entrance of DOC.

On SCREEN a close-up of the CLOSED EYES of WOMAN ON CROSS.

DOC stands, stage right, watching the davening.

DOC quaffs the contents of the glass, rests it on the footplate of the cross.

DOC walks behind davening PRAYER, clasps his hands into a club and cracks the davening PRAYER on the back of the head as he prays, then kicks and punches him after he's fallen to the ground.

Brutal.

During the beating a wheelchair is pushed on from stage left.

Red boxing gloves, wearing blackframed eyeglasses and a beard, on its seat.

Barefoot PRAYER lies crumpled at the foot of the cross.

DOC hauls him onto the wheelchair, sits him down, listing.

Places the eyeglasses askew on his nose.

Sticks the beard on his face.

Puts his feet in the boxing gloves.

The ~~bleedied~~ loincloth on his head.

DOC surveys his work.

DOC EXITS stage right, picking up the empty glass on the way.

Beaten PRAYER sings, with the paralytic lopsided face and toned deafness of a stroke victim:

PRAYER

I gets weary

And sick of trying

I'm tired of living

And scared of dying

But old man river

That old man river

He just keeps

Rolling

Along.

(dies.)

At the same time WOMAN ON CROSS opens her EYES
(SCREEN EYES OPEN) and sings:

WOMAN ON CROSS

I shall not

I shall not be moved

I shall not

I shall not be moved

Like a tree

Planted by the wa-ter

I shall not be moved.

(EYES close ((SCREEN EYES CLOSE).)

DOC ENTERS, goes to the wheelchair and listens to PRAYER's body with a stethoscope — a stethoscope which has three listening disks.

He places one in the body's mouth and two on its chest, in different spots, all at once.

Listens.

DOC signals off-stage left, rolls the chair downstage center.

DOC dumps PRAYER's body out the chair onto the ground.
DOC gets in and ROLLS OFF, stage right.

Pause.

WOMAN ON CROSS breathes.

eWoman ENTERS from stage left, dressed in a dark skirtsuit and heels.

eWoman stares down at the body for a little while.

Then speaks.

While speaking, she moves to sit on the crate a number of times, but never quite sits.

eWoman

to body

eWoman (cont)

I think I'm coming down with something. Feels like it. I—. Feels like I'm getting a fever or something, yeh, I'm pretty sure. My throat's kinda tight. I think I'm warm. I am.

I'm sure of it. Feel a little clammy. You know how you get, when something's just starting to come on. It's like it's hard to tell what's your body, what's your mind, you know. And what's just the world. What's just the world? What is? Maybe the world has a fever and I'm just feeling it. Maybe I just do what the world tells me. The world worlds. That's this. What this is.

prods body with a shoe

Maybe I just really exist outside myself. Like you. Always did. Anyway. I've got pain now. Not this cold. For a while now. It's been some time. Pain that comes on me like it has a purpose. Really sharp. In a joint. In a muscle. In my chest. In my belly. In my eyes. And then it just goes. And gone it's gone. I know how that sounds. But I think it's true. I mean I know it is. What it is. It's the world. Afflicting itself on me. Through me. I'd say it was pain from space if I didn't know better. Because it's not — they're not — part of this sickness, these sicknesses that everyone shares. You know. The simple ones. A cold here, a cold there. Cancer. Liver cancer blood cancer brain cancer lung cancer breast cancer stomach cancer rectal cancer cervix cancer throat cancer. Prostate. Viri. Fungi. Organ failings. Bone cancer. Bone derangements. Suspended, or revoked, immunities. The ones we share. I'm not talking about them. Not even — .

long pause

Not even. This pain is delivered. These pains. It's delivered. It's sent. It arrives, it speaks its piece, does its work, and then it goes. And gone it's gone. Gone. I like it. In a way. I have to say. Although I know how that sounds. I do. But I do. I do. I like it because it clears my head. It clears my head. It's like. It's like there's this intense, frozen eye, this eye that wanders around inside of me. Most of the time it's closed. But then, and I don't know when it will be or where it will be, I never know, but the eye opens, and that's when the pain starts, because it's so so cold it feels like burning, it begins to stare a hole through me from inside, wherever it is, just this intense blinkless freezing stare, with my body in the way of its seeing. I'm in its way. But it tears through me with cold by staring. And I can't tell you how much. I can't tell you how it hurts.

How much. I pretty much go deaf from how it feels. But once it gets through, once it can see through me, once it's got through, it's like this bell, this transparent glass bell that's right inside the middle of my head is struck, rung, rings, just once, sharp, and the entire world freezes, instantly turns to glass, transparent, and then, suddenly, there's no more, no more, color, no more shadow, no more sound, no more smells, no more *more*, no more food. No more food. No *more*. There's nothing. Nothing. Nothing to touch. Nothing to hold. Nothing. There's no.

long pause

Perfect. Perfect. Outside. Inside. Everywhere all around. Like a heartbeat that never comes back. On and on and on and on. Forever. For a little bit. Just for a little. And then I never notice then when but then the eye must close. I never really notice then when it goes back but then things are just like they were. And the pain gone it's gone. Doesn't leave anything hurting behind. Just me. Can you believe that? Pain can do that? Something you didn't want, don't want, would never, would never want, would never want, never wanted. Can bring you everything what you've always wanted? Does bring. It does. It does. But it goes. Doesn't stay. But I still dread it. I'm always afraid it's coming, and I won't be ready, and it will surprise me, a-and the surprise will kill me. Even though I'm always happy it's come, afterwards. Always. I am. I'm happy. I'm happy after. I am. You wouldn't know what it's like. To be in a world without substance. Without any coloring. Without *more*. Clear. Not you. How would you know. I never. I didn't. Never. But you. It's heaven. Heaven. Nothing. It's like putting the part of you what hurts the most into a ice cold river. You can see it, but. You remember, once you fell asleep with your arms behind your head? And your arms fell asleep? And you woke up and started to scream because you couldn't find your hands? Your arms? It's like that. The part that hurts has become nothing but air. It's gone. It's heaven. So it's worth it. Yes. It was worth it!

long pause

Look at you.

unwrinkling body

It was always someone what didn't know me at all. And I and they were just on our ways, our own separate ways. Going on. Little secret was that they really did know me. Little secret was that was the little secret I couldn't ever tell. Tell anyone, anyone or

them. But because I never told I never knew if it was true or not. But I did know. But I couldn't. So we'd make like killer fish in a bowl. And then we went on, our own separate ways, just like it was. But I always felt like opening my mouth to tell. I always just wanted just to tell, just once. Just to tell them. They knew me. They *knew*. They did.

And that that was better than anything, anything. Anything. Better than anything ever in the. I would watch them walk to the doorway, walk away and I would think it right at their backs *What are you doing?* Right at their backs *Stop. Don't you know? Don't you know? You know me!* Right at their backs *You know me!* Right at their backs *Turn around.* And they would hear nothing. And they'd go. And then the door would close. And then it was no secret any more. When that door would shut that's when I knew. When I knew. They knew. Me. That's. There's an opening I can't close. Between you — I mean *me* — *Me* and the world. Me. Not you me. ME. Not YOU. ME. That's where the confusion enters. Me and the world. *My body. My mind. The world.* I'd like to close it. I'd like more than anything like to close it. I'm trying. I'm trying I've tried I'm trying. I've tried.

a lullabye

Tried and true // I'd give to you // the stars the moon the sun.

pause

violent weeping whisper

I know what's fucking going on!

eWoman takes the ~~blooied~~ loincloth, blows her nose in it, clears her throat in it, wipes her eyes with it, puts it in her pocket. Removes eyeglasses, and puts them in her other pocket. Takes beard from off the body, puts it under her skirt, up between her legs. She sits the body up, grabs it under the armpits and drags it off, EXITing stage left.

Pause.

WOMAN ON CROSS breathes.

DOC, from stage right, and eWoman, from stage left, RE-ENTER.

DOC wears only the white coat, naked underneath, —the coat stops barely covering his genitals and ass— and heels, which eWoman was wearing.

He's got the red boxing gloves on.

He's got an empty glass affixed to a saucer tied to the top of his head, around his chin.

eWoman dressed in the dark skirtsuit.

She's barefoot now.

She wears the blackframed glasses.

She holds a transparent pitcher of water.

DOC and eWoman meet at center stage, face the House.

She calls out

eWoman

Round!

She sits on the crate, DOC kneels before her.

She opens her suit top removes a breast and he nurses.

As he sucks, she fills the glass on his head from the pitcher, slowly.

After it's filled, he stands, faces House again, she replaces her breast, stands, faces House, holding pitcher.

As DOC moves through his shadow-boxing speech, the water in his head-glass spills out.

When it has gotten close to empty eWoman calls out "Round!".

She sits on the crate, he kneels before her, she opens her suit-top removes a breast and he nurses.

As he sucks, she fills the glass on his head from the pitcher, slowly.

After it's filled, he stands, resumes; she replaces her breast and returns to her place.

He resumes speaking by repeating the last sentence he'd spoken.

Three "rounds."

During the boxing speech eWoman's "pain" afflicts her. As if she has been struck.

Three or four times, with plenty of space between.

An open mouthed voiceless cry accompanies its arrival, and the two conflicting instincts to keep hold on the pitcher with one hand and bring relief to the site of the pain with the other.

Gone before she knows it.

Both face House until they need each other.

DOC

All to House
No one lives.

Forever.

Anyway.

DOC starts boxing. He accompanies himself with his own sound effects, sharp breath through nose, etc.

I thought he would. I thought she would. Then I thought he would again. But none O, none of them did at all. But then that's alright, that's okay, that's really alright. That's pretty good actually, that's not a bad thing at all no. There

But

Then

There

O

See

Watch

There

That. Was a Sunday, or a Saturday, or it maybeen one of those Mondays off a holiday weekend, when everyone kind of walks around quiet, free and mizrable rotten, since Tuesday now's been fucked into Monday. Bang! B-bang bang! But it don't matter, don't matter which. It was. Movin' it, movin' it now. I'd married me a girl in my mind. I'd married me a girl in my mind that I could not find and boy was I fired mad. Ma-a-a-a-ad. B-bang bang! Keep punchin'. Keep swingin'. Keep punchin'. I was fired. Fired. Job after job, losin' it. Losin' it like water through my fingers, my money AND my life. My money AND my life. And my knife. My knife. My knife. I started to take jobs. Ugly jobs. Killing jobs. Job job. Hook. Killing animals for bread. Killing birds and killing their babies, in rich homes, stuck in rich attics. Killing skin in bone mutt dogs by rivers, ugly dogs in ugly cities, and just throwing them in. Slap. Splash. Killing cats with boards. Bang. Then just for fun. Bang. B-bang bang. Nice people. Nice-ist people. Nice-ist people paying me for this too. Sweet. Earnist. A brigade of citizens

DOC (*cont*)

upright and personable with the hunger to murder beasts by. Surrogacy. The need. Was a killer husband been left. I was. Or I was. A husband been left to kill. Or I was. Killed and. Left. Right. Left. Rightleft. How. I got these contracts? How? My fingers did the walking. Up and down the ladder on the page. Rung to rung. Ring. Stop anywhere.

Ring. Punch the numbers. B-bang bang. There's no service that won't find its customer. Events. E-vents, if you know what I mean. It is the customer creates the service. A-a-a-a-ad. Slap. Bang. I just overhear, so to speak. I just lissen. Lis-sen, if you know what I mean. I got a acute lissening device. Feels a needle instead of a q-tip, used the same way. A very pointed hearing aid, I might say. Run that knife along my prick, you bitch. I like that. I like that I do. Draw some blood. That's right. That's right. But I began to make an effort. An. Ef-fort. To get out of that service. Industry. To. Revaluate. To recess. To relign. I don't know why. I heard a call, I suppose. My listening device caught a faint signal. Honestly, I'd forgotten about that girl I'd married, these years killing. Was very involved with the work. Work chokes the memory of yourself. Right out of mind. I'd forgotten I'd ever even been. Married, to be honest. Mostly, I paid whores to get me out. Men think. Fucking matters. Only when you're not fucking. "Get me the hell out of here!" Ha Ha-a-a-a-a-a-a ha Ha! "Get me out!" Might as well eat spring air and shit your brains out yr ass into a soup bowl. Fucking. Fucking fucking. Fucking fucks fucking fucks fucking fucks fucking. And that's. All there is to that. But I was caught up. I was. Like all of us. I don't know. What women think. I can't. And anymore. Don't I care. That's the spot on the water where I dropped my last dog. We have our sep-arating thoughts in our sep-arating bodies and ke-ep 'em churnin' the closer we get. Churnin'. Boilin'. Fine. Fine fine fine. I'll pay it. Most of the whores I paid were married women themselves. Like me. I'm a god damn bastard. I'm a fuckunting nitwit. 'm an idiot! Stupid fuck fucking! I bleached the eyes of cats while they screamed!

DOC *turns to look at eWoman, stopping boxing. Apologetic*

No. That's not true. I never did that. Something very white just came into my head, that's all.

They gaze at one another.
WOMAN ON CROSS's EYES OPEN, (*SCREEN EYES OPEN*)
and she gazes towards House.

eWoman puts down the pitcher, begins to unlace the gloves,
roughly.
WOMAN ON CROSS's EYES CLOSE (*SCREEN EYES CLOSE*).

The gloves are unlaced and removed, placed on the floor.
eWoman and DOC hold each others gaze.
She unties the glass from under his chin, fixes his hair & his coat
collar with one hand, and quaffs whatever is left in the glass.
Puts it on the crate.
In a gesture identical to hers, he opens his coat and offers his left
breast, and she nurses.
He strokes her head as he speaks, to House, through to the end of
the speech.
Three times, during his speech, eWoman's "pain" strikes her.
Her left hand indicating its site.
Each time DOC bellows in agony as she clamps down on his
nipple, until her "pain" subsides.
Then the speech resumes, where it had left off.

DOC

That was really the thing, see. That was really it. That was where it all began, when it ended. I laid off the animals. I quit the animal thing. I stopped. I really don't know why. I had some money put up, and I pulled it down. It was blood money, sure, but what other kind is there. Wish all you want. Time is money. And that's my proof. So I took some. I took some time. I relayed a message to myself. I had to. I did long train rides, to just ride. Kept to myself. Five, six, seven, ten day rides. And I found myself remembering her, the girl I had married in my mind. Really remembering, putting it together, putting her together, piece by piece, thread by thread, hair by hair, smell by smell. I started to feel like I'd never really seen her before. Or smelled her. Like I'd married her without ever even looking at her. Directly. Or she at me. Or that I'd ever even really met her. So who was I putting together? One night, it was sunset, and I was in a train. Looking out, it was still in the early spring, and the train was going really slow past these dirty, shitty backyards, all full of garbage and grey snow, poor, all the way poor, and suddenly I felt myself really seeing these yards, really feeling what it was like

DOC (*cont*)

to live there, to live that life in there, to call that home, and then I caught my reflection in the window. I saw me. I had the black lips of every dog I'd killed. I had the betrayed shocked eyes of every cat I'd murdered. I had the paperthin skull of every bird I'd smashed. And all these filth poor unkept houses were passing through my face like my head was an assembly line of poverty. I tasted my mouth. I knew who she was. That was the truth. The next day I flew to her city, got a cab and got dropped at her door. It was one of those houses. She opened it. She was fat. She was a whale. A white whale. She was the fattest, whitest whale of a woman I've ever seen. I recognized her instantly. Never seen her before in my life but knew her instantly. Instantly. She was a memory as soon as I saw her. She stood at the door. She'd never fit through it. Oneperson wide. She wore a sleeveless housedress that was like two sails stitched together with cat gut. It was stitched all over the place, surgeried together. She had no idea who I was. "Call me Ishmael," I said. I couldn't help it. "Fishmeal?" she said. "Yes," I said. "That's right. Fishmeal." The thing was, she couldn't even remember her own name. She was my age, our age, and had already pretty far lost it. I'm sure it was a Saturday. *eWoman looks up at him*. I'm sure. I am sure. I am. *eWoman returns to nursing*. I just stood there and looked at her. Her eyes pointed at me like guns hidden in a mountainside bunker of grease. They glinted in their own dark. Even the gums around her teeth were fat. She was disgusting. Absolutely disgusting. The only thing thin about her was her hair. And her mustache. I hated her as soon as I saw her. My skin crawled. And I had married her. Her oneperson doorway was her coffin. And the less she remembered me — ME — the fatter she got. The longer she forgot me, the fatter she'd get. She crowded death. She backed away, and let me in. The light in the place was like mucous. It didn't shine, it *dripped*. There were two couches, facing each other. One had been stripped. All the way down to the piss stained stuffing. The other was intact. The fabric of her housedress matched it. You know I once knew a guy who made a winter coat from the fabric off his dead grandmother's couch. Anyway. There were little tags on everything, naming the world. "Wall." "Window." "Chair." "Door." "Mother." "Mountain." "Lock." One of those houses. That assembly line in my head. The smells. Damp wool. Coffee grinds soaking on brown paper. Rancid metal tunafish. Dirty socks. Roach bodies. Unwashed

ass. Piss. Shit. “What is it, Fishmeal,” you said. I was speechless. You hauled yourself out the room, making me bounce. Out a demolished doorway. Horsehair plaster hanging in clumps. I heard kitchen sounds. You came back at me, you were holding a glass of what looked like grey snow. You were making me an offer of this. I looked at it. I realized I had an erection. *eWoman cups DOC’s penis with her left hand.* “Pit bull milk,” your mouth said, and you offered me the glass of grey snow. I looked more closely at your mouth. It seemed to be surrounded by tiny clumps of dirty laundry. It moved. “Pit bull milk,” it said again. I’d heard right. I shook my head. “But thanks anyway. Thanks very much,” I said. I backed up, undid myself and showed you my hardon. Your firearm eyes slowly took their gaze there. The floor moved and I felt my cock bounce. You’d hauled yourself out the room again. You were like a planet with armholes. I heard kitchen sounds. I did myself up and left. I’ve never been happier. Before or since.

DOC & eWoman

To each other

That was the happiest moment of my life.

They kiss.

Barefoot PRAYER ROLLS ON in wheelchair, stage left, as they are kissing, stops, facing House upstage left of couple.

They notice him.

They end their embrace, turn upstage towards him and walk to him hand in hand.

DOC picks up boxing gloves on the way.

Together, sharing the tasks, they place PRAYER’s feet in the boxing gloves, the beard on his face (from under her skirt), the glasses on his nose, and the ~~bloo~~di~~ed~~ loincloth on his head (from one of her pockets).

They roll PRAYER to center stage.

DOC removes the three-disked stethoscope from his coat pocket and puts it on.

DOC and eWoman stand facing House, flanking wheelchair, each resting a hand on PRAYER’s shoulder.

All smiling out to House.

PRAYER begins to make a sound, and first it sounds like he's going to sing Old Man River again. But it becomes an inarticulate, horrendous bellow, which does not stop, just increases in volume.

DOC walks downstage, picking up the empty head-glass & saucer. eWoman remains in her pose, smiling to House.

DOC walks upstage to 6 armed cross, holding the empty head-glass & saucer, while the bellowing continues.

~~WOMAN ON CROSS pisses into the glass, filling it.~~

{DOC extends the glass to WOMAN ON CROSS's vagina, waiting for piss. The glass remains empty.}

Her EYES remain CLOSED (*SCREEN EYES remain CLOSED*).

The bellowing cuts off.

PRAYER stares wild-eyed out at House.

DOC holds the glass up to the "light", inspecting it, then says over his shoulder to eWoman

DOC

We should test?

eWoman remains smiling, facing House.

BLACKOUT

On SCREEN WOMAN ON CROSS's EYES slowly START TO OPEN; before they are fully open the SCREEN flicks OFF.

Pause. Dark stage. Single candle burning.

WOMAN ON CROSS gets down, taking her extra arms with her. She, DOC, eWoman, PRAYER, all make their way downstage.

Lights up on

ALL 4, standing in a row facing House.

In operatic, aria-long phrasing, with tremolo & distinct pauses between phrases, they sing

ALL

Now I Shall

You Were To

I Shall

ALL (*cont*)

It Will Be
This Of Course Was
Lacking Now Is

Hold, then
BLACKOUT.

Pause.

Lights up on
The four dispersing, DOC (with headglass and saucer of piss) and
WOMAN ON CROSS (with her bundle of arms) EXIT stage right,
eWoman (with pitcher & pushing wheelchair) EXITS stage left.
PRAYER remains, watching them leave.
He removes beard, loincloth, glasses, boxing gloves, dropping
them onto ground.

Lights down, uterine again.

PRAYER sits on the crate, fist under chin, side to House, facing
stage right.
Dark stage, but for single candle ~~in plant~~ on TV.

Using the “NightVision” infrared camera-effect, the TV flicks ON,
and the audience is shot, face by face appearing on-screen as they
watch the stage.

PRAYER weeps, mourning on the crate.
Continue. Long.

The TV flicks OFF, PRAYER’s weeping stops.

Pause.

Enter three clothed & shod FIGURES, two from stage right, one
from stage left.
They approach PRAYER.
The one entering from stage left holds the head-size frame of a
house, made of sticks, a kind of A-frame.
The two others hold the prosthetic arms from the cross.
An arm in each hand.
The 3 stand around PRAYER, waiting.
He doesn’t acknowledge them, he’s making after-cry sobs.

The TV has flicked ON with their entry, showing a night-forest, full of wind.

The SOUND OF its CREATURES fills the air.

The two armed FIGURES begin to pummel PRAYER, beating him with the arms, knock him off the crate and to the ground, continue to beat him.

Brutal.

The house-holder FIGURE stands and watches.

The two attackers make grunt-sounds —from the effort, not as speech— while PRAYER, being beaten, remains silent.

The beating ends.

The arms are dumped in a pile at PRAYER, he's propped on the crate, the house is placed over his head, it rests on his shoulders.

He lists.

The three FIGURES turn around, get down on all fours and kick hind-legs like dogs covering shit, in PRAYER's direction.

In unison they make a single, percussive vocal noise:

'PAhh

which clicks the TV and the NIGHT-forest SOUNDS OFF.

Then the FIGURES get up, dust themselves off, and EXIT, stage right.

PRAYER breathes heavily.

His body, and the house around his head, heaving.

He turns, leans, and blows out the candle atop the TV.

His breath flicks the TV ON.

A vagina, in close up, between the open legs of a body moved by breathing, appears on screen.

PRAYER faces house, gazing out, breathing heavily.

Pause.

The tearing, gulping SOUND OF a MODEM making and completing a connection, so loud as to be a roar, breaks the silence then, silenced, intensifies it.

PRAYER

A lullabye

Em eye see, kay ee why, em oh you ess see.

Sits, gazes out.

One after another, a series of objects are removed by a female hand from inside the vagina.

A coin, a small baby doll, animals, ~~dinosaurs~~, rocks, silverware, scissors, a pencil, a screwdriver, a set of keys, ~~a comb, an audio cassette~~, a pistol, ~~an extension cord~~, a roll of film, ~~a book of matches~~.

PRAYER

During removal of objects

Then tiny, tiny little people appear and walk 'cross the TV screen, making little tiny noises. Tiny little little tiny people wearing clothiz, wearing shoesiz, walking from right to left 'cross the TV, making little tiny little laughing noisiz. Fours or fives of them. Then, when the last one makes it all the way 'cross the TV, the TV screen goes blank (*he makes a slurping sound*), shuts right off. Poofffffffffffffff.

A lightbulb is screwed into the vagina, and lights up.

Oh, thank you.

He works a hand back in his pants, to his ass, pulls out a book of matches, turns, lights the candle atop the TV.

Puts the matches in his back pocket.

He reaches down and shakes one of the arms' hands.

How do you do.

How do I do what?

How do I do what?

WHAT?

How do I do what?

The arm begins to pull him up off his crate, and to drag him towards stage right.

What? Stop. Let go! You're hurting me! Stop it! Hey! Stop! Where! Help! Help! Help! NO! NO! HELP ME! HELP ME! HELLLLPP!!! (*Utter hysteria. Screams.*)

The arm stops pulling just when it disappears through curtain stage right, and PRAYER is half off stage, reaching into playspace to be saved.

PRAYER's screams stop abruptly.

PRAYER gazes out at house, blinking, leaning tilted into playspace, obviously being supported offstage right.

A FIGURE, clothed & shod, with a long bamboo pole with a string and hook enters stage left.

Hooks the house on PRAYER's head, lifts it off, and places the pole in a hole in the ground so the house remains suspended, hanging over center stage.

The FIGURE EXITS, stage left.

PRAYER wipes his left arm across his mouth, from the elbow to the back of his hand, punctuating it with

PRAYER

'PAhh

which flicks TV OFF.

PRAYER smacks his lips. Blinks. Gazes out at house again.

The NIGHT-forest SOUNDS heard again.

In mid-sentence PRAYER and WOMAN ON CROSS enter, their arms hooked, walking slowly, tentatively, staggering slightly in the low light towards center stage.

She is clothed, wearing pants and a tee shirt.

Both of them barefoot.

WOMAN ON CROSS

—n't really think he was that type of person. Not at all. I expected him back.

PRAYER

You hoped.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Yes. I did. Only because I didn't think he was that kind.

PRAYER

Well. It's almost four. That gas station wasn't so far back as to take this long. I think he's gone for good. It'll be dawn soon. Traffic 'll start to pick up.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Place sucked. I'm not gonna work there. Hicks.

You didn't expect him back?

PRAYER

I *wanted* him back. I don't know if I expected him. It's too recent to remember.

PRAYER (*cont*)

There's a couple other bars.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Why we moved here. Nowhere. Again.

PRAYER

Because *somewhere* wasn't working. Remember?

WOMAN ON CROSS

Then why did you give him the gascan in the first place? If you didn't expect him back why bother?

Somewhere is *never* working!

PRAYER

I guess I could have gone myself.

WOMAN ON CROSS

You could have.

PRAYER

I could have.

You would have liked that.

WOMAN ON CROSS

I would have liked that?

PRAYER

You would have.

WOMAN ON CROSS

I would have?

PRAYER

You wouldn't have?

WOMAN ON CROSS

I would have?

PRAYER

You would have.

WOMAN ON CROSS

So you weren't sending him to help us, you were getting rid of him, to strand us. You think I was hoping you'd go so I could have a go at him.

PRAYER

Or he could have a go at you. But yeah. That's right. So you could have a go at each other. And so I could just been gone.

WOMAN ON CROSS

And what would have been the problem with that?

PRAYER

"What would have been the problem with that." How many times? What would have been? (*Whispering*) It's not allowed! That's what! It's not allowed and you know it!

WOMAN ON CROSS

If we can have a go at each other why couldn't we have had a go at each other?

PRAYER

(*Whispering*) Because I can't be two people at once! I can't! I try I can't! I'd rather die! DIE!

WOMAN ON CROSS

You will die.

Not even one person.

Here are some arms. Let's make a fire.

They arrange the arms in a teepee shape.

PRAYER pulls the matches from out his back pocket.

PRAYER

You think that?

WOMAN ON CROSS

What.

PRAYER

You think that?

WOMAN ON CROSS

What.

PRAYER

Go. We have a go. That's what we do? Have a go. A go?

WOMAN ON CROSS

We don't?

PRAYER

After all these years you think we have go's at each other?

WOMAN ON CROSS

I think we'd be pretty lucky if we did.

PRAYER

Go is blind. You want be blind again? That's you want? You want be blind again?

WOMAN ON CROSS

Again? Right now I think blind is more real than any of the other.

PRAYER

Sitting down on crate

Go's. You think we have go's. Well. You know when I'm you — in you — when my cock's you — in you — not moving, just in you, and I take mind there, my mind, there's nothing been created can measure the changes, moment by moment, I feel in you. Without moving, either of us. I'm feeling your mind, when I'm held by your pussy. I'm feeling the charge of your mind through my cock, in you, inside you, like I'm a conductor your current passes through. And I'm not just talking about cunt-energy, or cock-energy. Just meat. You know. I'm talking about *mind*. That, *this* current, this same current that started your heart. Both our hearts. Started the ocean. Started the sun. We fuse. We become one circuit. Like two bodies braided 'round each other that end in one mouth. Inside you inside *me*, I can feel you going place to place. I ... You ... I ... A silent movie for the blind. But blind no more. It's like the stars skywriting in blood on the back of my head. The message. I'm in there, in you in me. With you. *With you*. You think that's not real? You think blind is better than that? Than having that? You'd rather not have that? You'd rather be fucked? That's what you're telling me?

Long, long pause.

She staring at PRAYER, absent-minded contempt.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Are you going to light these arms or what?

PRAYER

We don't need them.

Hangs his head

Pause

Stands

Fuck them. It'll be light soon and it's not cold and I want to know! Yes?

WOMAN ON CROSS

Know what?

PRAYER

What I just said!

WOMAN ON CROSS

What did you just say?

PRAYER stares at her.

Long pause.

NIGHT forest SOUNDS abrupt CUT.

Pause.

SANDPAPER SOUNDS, low, continuous scraping.

WOMAN ON CROSS

I'm cold.

PRAYER

No you're not.

WOMAN ON CROSS

I'm not?

PRAYER

No. You're not. No your *not*.

Long pause, stare.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Reading my mind again hay. Feeling my mind again is it hay. Think you're in me so far hay. Thinking you're way down deep in there, hay.

During following PRAYER makes no attempt to defend himself at all.

All his effort is to *not* defend himself.
Keeps his hands by his sides and his eyes on her.
She staggers during.
Walks through the arms.

WOMAN ON CROSS

Reaching over pile of arms

Pokes him on arm. Yea-ha. Feels like. *Pokes him on stomach.* Well yes I do believe.

Pokes him on face. Well fuck the Milky Way it is! Your body— *sniffs him, then sniffs her hand* —is the inside of my cunt! Yes it's true now! This is my cunt skin! My cunt— *caresses, then punches him in arm* —arm! My cunt— *caresses, then punches him in stomach* —belly! My cunt— *caresses, then punches him in face*; PRAYER *falls to ground* —face! CUNTFACE! You stupid fuck! You think you're reading *my* mind through my cunt all these years! With *your* dick? You've got a cunt for a brain! A dried out, shriveled up childbare cunt for a mind is what you have! A mindless mind! Every fucking thought you have is backwards! Upside down and backwards! Over! Over and over! Always the same! You fuck! You mindless, spineless, fuck! You don't hear me! You don't *HEAR* me! Now you've gotten us stuck out here, fucking nowhere, because you're afraid of some ride giving me a fuck! Some fuck giving me a ride! Him? You ass! You picked him up! You read my mind? You? You're fucking illiterate! But wait. How is it. How is it exactly that your body has become my cunt now? How izakly is this? And then. If. If *you* are my cunt, then. What's this here? What's thisa here now? What's now between my legs? Have you stolen it? Or. Is this you? Wait. Is this you now? Is that what you're trying to tell me? Is that what this is now? This is you here? Oho, you'd like that wouldn't you. You'd like that much methinks. Yes yes yes yes. You'd. That's. You'd like that. My baby born ripping through your face. You'd like that, my piss to pour out your nose, hay? You'd like the yeast in me to foam up your mouth, curdle your teeth, sour your gums, plaster up your eyes, chugg your ears. You'd like that inflated head of yours to be the inside of something fertile, wouldn't you. Anything. And, especially, O, yes, but most expecially, you'd like all these cocks, these stiff, hard comeswollen cocks you're so sure are throbbing my way to shoot their hot loads straight down your throat. Isn't that right, now? Straight down that cunt of a throat of yours! So you could bite 'em off and swallow them whole! Isn't that right now

WOMAN ON CROSS (*cont*)

number twenty-one? Isn't it? What the hell have I been doing? What the hell have WE been doing? You're like some frankenstein doll with all the parts stuck on wrong. And you're stuck in me, and I can't get you out! I can't get you the hell out of me! I feel sick! I feel like I've been poisoned! I've been contaminated by you! I feel like you've bitten through an artery in me and I'm bleeding to death inside! You're trapped in me and I can't get out of you! *You* get out of *me*! Get out of me! Get the hell out of me! Raben! Fount! Rilsh! Simming! Shurrrlllll!

Long pause.

PRAYER, on his elbows, stares up at her, she down at him.
Both breathing heavily.

PRAYER

Sometimes we eat things to rid the world of them.

WOMAN ON CROSS

She mouths his words, repeating them silently.

We do do we? We do hay? Iz that so? Then why are you still here? Why are you still here! You feculent, fatuous, simpering slugtrail of a man? Why would you still be here? Haven't I et enough of you? Haven't I et enough? Is there no end? Is there always more? MORE? *Moremoremoremoremoremoremoremoremore*. Is that it? That's it hay? There's always more, right. Right? You ... fungus! You virus! How much more of you do you think I can eat? HOW MUCH! I've eaten without appetite for ten thousand years. Eaten YOU. Without appetite! Without want, or desire, or taste. You! Turd! I've lived in house after house after house after house after house after house with you. I wanted you to live. I made my way, every day in the world, every night, hoping, hoping to come home and find you alive. Alive. To find out that you'd decided to live too. But you made every house, every house we ever had, into a showcase for your miserable cottonmouthed misery and your pygmy world failure. You tricked me. You died as soon as we married. You attracted me with your life, which was some kind of hologram, and as soon as we hooked up you died. You vanished. I thought. But what

WOMAN ON CROSS (*cont*)

you really did was finally appear. This dead dying nevercanlive house insect. Never was a man. Never-Was-A-Man. That's you. That's your indian name. Never-Was-A-Man. Your native asshole name. That's you. But Never-Was-A-Man didn't show his face 'til it was too late for me. You'd already got me. You got me to watch. To watch you. Watch you become a heap of laundry twitching in its own gas. Watch the world around you—which was me— become some kind of movie screen, that you could just look at. Just watch. And I know you think it gave me pleasure, that it gives me pleasure to see it, to watch you, you fucker, you think it's some kind of gift you've given me, that I could watch you become this thing, this pile of blueeyed excrement. You thought I loved this. You thought, you think I'm *honored*. You think I feel it like love that you watch me, out there. *Out there*. *Out here*. While you sit there, look, rotten. Rotting. You think you're returning love, this way? That you're loving me, like this, by composting yourself? That I felt loved by this? And so that I love you? You *think*. You think this is it. But I don't. Do you hear me, Never-Was-A-Man! Twelve years. Twelve years? I *don't*. I don't. I just don't know how to get away. Fuck me! But you. You're a weed. Grown over my love choked it an inch of its life. It's buried beneath you. Huh? *Buried*. And that's why you think it has something to do with you. That's why. All these years. All these years. No he's alright. Goodbye, Ray! No he's really not a bad guy. So long, 'Manda! No, you just don't know him. I'll miss you, Lee! G'bye! G'bye! G'bye! G'bye! For YOU! FOR YOU! YOU! You. Your foul tongue's never known a goodbye. Hello or either. How could it? There's no one in there. *Here*. Never-Was-A-Man. I've got to get through you. Get *out* of you. But see it's not you I want. I've got to dig. I've got to rip my way out. But it's not you, now. No more. It was. It was, I know that, it was, for a time. Not long. O my fuck! Too long. I admit that. Look how I've followed you. You see? Even to out. My empty cunt! But it's not now. You. And won't ever be again. *Ever*. You hear? You *SEE*? Never-Was-A-Man? *Ever*. *Ever*. That's right. That's right. Sit there. Just. Look.

Long pause.

PRAYER stares up at her. Both breath heavily.

eWoman enters, stage left.

Dark skirt suit and heels.

She's carrying a rusty shovel tucked under an armpit and she's struggling with a baby, an infant.

She's got a fist pushed up its ass, hiding her entire hand, and she's making the baby's cries — screams — with her own voice.

The struggle spins her, staggers her, careens her around a small area of the stage.

PRAYER and WOMAN ON CROSS watch, like children at a puppet show.

The baby pulls eWoman to and fro.

Finally she grabs its neck, struggles to press it down to the ground, and stamps on its head, exploding it, killing it.

She extricates her hand from inside the baby. It is stained, to the wrist.

She heaves a sigh, exhaustion, and leans on the shovel, breathing heavily.

Stares down at the little corpse.

Pause.

She notices PRAYER & WOMAN ON CROSS.

Smiles at them.

Then extends the shovel with one arm, stained hand towards them, offering them the opportunity to dig.

PRAYER gets up with difficulty, and makes his way slowly over to the shovel.

He gazes into eWoman's face, receiving a message, nods once.

He takes the shovel from her.

Steps back a step, turns towards WOMAN ON CROSS, and then spins, smashing the shovel across eWoman's face.

eWoman stands for a moment, makes a baby cry, and drops in a heap on top the infant.

SANDPAPER SOUND CUT.

PRAYER throws the shovel at WOMAN ON CROSS's feet.

PRAYER

Start yr digging.

WOMAN ON CROSS picks up the shovel, puts it across her shoulders and hooks her arms over it, starts to do a slow softshoe.

PRAYER, with handclaps, sings a blues dirge for WOMAN ON CROSS to move to.

PRAYER

Along come the mountain
Along come the sky
Along come the river
A long time to cry

Looking through the window
Looking through the trees
Looking through the window
Who's looking for me

Long time comin'
Long time to die
Long time comin'
Long time to die

The song and dance come to a humming, shuffling end.

WOMAN ON CROSS tosses the shovel back to PRAYER.
He catches it and stands, facing house, with it over a shoulder,
military at-arms.

PRAYER tosses matches to WOMAN ON CROSS.

WOMAN ON CROSS arranges eWoman's body, lengthwise right
to left.
She shoves the little corpse up between eWoman's legs, under the
skirt, making sure it's where she wants it.

PRAYER hands the shovel back to her, without looking.

PRAYER stands, using his hands to do a dental self-exam.

WOMAN ON CROSS places the shovel lengthwise on eWoman's
body, the shovelhead on her chest facing up, handle down by her
crotch.

{She places a penny — originally puked by PRAYER — on each of her eyes.}

She then rearranges the arms as a campfire, by eWoman's head, lights a match and throws it on them, and then sits at the fire, warming herself.

The stopping of her activity gets PRAYER's attention, he stops his dental self-exam.

PRAYER turns, reaches down and pulls eWoman's teeth out of her mouth, all of a piece.

PRAYER speaks through the teeth in his hands, placing them on different parts of his body as he speaks, speaking through those parts, to her body, at times moving to sit on the crate, but never actually sitting.

WOMAN ON CROSS sometimes listens to PRAYER. Sometimes not.

PRAYER

to body

Coming down with something. Feels like it. I—. Feels like a fever or something, yeh, pretty sure. Throat's kinda tight. Warm. Am. Sure of it. Little clammy. You know how you get, when something's just starting to come on. Like it's hard to tell what's your body, what's your mind, you know. And what's just the world. What's just the world? What is? Maybe the world has a fever and I'm just feeling it. Maybe I just do what the world tells me. The world worlds. That's this. I wanted to be somewhere. I could dissect you. That's really what I always wanted. I could dissect you and hang your insides on treebranches to dry. Just that. A mini orchard of meaty mittens what you used to be you. I wanted to be somewhere. What liver. Somewhere that would settle me down. What lungs. Somewhere that held me down. What heart. I mean look here. What tongue. Where are we? The tongue. Where is this? The tonguing. This is always how it's been. You were always telling, excelling at the tonguing. Ask me where I am I can't say. It was a sovereign nation, yours. We're here but what the fuck is that? That tongue. If I knew where I was I'd know what to do. No one really lived there, you know. You understand? Renting and out. Tenting and gone. A step in a step out and out was out, all the way. Gone they're gone. If I knew where the fuck I was I'd know what the fuck to do. It was like a country of mesmers, all agape. Lollygagged and chinny,

PRAYER (*cont*)

smarting. Titty and moled, harrowed. Where I was would *tell me*. Elbowed, naveled and jowled, necromantic. I just wanted the place to tell me what it was I was supposed to do. What I was supposed to do. I've got the parts. I got the pieces of it. A door I walk through. I close I open I lock I let I listen through. A window I shut I open I look out I smash I hide from. A floor, walk it kick it stamp it fall on it lie on it piss on it listen down through it. Wash it. Scalped, eared, famished and often assed. ASSED. Love to wash it. The window too. Something to hang on for a second more. One more second. So, you know, I got the parts. I get them. But it's the whole thing, the whole thing I never know. I never get. So even though the parts are all around me, the pieces are all around me, they don't tell me anything except about themselves. Cocked, cockeyed, cocksucked, cock colded, cocked and raidy, ma'am. And I need to know the whole thing, the whole thing in order to do what it is I'm supposed to do. The place would tell me if I just knew where it was I was when it was I was, there. But it never does. Necked, noosed, rectumed, sacrumed, pubumed, slapshotted, suckumbed. I can't hear it. I couldn't ever. The best I could do was make up stories about what it was I was doing when I wasn't doing anything. When anyone, anyher, mostly anyher, asked. I'd make up elaborate tales. Activity laden. Ascending colòn, descending colòn, Willie. Renal. Tales. Of professionals clashing in desperate lunges for the last of all of it. Of bus rides that generated spontaneous conversation which ended up having significant impact on governance at the local level, with the possibility of this impact being felt way up the food chain. Duct. Ventricle. Synapse. Slew. Heap decisions made because they had to be. They had to be. By me. By me, me who feels surrounded by wild animals when I glimpse two people having a conversation on the street. Me who feels the very last food grabbed out his mouth at the sound of friends laughing in a window. I wanted to be there. Or there. And then I would know. Valve. Tourniquet. Dressing. Salve. I would know what it was because I'd know where it was. It was always out there. Not here. There. Somewhere that I would understand, and then everything would have been easy. Easy. Would have taken care of itself. Of me. Because the place would know. Capillary. Vaso vagel. Nu? And I would know. And so I would do what I was told by where I was. But not here. Never. It refuses. It's gagged. It will not speak and I think it

PRAYER (*cont*)

won't, ever, just to spite me. Just to murder without killing me. Just by filling my lungs with ignorance like seawater. Urethra. Duct. Duct. Duct. Duct. Duct. Glans. So just I won't know. And so I won't be able to do it. Do it. Do whatever it is I'm supposed to do. Because the place isn't anywhere. It doesn't make me do anything. I don't even think it needs me. Labia majora. Labia menorah. Sanguinal hood. Cliteral horse shoe. Captain of the cavalry. Clamp. It never did. It never needed me so it never talked to me so I didn't have anything to do for it, and so there wasn't any what for me to know what to do. This is how it was it is I'm not crazy. I'm not making this shit up. Occipital lobe. Ocular nerve. Upper lid. Lower lid. Lachrymal depression. Linguinal torch. Mammarial no deposit no return. Areolan wave scape, white milk crests, salt air, seabone starvation. You fuck. I just wanted to know where I was and then I would have known what to do. Yeah fucking. Fucking a-ing a-ing. ING. Can fuck in there, here, that wasn't any problem. Fucking was what made sense. Because fucking doesn't happen any WHERE. Machine mouth. Meticulous hand. Matrimonial moisture. Male. Female. Ejaculation. When it's happening. So I fucked, just to match, meet, mend, what was mashing on. Fucking fucking. But that don't help. That didn't help. Long before it's done and over the thing is on the rise again. Tushy. Singalong. Slow soft shoe. And after it's done another elbow to lean on and make your hand into a shape for the wind. Be ready, ropes and gloves. Be. After.

It was always someone who didn't know me at all. He or she. And I and they were just on our way, our own separate way. Zzz. Going on. Secret was that they really did know me. Secret was that was the secret I couldn't ever tell. Tell anyone, anyone or them. But because I never told so I never knew if it was true or not. But I did know. But I couldn't. Could not. And then we went on, our own separate way, zzz, just like it was. But I always felt like parting my lips to tell. I always just wanted just to tell, just once. Just to tell them. Then they would know me. Would *know*. They would. And that would be better than anything, anything. Be known. Better than anything ever in the. I would watch them walk away and I would think it right in their backs *What are you doing?* Right in their backs *Stop. Don't you know? Don't you know? You know me!* Right in their backs *You know me!* Right in their backs *Don't you want to know?* Right in their

PRAYER (*cont*)

backs *Turn around*. And they would hear nothing. They'd go. And the door would close. And then it was no secret any more. When that door shut that's when I knew. When I knew. They knew. Me. That's. And then I'd be back here. A place that refuses. Everything. To tell. Me. Anything. Then. One day she walks up to me like a map with a cunt and great legs. I was using a door. Looking live. Thresholding. Just at the intersection between someplace and another. That was the place. O yes. She was incoming, I was outgoing. I'd done nothing but find her. I traded this place for her. I hid out. I didn't even talk to the doors. I refused. Finally *I* could refuse. I stuffed my ears against them. The doors, the windows, the floors. Finally I could be the one to withhold information. Critical, crucial information. Life and death. "How are you?" House and hearth. "Anybody home?" Wife and man. "Don't you love me?" Shit. The shit that mattered out there. What never existed here. I could *not* tell. And I *could* just watch. Did. Watch there turn to here. Turned *there* into *here*. Turned her. Without stopping. It. Couldn't. Even know. And came back. Got back. I came home. No O O O! And I don't want to be somewhere, ever, ever again. I'm not!

WOMAN ON CROSS stands and walks over to PRAYER.
Takes hold of the wrist of the hand holding the teeth.
Takes the hand and forcibly shoves the hand with the teeth into PRAYER's mouth.
He's pushed, struggling down to one knee, resisting.
She force feeding him the teeth.
Finally the teeth are in his mouth.
She clamps his mouth shut, waiting for him to swallow.
It's done.
She holds his head by the ears, gazes at him.
Pulls him up to her, to standing, by his ears.
Opens his mouth, searches in it with her fingers, eyes.
Then she engulfs his mouth with hers.
They grab and squeeze each other's crotches, yelling into one another's mouths, eyes open.
Long.
They break, face house, wipe an arm across their mouths, from elbow to wrist, smack their lips, punctuating it in unison with

'Pahh

They walk backwards upstage, stepping on eWoman's body, and huddling close together, stop under the hanging stick-house.

NIGHT forest SOUNDS up.

PRAYER

out to house

He's not coming back.

WOMAN ON CROSS

out to house

Why should he be.

Why should he.

Why should he at all.

They embrace, kissing.

TV flicks on.

On screen WOMAN ON CROSS' closed eyes.

SCREEN EYES slowly open while they kiss.

All lights down.

PRAYER & WOMAN ON CROSS are concealed.

Just the TV, the eyes.

TV flicks OFF.

The night forest SOUNDS begin to FADE, as the SOUND OF hundreds of bodies BREATHING in sleep fills the space.

A minute or so.

DOC ENTERS stage left in white coat and black pants and shoes, three-disc stethoscope hanging off his neck.

He walks slowly, difficultly, under the weight of an enormous yellow sack he's carrying across his back.

The sack glows from inside.

Blows out the candle.

He walks across the stage.

He exits, stage right.

Black stage.

The SOUND OF sleeping BODIES CONTINUES.

Hard CUT silence.

A SHOUT, CUT off.

Long, firm pause.

SOUND of one swipe of a D₇ chord on a old acoustic guitar.

End.