



The Naked House Painting Society

A Play In Two Acts

Robert R. Bowie, Jr.

The Naked
House Painting
Society

CAST

- Carol Is married to Michael and is in her mid-thirties. She is slender and attractive and commands a dry, sarcastic wit, but because she is one of those persons who avoids a confrontation when it puts into risk the things that she holds dear, she has a highly developed second sense about what may injure. She is a nurse at the Island Hospital.
- Michael Is married to Carol and is strong and handsome and in his late thirties. He teaches school in the island public school. He conceals a certain danger about him.
- Andrea Is married to Brendan and is younger than the rest. She is beautiful and in her early to mid-thirties. She is an amateur potter. Her beauty is radiant, both physically and in character. She is vibrant and capable of a wide range of deep conflicting emotions.
- Brendan Is married to Andrea and is in his late or mid-thirties. He is a very successful stockbroker of the mid 1980's vintage. He is thoughtful, likeable and vulnerable, but restrained because he has realized, in middle age, that business has deprived him of friendship and perhaps the love of his wife. He is cunning and has the courage to risk everything. He is the architect of the conflict of the play. He has placed everything dear to him at risk.

©1990 Robert R. Bowie, Jr.
All Rights Reserved
Contact:
Robert R. Bowie, Jr.
526 E. Seminary Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
e-mail: bob@bowie.com
05/15/03

THE SET

The set is composed of a formal wooden deck, which has been painted white, in front of a huge summer house which is only partly revealed on the stage. On the deck there are beach chairs stacked against the house and several pieces of white wicker furniture as well as a stylish black glasstop table and black wrought iron chairs. Also on the deck is a mover's box containing a potter's wheel. The clapboard house is faded from the blustering of winter storms and the paint of the trim of the windows and the door is cracked and slightly chipped. The kitchen window looks out over the deck. Inside the window can be seen a row of plants which face a person at the kitchen sink. There are window boxes in front of the windows. A screen door provides entry from the kitchen. At the farthest point of upstage left there is an enclosed outdoor shower.

The offstage area to the downstage right of the deck is graced with a wild rolling field, below the deck, filled with tall grass and wild flowers. At the edge of the field, down by a shallow cove, there is an old Indian burial ground. The offstage area downstage left holds a dirt road with a ridge in it that provides difficult transit to the house from the main road. The shallow water cove which is behind the house is filled with mussel shoals and oyster beds and the nests, along the shore, of sea birds. The summer nights are cool but the sun during the day comes down heavy with its light and heat onto the deck and field and surrounding trees and inlet.

The set must have a feel of beautiful, peaceful, summer isolation. The tourists

are far down island. They only come the twenty miles in buses to see the Gay Head Cliffs and the small but commercial Indian Reservation there.



THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE PLAY

The entire play takes place in the mid 1980's on Martha's Vineyard in Gayhead, up at the far end of the Island, away from the tourists and the tourist traffic of Vineyard Haven, Oakbluffs and Edgartown. Act One takes place on a weekend after Labor Day. Act Two, Scene One takes place in late November or early December of the same year and Act II, Scene II through V take place the following spring on Memorial Day weekend.



ACT I, SCENE I

It is slightly before sunset. The deck chairs are stacked up along the side of the house. The window to the kitchen is closed and the door is locked. Michael and Carol have just come up the long driveway to the house and parked their jeep. They are in the process of discovering that no one is at home yet. Michael has checked the windows on the other side of the house and returns to Carol as she stands alone on the deck. Carol holds a gift wrapped bottle of wine.

CAROL:

So we drove all the way up here and you still won't tell me where you were last night ... Oh God I've lost the keys. Do you have the keys? (*Checking her pockets feverishly and then finding them.*) No. Here they are ...

MICHAEL:

(*Laughing and looking at the house.*) I don't believe he bought this house. Christ, we painted this house back then. Man, it didn't get any smaller.

CAROL:

They said four o'clock.

MICHAEL:

(*He is still looking at the huge house.*) Well, the ferry must be late.

CAROL:

It doesn't even look like they've moved in yet.

MICHAEL:

No - there are tons of boxes in there. I haven't seen this house in ten years.

CAROL:

We've got a hell of a reunion in the making but the only thing that's missing is Andrea and Brendan.

MICHAEL:

What do you think this place went for?

CAROL:

This far up the Island and with this ground - I don't know...

MICHAEL:

We're talkin' big bucks here.

CAROL:

Michael, it's no big deal.

MICHAEL:

I know Carol, but he's probably changed ... Remember we used to paint these houses naked.

CAROL:

(Sarcastic humor.) Yea, he probably isn't a naked stockbroker.

MICHAEL:

You watch, he'll show up in suspenders with some kinda asshole designer luggage.

CAROL:

Honey, why are you so scared?

MICHAEL:

Carol I'm not scared - I mean its been ten years. We just painted houses together for three summers. He bought a summer house - he's moving back, you know - tourists aren't happy unless they know "the locals."

CAROL:

It was good times. Relax.

MICHAEL:

It's just weird.

CAROL:

Get over it Michael. It'll be good to see them again.

MICHAEL:

(Joking) Let's practice how we're goin, to say hello.

CAROL:

We've got nothing to be ashamed of ...

MICHAEL:

(To himself, practicing various greetings.) Hi ... Hey there... Hello ... *(He grabs his crotch and gives a Bronx cheer and then bursts out laughing.)* I'm only kidding.

CAROL:

Sure you are ...

MICHAEL:

(Indicating the bottle that Carol holds.) He probably won't like the wine.

CAROL:

Give him your book of poems.

MICHAEL:

No.

CAROL:

Why not you've got it with you, haven't you?

MICHAEL:

Yea - so what?

CAROL:

So just give it to him. That's what you've been doin' while he's been makin, all his money.

MICHAEL:

Maybe I'll give it to Andrea. She'd probably read it.

CAROL:

(Catching the slight.) Oooh.

MICHAEL:

What and tell him that I teach school in Vineyard Haven all winter and still paint houses all summer to make ends meet for us.

CAROL:

(Sarcastic humor.) Well what are you going to tell him - that you're the Ambassador to Russia?

MICHAEL:

(Laughing) No, I'll tell him I'm an archeologist - when we were painting this house, one afternoon he found this little Indian graveyard down at the end of the field. He was down there all the time.

CAROL:

Just give him the book - that's all I'm saying... And then he'll say "...Oooh, how boring!" *(She laughs good-naturedly.)*

MICHAEL:

Now that's funny.

CAROL:

I'm just kidding.

MICHAEL:

You weren't with us when we painted this house.

CAROL:

No.

MICHAEL:

The owner was this big fat guy we met drinkin' down Island at the "Leaside." He struck up a conversation. He was drunk. He kept sayin, "friend you got to paint my house tomorrow." He was desperate. So we went the next day and it rained. *(In complete disbelief.)* He wanted us to put on latex paint on a rainy day.

CAROL:

(Sarcastic humor.) Well maybe he went to "house painter's hell" or something?

MICHAEL:

I just hate jobs that weren't finished right.

CAROL:

Ten years later?

MICHAEL:

Andrea painted this house with us back then.

CAROL:

(She laughs) Why does this bring up old shit for you?

MICHAEL:

I just don't know why he'd call us out of the blue ...

CAROL:

Come on - you two were best friends for years. You use to call him "The

Boss." You loved him.

MICHAEL:

...I'll give you even odds that he wants us to paint the house.

CAROL:

You mean for old times sake or something?

MICHAEL:

Yea.

CAROL:

You think that's why he called us?

MICHAEL:

He'd have to do it with us.

CAROL:

So no problem.

MICHAEL:

What do you mean?

CAROL:

Just tell him if it's for old times sake we all have to do it naked.

MICHAEL:

You're crazy.

CAROL:

No, you're crazy, he wouldn't ask us to do that.

MICHAEL:

He might.

CAROL:

No, he wouldn't.

MICHAEL:

Sure he would.

CAROL:

(She thinks for a second.) Michael, the guy's an angel.

MICHAEL:

He's had friends since then.

CAROL:

(Nagging) Well you sure have.

MICHAEL:

Leave it alone.

CAROL:

... No male friends ...

MICHAEL:

Why are you on me like this?

CAROL:

... Just female friends. Where were you last night?

MICHAEL:

I finished painting the Weisner's house at noon and I finished acting in the playhouse last night. I went out to the beach with a bottle. It would have been nice if you had seen the show.

CAROL:

Is the summer over, finally?

MICHAEL:

Yes.

CAROL:

No more summer stock? No more summer waitresses?

MICHAEL:

(Michael goes over to a flower box and picks the geraniums that are in bloom and makes a handful of them and returns to her.) My love., you are an artist with your forgiveness. *(He hands them to her.)* I love you. *(He kisses her.)* The winter has begun. Come on let's go.

CAROL:

No. I told him we would be here.

MICHAEL:

(Carol sits down at the table and gets a magazine out of her handbag and starts to read as she waits.) I remember coming up here the first time to paint the place. It was too wet and hot to paint ...

(The lights change and the scene is a flash back, ten years before the rest of the action of the play. Andrea enters the stage in the misty blue light of predawn. She carries two paint cans and brushes and is dressed in a yellow slicker that hides her face but exposes her legs. She hands Michael a paint can and a brush. It has been raining, but it has stopped. They meet on the deck. She holds an umbrella over their heads and he puts a towel around his neck.)

MICHAEL:

(Michael turns around and they kiss.) Where's Brendan?

ANDREA:

Look, do you see something moving over on the dunes?

MICHAEL:

Don't fuck with me, Andrea - it's raining. *(He looks up from the porch at the house.)* Jesus, look at the size of this God damn place.

ANDREA:

The paint will never hold after this rain.

MICHAEL:

Hey, the deal Brendan struck last night in the bar was five hundred dollars if we can do it in a day.

ANDREA:

(Looking from the deck.) Look it is him out there.

MICHAEL:

(Snuggling up to Andrea.) You know we could do this alone.

ANDREA:

You think you're that good?

MICHAEL:

With this rain he'll be touching up behind us all day.

ANDREA:

What do you want Michael?

MICHAEL:

(Softly) I just don't want him touching up behind us all day.

ANDREA:

So what do you want?

BRENDAN:

(He comes on stage from the dunes, also in a yellow slicker, holding some

paper in one hand and some things hidden in his fists in the other.) The paint's never going to hold.

MICHAEL:

Do we still have a deal?

BRENDAN:

Yea, five hundred at the end of the day or two dollars an hour if it takes longer. He slammed the door in my face. He doesn't care about the money or the rain.

MICHAEL:

Why?

ANDREA:

What were you doing out on the dunes?

BRENDAN:

These papers were tacked to the door when I got here. Some of the copies blew down the beach.

ANDREA:

What's in your other hand?

BRENDAN:

I leaned down to pick the papers out of the dune grass and there were chips of pottery and some arrowheads. I kept some.

MICHAEL:

So the deal is on?

ANDREA:

(Looks at Michael to let him know that she is in control and then addresses Brendan.) Look how big this place is.

MICHAEL:

(Catching the drift of Andrea's game.) We can do it though.

ANDREA:

But we'll need more paint.

MICHAEL:

Brendan, trust me ... *(Kidding him as the odd man out.)* You should go.

BRENDAN:

(Joking in return.) You two spend all night together and you still want me gone? Okay, okay, just because I'm a nice guy I'll go ... *(He turns to exit.)*

MICHAEL:

(Kidding Brendan.) You're the boss, remember. You struck the deal...

BRENDAN:

(As he exits.) Yea, and don't you forget it.

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Nice job. The guy can take a hint.

ANDREA:

Just make up your mind, Michael.

MICHAEL:

A couple of hours we can get it half done - the trim and some windows - then we take a long lunch on the roof and wait ...

(Flash Back lights Go Out)

CAROL:

(The light of the stage now holds the coming of night. Michael is laughing at the memory, as the flash back ends. Carol turns in her chair to look at him.) Michael, why are you laughing?

ACT I, SCENE II

(The Lights Go Out.)

It is much later. A car horn beeps. A set of headlights level and then pass across Michael and Carol. The sound of a Land Rover engine turning off and the slam of car doors wakes Carol as she dozes on the porch in one of the folding chairs. Michael has been leaning against the house. Brendan bolts onto the stage from the audience. He is dressed in suspenders etc. and carries designer luggage as well as a bottle of champagne.

BRENDAN:

(Embracing Michael and Carol excitedly.) I knew you guys wouldn't abandon me. Sorry we're late...

ANDREA:

(Carrying a grocery bag on stage.) Oh, its been so long. Hello. Hello.

BRENDAN:

We missed the ferry and I had to talk my way on to the later boat. *(He tries to open the champagne.)*

MICHAEL:

(Recreating his earlier moves to amuse Carol.) Hi ... Hey there ... Hello. *(Instead of grabbing his crouch he looks at Brendan.)* Nice fuckin, suspenders! You so important now you can't come up on a Friday night?

BRENDAN:

(Laughing with Michael and referring to the suspenders.) I wore them all the way up here just to piss you off. *(There are overlapping, but awkward greetings all around. The awkwardness is always ever present.)*

ANDREA:

(Kissing Michael and Carol.) God you all must be starved. I'm sorry we're so late. *(Hugging both of them.)* Oooh - I can't believe its been ten years...

BRENDAN:

(To all of them.) I've got champagne to start the weekend off. *(He continues to wrestle with the cork.)* Take one of the cups. *(Michael and Carol each take a cup and Carol inconspicuously hides her bottle of wine in one of the chairs.)*

CAROL:

Oh this is going to be such fun.

MICHAEL:

(Taunting Carol. Pushing the sincerity of her intimacy.) Go kiss 'um, honey.

CAROL:

(Embarrassed) No.

BRENDAN:

(Pops the champagne cork.) Okay - the weekend has begun. *(He pours champagne into plastic cups and hands them out to his guests.)* Put the glasses down for a minute - *(He gestures for them all to hold hands.)* Let's hold each other's hands...

CAROL:

(Repulsed by the excessive intimacy of the suggestion.) No, come on. I'll drink the champagne instead ...

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) Oh, please Brendan. *(She turns away from him in rejection of the request. They all flounder for a moment.)*

CAROL:

(To Andrea) You look so good. You haven't changed a bit.

ANDREA:

Neither have you.

CAROL:

(To Andrea) You haven't seen the reading glasses - they are an inch thick. I can't see a thing. *(She laughs.)*

ANDREA:

(Teasing Carol.) Hey, I'm the one over here with the crow's feet. *(She laughs.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) Did you really wear those suspenders ...

BRENDAN:

(To Michael, developing his joke.) ... And designer luggage, too. *(He holds up his glass for a toast.)* To our best friends-- friends from the beginning. Friends forever. *(They all lift their glasses and laugh awkwardly. Brendan offers to fill empty glasses to break the silence.)*

CAROL:

(The awkward pauses continues and increases.) So is this the first time you've been here?

ANDREA:

Oh, no, we went to closing up here last weekend and came up here...

BRENDAN:

(Beat) You all must be starved.

ANDREA:

...I bought fresh corn and we got some lobsters on the Ferry.

BRENDAN:

(Searching through his pockets.) Oh God, I can't find the key.

ANDREA:

(Tense - her nerves are on edge.) Come on Brendan, They're hungry...

BRENDAN:

(Searching his pockets.) Relax honey - I had them on the boat. I've got them somewhere.

ANDREA:

(Apologizing to the others.) We drove all the way up from New York and then we missed the boat. I just wanted to take a shower and we're late for you all.

BRENDAN:

(Now searching his coat for the keys.) You can take your shower. I'm going to make the dinner. Go on.

ANDREA:

In the outdoor shower?

MICHAEL:

(Taking the advantage.) Yea - like the old days ...

ANDREA:

(Changing tone and looking at Michael.) That's why we're here ...

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) I can open it.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Go on.

BRENDAN:

No wait a minute. The key is somewhere.

MICHAEL:

I can open it. *(He goes over to the door.)*

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Go on.

MICHAEL:

(Slams himself against the door and then produces a pen knife, jimmies the door and slams himself against it again - it opens.) It's easy.

ANDREA:

(She kicks off her shoes and begins to disrobe.) Get me a towel in there. *(Brendan is in a contained panic.)*

MICHAEL:

Sure. *(He enters the house.)*

ANDREA:

(As she continues to disrobe and neatly fold and stack her clothes on one of the chairs.) There are towels in the boxes inside the door.

BRENDAN:

(Finding his key in his brief case.) I put it in here because I didn't want to lose it. *(Looking for laughter to cover his embarrassment.)*

CAROL:

(Trying to get into the spirit of things to help Brendan out.) A brief case. I've never seen you with a brief case. *(Brendan is only thinking of his wife disrobing.)* Stand up and hold it. *(Laughing)* Let me see what you look like on Wall Street.

BRENDAN:

(Carrying out the joke.) I can't believe it either. *(He stands up straight and holds the brief case in a pose as his wife undresses behind him.)* The man in the

gray flannel suit ...

CAROL:

(To Brendan) Hey I went to grad school in Boston for a while.

BRENDAN:

That's great.

CAROL:

Well Michael was in this accident so I came back here - you know to be with him. Did you know about that?

BRENDAN:

(He glances at Andrea's progress from the corner of his eye.) Forget about it - the world is rotten with grad students.

CAROL:

(Touching his hand.) No big deal.

BRENDAN:

(Embarrassed.) Yea. I knew it wasn't.

CAROL:

I'm a nurse at the hospital now. It's steady work down here in the winter. I like it ...

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) Unless you want me to show these people what ten years has done to my body - you'd better get me a towel in there.

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea lovingly.) Andrea - they'd be envious. *(Exiting to the house quickly.)* Michael where's that towel?

CAROL:

(To Andrea as they stand alone together with Andrea half naked in front of Carol.) Looks like you want a shower in the worst kind of way...

ANDREA:

(The tension in her has reached its apex.) It has been d dirty miserable day...

CAROL:

(Beat) I wish I could still do that...

ANDREA:

Do what?

CAROL:

(Looking after Brendan who is racing to satisfy Andrea's needs.) Just "that".

ANDREA:

(Beat) The city was so hot. I just want a shower. *(Beat. As she thinks about the comment.)* Then we can all have a nice dinner. The lobsters are big. *(She heads for the outdoor shower.)*

BRENDAN:

(Coming from the house with a towel and a bathrobe.) I found the soap and shampoo. *(Andrea turns on the shower.)* I get dinner ready. *(He hands the towel and bathrobe over the edge of the shower stall.)*

CAROL:

(To Brendan) I'll set the table - okay.

BRENDAN:

I want us to eat out here. The stars are out. I packed some candles.

CAROL.

(Stopping Brendan) You okay?

BRENDAN:

Sure. *(Beat)* It was just a long ride up here.

CAROL:

(Giving a look at Brendan like someone who has been surprised by the rekindling of an old friendship.) You okay?

BRENDAN:

(Smiling defensively and privately for a moment at Carol.) Yea, its just been sort of hectic.

CAROL:

Its been awhile. *(From behind the shower stall Andrea's head can be seen. She draped the rest of her clothes over the top of the shower stall and starts the shower.)*

BRENDAN:

(Quickly) No it hasn't.

CAROL:

It'll be okay, Brendan. I'll set the table out here - okay.

BRENDAN:

(To Carol) Great.

CAROL:

(To Brendan) Brendan, why did you invite us here?

BRENDAN:

Why?

CAROL:

Nobody's going to get hurt are they?

BRENDAN:

(To Carol.) I don't know. *(Michael exits from the screen door with a towel around his neck. He stops to inspect the box with the potter's wheel in it and opens it.)* I've got to shuck the corn and start the water for the lobsters. *(He looks at Michael and then at his wife in the shower as he speaks to Carol.)* I packed an old cutting knife in a box upstairs. Will you get it for me? *(Brendan and Carol exit through the screen door.)*

MICHAEL:

(Yelling to Andrea who is in the shower.) What is this stuff in the box?

ANDREA:

(From within the shower.) What?

MICHAEL:

(Opening the box and starting to set up the potter's wheel.) You heard me.

ANDREA:

(From within the shower.) What?

MICHAEL:

(Drifting slowly toward the shower.) Do you want me to set it up?

ANDREA:

(From within the shower.) I can't hear you. *(Looking over the shower stall.)* The wheel you mean?

MICHAEL:

(He walks over to her and stops and then aggressively puts his hands on the top of the shower and looks her over as she turns off the water.) I just was askin' if you wanted me to set it up? *(Referring to the potter's wheel.)* You heard me.

(Brendan pushes open the screen door and watches what follows. Michael and Andrea don't see him. Brendan puts his hands in his pockets and doesn't disturb them. He just watches.)

ANDREA:

What are you lookin' at?

MICHAEL:

(Turning away, self-satisfied.) If you haven't seen it, you don't know what it is... And if you have it don't make no difference.

ANDREA:

(To Michael playfully.) Well come on in, the waters fine. *(Michael laughs. Brendan has gone to the far end of the deck and continues to observe them unnoticed. She exits the shower with the robe around her.)* Can you make it work?

MICHAEL:

Sure.

ANDREA:

(Pointing to the potter's wheel.) Then please do... I'm going inside to dry off. *(She exits past him as he watches. They smile at each other and both exit through the screen door. Michael is respectfully following her at an appropriate distance. Brendan watches them exit and then he folds his arms.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT I, SCENE III

The lights raise on the porch. It is slightly later the same night. Brendan: is shucking the corn sitting in one of the chairs down stage center. Michael is putting together the potter's wheel. There is a long pause before either speaks.

BRENDAN:

(Shucking corn and as he speaks he tries to get Michael's attention.) It's a beautiful night. It's so clear. I remember nights like this... Do you?

MICHAEL:

(He has just finished setting up the potter's wheel.) You know if nothing else, I'm a craftsman. Maybe that was what I was always supposed to be.

BRENDAN:

No, you were a poet - you are a poet is what I mean. That's something you were born in to...

MICHAEL:

(Coming over to Brendan.) It's still a craft. You need some help with the corn?

BRENDAN:

Sure, pull up a chair. *(Beat)* The last corn is always beautiful. Look at the color of the kernels. Andrea bought some fresh tomatoes at a roadside stand coming up here. Did you see how beautiful they are? She studied them in their baskets. She couldn't make up her mind and the clock was ticking in my head. I knew we were so close to missing the boat, but I admired the time she spent. She really is an artist and I had to kill the tension in me and let her decide. I kept saying to myself - "What is missing the boat?"

MICHAEL:

(Softly to Brendan as he picks up the first piece of corn and prepares to strip

it.) She knew what she was doing.

BRENDAN:

Yes, she did. If I just take time to watch her I realize, every time I do, that she has this wonderful sense of things.

MICHAEL:

(Referring to missing the boat.) No, she knew what she was doing.

BRENDAN:

(Confused) What do you mean?

MICHAEL:

(Changing the subject.) I've got a question for you. Where did you go while I was setting up the potter's wheel?

BRENDAN:

Oh, I just went for a walk.

MICHAEL:

(Stripping the piece of corn.) Where?

BRENDAN:

...Just down along the beach.

MICHAEL:

(Stops stripping the corn.) I looked across the field. You remembered the old Indian graveyard.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) You just walk off the beach and up the bank and you're there...
(Beat)

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) You went up there? *(Beat)* You told me ten years ago

the place frightened you. *(Michael waits for an answer but doesn't get one.) Remember? Continuing to strip the corn.)* I saw you've got paint cans in there.

BRENDAN:

Next spring I'm goin' to paint the house. I could get the paint cheaper in New York City. It didn't cost me anything extra to bring it up here last weekend when we came up for the closing...

MICHAEL:

(With a voice of complete giving.) You want me to help you paint this place?

BRENDAN:

(Surprised and moved.) No - you don't have to do that.

MICHAEL:

We could all do it this weekend. Each take a quarter of the house. Hell, at least three of us know the house.

BRENDAN:

No. I want you all to have a good time. We'll go down to the beach and drink wine at night. You know. Get acquainted again.

MICHAEL:

That's the way to do it. We need a common project. It won't be work. It's what we all did together, before - okay?

BRENDAN:

No.

MICHAEL:

(Pulls a paint brush out of his back pocket and hands it to Brendan.) I pulled this from your box of supplies. Feel the gentle taper of the stem - the balance. *(He hands it to Brendan.)* What's it feel like?

BRENDAN:

It feels good.

MICHAEL:

Lets do it then.

BRENDAN:

No. *(He hands the paint brush back to Michael.)*

MICHAEL:

Why?

BRENDAN:

Andrea has already arranged, if necessary, to stay a day or two to get a painter.

MICHAEL:

(Looking at Brendan as Brendan daydreams for a moment.) A penny for your thoughts. (The lights go down and a flash light flickers from off stage and then centers on Brendan's face. This is the second flashback of the play. Andrea, dressed in the yellow slicker holds the light. She addresses Brendan as he stands at the top of a ladder at the edge of the house with the paint brush still in his hand. He remembers.)

ANDREA:

Are you still painting?

BRENDAN:

Yes.

ANDREA:

It's all over. I saw the fat man on the road as I came up here.

BRENDAN:

I'm almost finished.

ANDREA:

Did you get the five hundred bucks?

BRENDAN:

(Beat) It took longer than I thought.

ANDREA:

You didn't get paid?

BRENDAN:

Why are you way up here?

ANDREA:

I didn't know where you were so I hitchhiked up here.

BRENDAN:

Where's Michael?

ANDREA:

Back down at the barn.

BRENDAN:

Why?

ANDREA:

I left him. *(Beat)* It's over. I knew you'd still be up here...

BRENDAN:

(Beat) Wait for me. I'm almost finished.

ANDREA:

Michael says the house was sold at auction. Is that true?

BRENDAN:

Yes. Right out on the deck...

ANDREA:

Brendan, come on down. It's just an exercise in futility... Come on down...
(He descends the ladder. She offers him her hand. He kisses her and laughs. The Lights Go Out on the Flash Back.)

MICHAEL:

(The lights raise again after the flash back and Brendan is back at the table laughing to himself.) Why are you laughing?

(The Lights Go Out)

ACT I, SCENE IV

The lights raise on the porch. It is later that night and all four characters sit around a table which is nicely set with table cloth, wine glasses, etc. They are finishing dinner and all are a little drunk. As the lights go up on them they are all laughing at the end of a story. There is a beat and Carol covers the silence.

CAROL:

(To Brendan) Michael told me that you three painted this house.

BRENDAN:

(Opening the next bottle of wine.) Did he tell you what happened?

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan as he anticipates the upcoming story about himself.) I knew you'd get to this...

BRENDAN:

(To Carol) He never told you?

CAROL:

(To Brendan) No - one of his many secrets... *(She laughs.)*

ANDREA:

(Affectionately as she looks at Michael.) You had lots of secrets, didn't you...?

BRENDAN:

...The owner had made a lot of money, it turned out, owning and operating some swank Inn up in Vermont during the winters...

MICHAEL:

Yea, but tell her how...

BRENDAN:

Yes, he'd made all this money, it turns out, but not paying his creditors. He was cheap - in the tightest sense of the word - so he got us up here and he wanted us to paint it "now!" With latex paint - the plastic coating over the woodwork - but it was raining when we came up here. But he said "do the job!" The wood was wet - he wouldn't listen.

MICHAEL:

...And the guy had no hair and he had like a thousand double chins and no shirt - really, he looked like he was out of a pampers commercial...

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) Wait - we'll get to that. *(Starts to pour the wine.)* Hand me your glasses... So Michael and Andrea start painting the house - It's goin' to peel off as soon as the sun comes out...

CAROL:

What did he want?

BRENDAN:

He had no friends - All he wanted was results. He wouldn't trust us. But he used to address us as "friend this" or "friend that." We told him...

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) Go on.

BRENDAN:

...So Michael and Andrea get kinda bummed out - I mean workmanship...

ANDREA:

(Holding her glass out to Brendan for more wine.) I'll take a little... *(Brendan pours her some more wine and then continues.)*

BRENDAN:

...So at lunch they are sitting up on the roof - they'd finished the trim and windows and they'd smoked a joint and Michael sees the skylight up there.

ANDREA:

(To Carol) This is the awful part ...

BRENDAN:

... So Michael's high, sitting on a roof, getting stoned and an idea comes to him... He'll play "Tic Tac Toe" on the skylight - big ones - with the paint - cause the rain'll wash them all way anyway... So he's workin, on a real big "O" and then he looks down through the skylight and the guy is lookin' back at him - I mean horrified ...

MICHAEL:

(Interrupting and happy.) He was real bald - no hair or anything you couldn't see him - till he looked up ... And started cussin"!....

BRENDAN:

Well, Michael being always on the attack pulled his pants down and sat on the skylight and went right through - the guy caught him - what could he do? Michael said he grabbed for the cord that opens the thing as he went down - reaching for the sky and all and this guy caught him...

MICHAEL:

It must have looked like "Jabba the Hut" catching the baby Jesus! *(They are all laughing.)*

CAROL:

(Laughing) Oh my God, how horrible ...

BRENDAN:

The next day I went back to him. It was sunny. I was going to offer to pay

for the window - I didn't have any money but I was going to offer to pay and I walk up to the door and the plastic paint on that door (*Pointing at the kitchen.*) had peeled right off the door. And part of me got pissed off - cause that wasn't our fault - But I knocked on his door, measured the window, got the glass and came back and put it in that afternoon. I love that story. Michael was great. Man, that must have been the best moon that guy ever saw through that skylight. (*They laugh.*)

CAROL:

Wasn't the guy pissed off about the paint?

BRENDAN:

Yea, he wouldn't pay us. No big deal, we had become one of his creditors.

CAROL:

Well, It must have taken some nerve to ask for it after Michael had skydived through his window...

BRENDAN:

Oh, I didn't ask for it. I just came back the next two days and did it over. It was dry by then.

MICHAEL:

I didn't know that... You son of a bitch, that wasn't our fault. You came back here for two days?

BRENDAN:

It didn't matter. We wouldn't have gotten paid. That morning the feds foreclosed on him. They had his furniture out on this deck by mid-afternoon. I had a good view from up next to the skylight. (*He laughs.*)

CAROL:

(*To Brendan*) Did you keep painting?

BRENDAN:

Yea.

CAROL:

Christ, what an exercise in futility...

MICHAEL:

(*To Brendan*) Why?

ANDREA:

(*Interrupting abruptly.*) What was the name of that pond we'd go to?

MICHAEL:

"Ice house." It's still there.

ANDREA:

Remember - we'd all strip down and go swimming after work?

CAROL:

Yea - I wouldn't do that again. Now I turn out the lights and put a towel over the mirror when I take a shower.

ANDREA:

I have beautiful memories of this Island.

MICHAEL:

(*To Andrea*) Did that have anything to do with you guys buyin' the place?

ANDREA:

(*To Michael*) Yes.

BRENDAN:

Andrea's been talkin' about it ever since we moved to New York...

Sometimes it takes me a while to catch up to my wife's intuition... *(He toasts Andrea from across the table.)*

ANDREA:

It's like you said Carol - those were great years.

MICHAEL:

(Looking carefully at Andrea.) It's dangerous to live in the past.

BRENDAN:

It took me ten years. I went to grad school with a guy, we both chose to work at the same brokerage house. We moved to New York, with our wives. He was a friend, not like you guys were, but we were friends. He took another job two years ago, two blocks down the street and now he steals my clients. What happens to people? People move away, or get divorced, and I just get that picture of that guy standing on the deck, right here, with the feds tagging his furniture. Even in the last days, living here alone, he must have been trying to sell it to avoid the foreclosure. I found out later that his wife and children had left that spring. You only make friends with three or four people your whole life. You can feel it when it happens. You all know what I mean? You can go back to them anytime and pick up exactly where you left off - no re-introductions, no resume bullshit, no circling around sniffing each other. Look at us, that's the way we are. Right here. Right now.

CAROL:

Yea, that's true. We've all seen each other - Michael we were all here when your father died and the last summer, Brendan, when you got the letter about grad school.

BRENDAN:

I've got no secrets from you all. I don't think that I can say that about anybody else.

MICHAEL:

When I got here I was a little afraid that, that might not be true. But

you're right. *(He lifts his glass.)* To no secrets - to no barriers.

ANDREA:

(Raising, she goes over behind Brendan, and putting her arms around Brendan's shoulders affectionately kissing him gently.) It took me ten years but my wisdom prevailed. *(They all laugh and toast and drink.)*

BRENDAN:

(Kissing Andrea in return over his shoulder.) And I love you more now than that morning that we met down here. *(Andrea goes over to sit on the potter's wheel, puts her glass of wine down and begins to shape some clay. To the others.)* I gave you my lost years, but what have you guys been doin'?

MICHAEL:

(He gets up from the table.) Nothing. Teaching down here all winter - 11th and 12th grade English, Moby Dick, Moby Dick, Moby Goddamn Dick. Not any of them has read a bit of it. I think there is a comic book that gets passed from senior class to senior class...

CAROL:

...or the video of Gregory Peck in the movie...

MICHAEL:

... But it doesn't matter, I haven't even read it in five years. I put out a cheap book of poems which in my sicker moments I make my students read. There are always one or two sycophants who do -they get "A's". I make my senior class memorize one of my poems each year. Guaranteed "A". *(He laughs.)* The accident -do you all know about that? I was out trying to help somebody and got clipped by a car and pinned on the Vineyard Haven bridge- hospital for five months hanging in a pelvic sling - I came out of it bloodied but unbowed. I still drink. *(Lifts his glass.)* I guess that's not news. Last February I stumbled on a hand calculator and after determining the exact number of days that I have been alive -given a leap year or two - I computed the approximate cubic footage of the Hyannis Ferry and determined that I had consumed enough bourbon to flood it four inches deep ... At which point my mission in life

became clear and I determined that it would take me until the age of 96 to fill it to the port holes - So I jog and eat right now...

BRENDAN:

(Looking around) You see - nothing has changed. *(They all laugh.)* Carol, what can you add to that?

CAROL:

Michael is an actor in the summer stock down here - and he is wonderful.

MICHAEL:

Not according to the critics in this last one ... You know, they only kick the tires but they never look under the hood. *(They laugh.)* Hey, under the hood is everything - right? *(He laughs.)*

CAROL:

It's not his fault. There is one critic who if you gave her free tickets to a baseball game, Michael swears, she wouldn't know it was nine innings. *(They laugh.)*

MICHAEL:

Yea. Bad. Bad. Bad. *(Stunned silence from the rest and then he addresses Brendan.)* You remember you'd go out to that Indian graveyard?

BRENDAN:

Yes.

MICHAEL:

What did you find out there?

BRENDAN:

I just went out there to look around. Nothing ... old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can, old iron, old bones, old rags ... It's just an Indian graveyard ... *(Beat)*

CAROL:

... And I can confirm the truth of Michael's other story - about the accident - and nothing else really. I've been doing the nursing. We still rent the same house in Oakbluffs- I nursed Michael back to health both in the hospital and at home after the accident. I think it brought us closer together ...

ANDREA:

Any children planned?

CAROL:

(Beat. She covers for Michael.) No... one thing I will tell you, because Michael is too modest but, he is very brave. He was in great pain from that accident and he has been very brave ...

MICHAEL:

No, I'm not brave - I've never been brave. That's just Carol talking; to be brave you must see clearly the risk and choose to take it - that's the literary definition. *(laughing)* I do, however, have an immense capacity to endure pain - think of the hang-over after drinking the Hyannis ferry dry, or worse, an entire class of 12th graders, dreaming about the girl next to them naked in the back seat and I've got them chanting:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

My only consolation is that Dylan Thomas must feel worse and he's dead. Of course, if he happened to hear them - he most certainly is "raging." *(He laughs)* Forget about that. *(He raises his glass.)* That's all the news that's fit to print. Bla-Bla-Bla- Christ the liquor got me. I'll be forty next May... I'm just like you guys - just waiting for something to happen.

BRENDAN:

May what?

MICHAEL:

The end of May. Memorial Day weekend. Seems appropriate.

BRENDAN:

Ahh Michael - it's not that bad - we'll help you through it. *(Turning to the others)* - won't we?

ANDREA:

Yea, vicariously.

CAROL:

(Laughing at Andrea) They were both cradle robbers, weren't they? *(Andrea and Carol laugh.)*

BRENDAN:

We'll open the house on your birthday, A big birthday party for Michael - the four of us ... We'll keep it quiet. What are friends for anyway? *(To Michael)* Deal?

CAROL:

Deal. To keep it cost effective - I'll supply the bourbon. Okay, Michael?

MICHAEL:

Sure ... *(To Brendan)* Let me ask you something. Why this house?

BRENDAN:

... I don't know - I've seen things falls apart. I was afraid it might happen to us. *(To Michael)* Remember that Yeats poem you showed me? "The Second Coming," right? Let's name the house. I propose a toast. "To all of you who are my best friends and to this house which we shall call "The Second Coming." *(They all raise their glasses and drink.)*

ANDREA:

(Drunk and bitterly from the potter's wheel.) With a name like that its

hardly appropriate to "consummate" it with a toast. *(She laughs - the others are stunned for a moment.)*

CAROL:

(Trying to joke her way out of the awkwardness.) Well what are you proposing: *(She holds up four fingers and looks around.)* "Fore Play"? *(She tries to laugh but nobody joins her.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Carol) Oh, that is so cute.

BRENDAN:

(Covering for his wife and very embarrassed.) She's a better person than I am... When she gets drunk she can go back to work. *(Referring to Andrea at the potter's wheel.)*

MICHAEL:

Show me how to make a pot. *(He gets up from the table and joins Andrea at the potter's wheel.)*

CAROL:

(To Michael) Come on Michael, its time for bed.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Put your hand in the center. Put it in the center and move it out. *(Showing him.)* Dip your hand in the water ... And then move it out gently.

BRENDAN:

(To Carol apparently unaware of the implications of what is happening.) She's had a long day.

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) Maybe I don't want it called that. *(Michael loses control of the pot and it spins wobbling on the wheel.)* It's all wrong now. *(To Michael with*

panic returning to her voice.) You don't know what you're doing, do you?

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Yes I do.

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea) I can fix it. *(He goes over to the potter's wheel and kneels next to Andrea and with his cupped hands begins to shape the pot back into form.)* Look.

CAROL:

(Collecting dishes from the table and heading back inside.) Come on Michael. All good things must end - until tomorrow. *(She laughs.)* Get the door for me, will ya?

MICHAEL:

(Still looking at Andrea.) Good night. *(He picks up the dishes after helping Carol with the door and then exits.)* Andrea, *(over his shoulder)* Brendan'll fix it for you. *(He exits into the house.)*

BRENDAN:

(Gently to Andrea) It's just practice anyway.

ANDREA:

(To Brendan softly.) I'm so sorry.

BRENDAN:

No problem - they're friends.

ANDREA:

No, I asked about children...

BRENDAN:

What are you talking about?

ANDREA:

I asked them if they were going to have children. It was horrible. I crossed the boundary. Maybe they don't want children. It's just always on my mind and the wine must have ...

BRENDAN:

(Brendan gently gets her to sit on the stage in front of him and then pulls a chair up behind her and snuggles down behind her.) You shouldn't worry about saying things like that.

ANDREA:

You don't understand. There are some things you can't ask anyone. All your friends, friends, friends talk - but there are some things you just don't say.

BRENDAN:

I'll tell them both tomorrow. It's something that is important to us. I'll explain the situation... and if an apology is necessary, I'll give it for us both.

ANDREA:

No ... Please hand me my wine glass. *(Brendan gets up and hands her the wine glass.)*

BRENDAN:

You want a little more? *(She holds out her glass and he fills it. She nurses the glass of wine throughout the rest of the scene.)*

ANDREA:

(After a pause) You won't listen to me will you?

BRENDAN:

It's the right thing to do.

ANDREA:

That's not the point Brendan. You're going to do it whether I like it or not.

BRENDAN:

I can't let you hide from these things. You sit at your wheel all day long. You make your pots and you keep all these things inside of you. You don't talk to me anymore. I love you. I'm frightened by that.

ANDREA:

Don't do it please. You take things head on. That's not the way to do it.

BRENDAN:

It's the only way I know. I'm frightened about us falling apart. I love you but I can't get at the problem.

ANDREA:

The reason I don't talk to you is because I can't trust you.

BRENDAN:

What do we have to hide. It's my fault.

ANDREA:

(Turning to face away from him.) Oh, stop it! *(Looking back at him.)* Are you going to tell them?

BRENDAN:

We bought this house. We can name it anything you want. It was just an idea I had. What do you want to name it?

ANDREA:

(She stands and addresses him.) Please don't tell them. It's private. It's none of their business.

BRENDAN:

(He takes the wine glass from her and hugs her with great passion. Tears come to his eyes.) I'm so frightened of losing you. All I know is that when we have a problem we have to admit it. That's the courage that Michael was talking about. If we can't talk we'll grow apart. I'm so frightened of losing you. *(He hugs her. He is overwhelmed with passion for her.)* Come on in, will you?

ANDREA:

No. I want to sit out here for a while.

BRENDAN:

Will you come in soon?

ANDREA:

Yes.

BRENDAN:

I'll wait up for you ... Tonight is supposed to be the night.

ANDREA:

It's hopeless.

BRENDAN:

It's not hopeless. The doctors haven't said it was hopeless... *(Beat)* I love you. *(He waits for a moment watching her from the door. She does not answer and the third flash back of the play begins as Andrea sits out on the deck with Brendan at the door watching her. The lights come up gently on one corner of the deck where Michael is reading a book. After a moment he looks up at Andrea and beckons for her to join him.)*

MICHAEL:

Listen to this. I have your answer.

ANDREA:

(She looks at him but does not move off of her seat.) Go on...

MICHAEL:

(Reading from his book.)

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
They youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:

Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an ill-eating shame and thriftless praise.

How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer "This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,
Proving his beauty by succession thine!

This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

I know it's not the answer you want. *(Michael looks up at her.)* Nothing is "permanent" Andrea. Listen how he ends it. It rhymes "old" and "cold". Shakespear wrote that four hundred years ago. Can't you still feel how much he loved her? There is no "permanent love" Andrea. There is only "perfect love". *(Michael looks up at Andrea and the lights fade on him and she is left alone again on the stage. At the end of the flash back Brendan can wait no longer and he turns and enters the kitchen door, shutting it behind him softly.)*

ANDREA:

(Turning to answer Brendan's question posed before the flash back but only an instant too late.) I love you too Brendan. *(Turning back into herself. She puts her head in her hands for a further moment and then stands and enters the house.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT I, SCENE V

It is slightly before dawn the following morning. Michael stands down stage on the patio dressed only in Brendan's pants, bare chested, with the suspenders holding up the pants. He is barefooted and juggling the contents of Brendan's pockets. There is a half empty bottle of bourbon on the table.

MICHAEL:

(Juggling) One - two - three - (He grabs one of the three objects that he is juggling and shoves it in his pocket as he tries to continue to juggle the rest.) Where the fuck is the money clip? *(He goes over to the table and takes a slug of the bottle of bourbon and then resumes juggling other things he finds in the pockets of his pants. The handkerchief, keys, etc... his concentration is deep. The light in the kitchen goes on and it shines out on to the porch as the dawn continues to come up. Michael pays no attention.)*

BRENDAN:

(From inside the kitchen, offstage.) Is Michael up yet?

CAROL:

(From inside the kitchen, offstage.) I just woke up. I don't know where he is. *(Brendan and Carol's shadows can be seen on the kitchen window.)*

BRENDAN:

(From within the kitchen.) Maybe he got up early to walk the beach.

CAROL:

(From within the kitchen.) Sometimes he drinks all night. My guess is he's on the other side of midnight. *(Beat)* You want me to set the table outside?

BRENDAN:

(From within the kitchen.) Should we just eat without them?

CAROL:

(From within the kitchen.) Don't wait for Michael. He'll be back when he's damn ready. Guest or no guest. *(She laughs to cover the fact.)*

BRENDAN:

(Backing through the door with knives, forks and placemats.) Andrea always sleeps late. She is an artist, too. *(He sees Michael.)* Here he is. *(Looking at Michael.)* Did you come into our room last night to get those pants?

MICHAEL:

(Stuffing his hands in Brendan's pockets and forcing the pants to go up and down on the suspenders.) Yes, I wanted to wear your pants. *(He reaches over to the table and takes a big slug from the bottle of bourbon and then turns to face Brendan.)* I wanted to feel the suspenders cut into my shoulders. I wanted to walk the property in your pants. I wanted to walk the beach in your pants without underwear.

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) You can have those pants if you want.

MICHAEL:

(Drunkly) Can I go into your bedroom again?

BRENDAN:

(A little nervous but covering it up.) You've got the run of the house. *(Carol enters through the screen door to the kitchen and stops, holding two cups of coffee in her hand.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan, completely disregarding Carol.) Okay, then I want to slide into your house. I want to dive in.

BRENDAN:

(To Carol) Hold open the door, I think he means it. *(Carol keeps the*

screen door open with her elbow.)

BRENDAN:

(To Carol after Michael has just dived, airborne through the door, and crashed into everything in the kitchen causing a loud noise inside. Carol lets the door slam behind him.) Yea, that's Michael - he'll probably come back reincarnated as a "Die Hard" battery.

CAROL:

(Handing Brendan a cup of coffee.) Tell me ... Does this make him a morning person?

BRENDAN:

(Dead pan and loving it.) Probably.

CAROL:

(Affectionately mocking him.) So are you going to be the tour director?

BRENDAN:

What do you mean?

CAROL:

Oh come on - you've got something planned.

BRENDAN:

(Loving the attention.) That's not fair.

CAROL:

Come on - what's the schedule?

BRENDAN:

I thought we could go down to the beach.

CAROL:

(Kidding him) And?

BRENDAN:

We could get mussels off the rocks for lunch.

CAROL:

That was spontaneous, right?

BRENDAN:

I've been thinking about this since I asked you all to come - I can't help it.

CAROL:

It's true, - once you care about someone, even if you see them ten years later they are eminently predictable.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) I apologize about last night.

CAROL:

Andrea just was in her cups. So was I.

BRENDAN:

No. We're tryin' to have a baby. It's been pretty ugly.

CAROL:

I don't need to know about that.

BRENDAN:

No, it's my fault. I don't want this weekend to fall apart. If it comes up it's all in the open. Friends, you know.

CAROL:

Maybe there are some things I don't want to talk about ...

BRENDAN:

I just want you to know its not her fault.

CAROL:

You don't have to talk about this. Now I know.

BRENDAN:

Yea. *(laughing)* That was the ugly part. They showed me a slide. There were all these little fellows swimming around and then a whole bunch of like starfish hangin' on the rocks.

CAROL:

(Laughing) Oh, gross.

BRENDAN:

Gross? We're talkin' about the flowers of my family tree here.

CAROL:

Starfish?

BRENDAN:

Yea. Just hangin' out on the corner.

CAROL:

... And smokin, cigarettes?

BRENDAN:

Yea, goin, nowhere.

CAROL:

We shouldn't be laughing about this.

BRENDAN:

That' s okay. It's been three years. We've still got a chance.

CAROL:

Are you embarrassed?

BRENDAN:

I was - until ...

CAROL:

Until what ...

BRENDAN:

Well I went for the test. You know the room with a rack of playboys that was what I was told. And this nurse hands me this little plastic cup and tells me to go in there. So I go in and there are no magazines. So what am I suppose to do - come back out again - that would be “embarrassing” - I mean at a fertility clinic - so when I do come out I wanted to make sure my shirt was all tucked in and my hair combed so nobody would know. So I check myself out in the mirror and open the door and handed the cup to the nurse and she looks horrified and in front of everybody she says “We don’t do that here - all we wanted was a urine sample.”

CAROL:

(Trying to contain her laughter.) Oh my God, Brendan, I don’t believe that.

BRENDAN:

Yea. It made me think I was a direct descendant of one of the starfish.

CAROL:

(Bursting out laughing and hugging Brendan.) Come on - we can leave a note.

BRENDAN:

I already left a note on the refrigerator. We’ll be back by noon. There is a bucket and tongs in the shed down the road.

CAROL:

How about bathing suits?

BRENDAN:

We don’t need bathing suits. We’re only going knee deep. *(Brendan stops Carol as if to complete his thought.)* Let me finish...

CAROL:

Come on we can talk on the road.

BRENDAN:

No. Wait. This may sound funny, but after all of this I’ve found there is only one thing I am good at. I mean Andrea and Michael are artists and I could never be that creative and you are a nurse and I don’t understand people well enough to heal them but, even when I’m scared and embarrassed, I have learned to confront problems. Do you know what I mean? Identify them. Give them a “name” sort of - and then face to face try and solve them. That is the only thing I’m any good at.

CAROL:

(Not taking the comment seriously.) Michael, that’s so boring.

BRENDAN:

(Thinking for a second.) Yea, it probably is boring. *(Laughing)* I didn’t say it wasn’t boring.

CAROL:

That’s good because it is. Come on. You’re a regular bull in a china shop. *(They start to exit for the beach.)* I’ll bet you get wicked headaches from thinking so much. *(She laughs.)*

BRENDAN:

I do get headaches? *(Laughing at himself.)* Can starfish get headaches? *(They both laugh and exit.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT I, SCENE VI

It is later the same morning. Andrea has been at the potter's wheel for better than a half hour and there are one or two pots drying on a shelf behind her. Michael enters from the door. He has just gotten up.

ANDREA:

(Looking over at Michael as he enters.) There's still coffee if you want it.

MICHAEL:

Where are the others?

ANDREA:

Down at the beach. They left a note. They'll be back for lunch.

MICHAEL:

I was up late.

ANDREA:

You couldn't sleep last night?

MICHAEL:

No.

ANDREA:

Yea, I heard you after we went off to bed.

MICHAEL:

I took a bottle down to the beach.

ANDREA:

Did you hear us talking out here before we went to bed.

MICHAEL:

(Looking at the pots.) Did you fire up the kiln?

ANDREA:

No.

MICHAEL:

You'll never get them finished by tonight when we leave.

ANDREA:

I know. I'm just doin' it for practice. ...Did you hear us talking out here?

MICHAEL:

... Yes, I heard you. *(Beat)* I went out the back door. *(Beat)* So since I saw this morning before the others did I decided to sleep late. *(Beat)* Sort of let them catch up. Brendan still gets up before dawn?

ANDREA:

(Surprised) I don't know. I was asleep.

MICHAEL:

As the sun was coming up on the other side of the Island, I happened to be standing knee deep in the surf with the jug in my hand and the waves rolling up against the back of my legs and I saw your husband walking across the field toward the Indian cemetery with a broom - do you believe it - but for that matter I was wearing his pants at the time - and then he went back along the path, and the light went on in my room - my wife was getting up -And I decided to make an appearance on the porch.

ANDREA:

(Laughing) Pull up a chair.

MICHAEL:

(Sitting down next to Andrea.) You know what I did yesterday while I was

shuckin, corn? ... I agreed to paint this house again ... So what's it like bein' married to Tom Sawyer?

ANDREA:

(Laughs and reaches out to touch him affectionately.) It's nice to you again.

MICHAEL:

(Looking at the house.) You wanna help me do it for old times sake?

ANDREA:

You don't have to do it. Besides Brendan and I have to take a Ferry back this evening. I won't have time.

MICHAEL:

Okay - I'll do it after you all leave.

ANDREA:

He didn't expect you to do it.

MICHAEL:

Did he tell you?

ANDREA:

Yes. He said you two had a nice gentle moment. The kind he's been looking for and you said you'd paint the house. The offer is what touched him.

MICHAEL:

He didn't think I meant it?

ANDREA:

I don't think that crossed his mind.

MICHAEL:

I can still paint a house.

ANDREA:

He knows that.

MICHAEL:

I'm amused you came back here.

ANDREA:

(Surprised by the tone of his voice.) Why?

MICHAEL:

I guess because I try so hard not to live in the past. I've got a lot of regrets. The past seems so easy to go back to.

ANDREA:

(Wiping her hands and paying real attention to him now.) You shouldn't have regrets ...

MICHAEL:

Why not. We both do. Different ones I guess. Why else would you come back here. It was your idea to buy the house, wasn't it?

ANDREA:

Yes. You're right.

MICHAEL:

What for?

ANDREA:

It's sort of like Brendan says. Friends are hard to come by in middle age. Even the people you live with seem cold.

MICHAEL:

Yea. I know. *(Beat)* Come on paint the house with me. I could put you on a plane tomorrow morning. I've got to do it. I just don't want to do it out here all alone.

ANDREA:

You're in pain aren't you? I can still feel it through all the lost time.

MICHAEL:

I realized last night out on the beach - that is what this weekend was designed to do. Each of us was trying to feel something. Anything.

ANDREA:

Yea. *(Beat)* Last night I sat out here and felt all this stuff around me and inside of me. It frightened me. I went back into Brendan and we made love. I loved holding him in my arms with the windows open and the night air fluffing the sheets at the foot of the bed. It seemed like for a long time before last night we had just had sex by appointment ...

MICHAEL:

(Beat) I couldn't sleep last night because I realized that I have been so lonely. I mean for years. Maybe I realized that all I really can do is paint a house. Do you remember when we painted this house together before? *(Andrea reaches over and hugs him.)* Christ. *(He puts his head in his hands as Brendan and Carol can be heard laughing and coming up the path to the house.)* It keeps getting thrown in my face by the happy campers. *(He points at the sound of Brendan and Carol.)*

ANDREA:

(Gently to Michael, touching his hand.) I'll ask Brendan if he would mind if I stay.

MICHAEL:

He won't mind. We are all friends ...

BRENDAN:

(Brendan and Carol enter with two or three buckets of mussels that they have harvested from the beach. Brendan also holds a little plastic sand bucket as he enters. He puts it to the side.) Oh God, the beach was beautiful. Look what

we've got. Mussels. Buckets and buckets. We just rolled up our pants and picked them off the rocks.

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan as he stands to greet him as Brendan enters.) I'm goin' to paint the house this afternoon.

BRENDAN:

(Putting down his buckets and hugging Michael.) Michael, Michael, you don't have to.

MICHAEL:

No, I made a promise. It's what I want to do.

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) I won't allow it. Andrea's going to call some...

MICHAEL:

(Insistent) I know all the contractors on the island. No. I made a promise.

BRENDAN:

If you want to do it we can all do it next spring when we come back up here to celebrate your birthday. *(Brendan hugs Michael again.)* Thank you though.

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) He wants to do it now.

BRENDAN:

(A little surprised at her insistence.) Let's eat lunch. We've got all these mussels. We can talk about it over lunch...

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) It's important to him. We've been talking about it. It's a gift

to you. I want to help him. I know it will be a long drive home alone for you tonight. Would you mind?

BRENDAN:

(A little stunned and surprised but covering well.) Let's make lunch and all talk about it ...

ANDREA:

Brendan. It's important to me.

BRENDAN:

Andrea, if you want to talk...

ANDREA:

It's not a secret or anything. He just wants to talk to me. Even among friends you can't tell everything to everybody.

BRENDAN:

Andrea, I don't see why...

ANDREA:

It's important to me.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) Okay. If that's what you want. Let's eat lunch and we'll pack the things and I don't mind driving alone... I can give Carol a ride back to Oakbluffs... Andrea, before I forget - I found something for you. *(He reaches into a little bucket he brought on stage with him.)* I found something for you. *(He lifts a little piece of broken pottery from the bucket and puts it in her hand.)* It's a piece of Indian pottery. It must be hundreds of years old. I thought you'd like it. *(He kisses her gently.)* Be careful.

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT I, SCENE VII

It is late the same night. The moonlight falls on the deck in a blue soft splendor. Andrea is painting a window with a sash brush with the paint can next to her. Michael is sitting on the deck and painting the lower half of the door. He has a smaller pan of paint beside him. Both are drinking wine and the wine bottle sits on the table on the deck.

MICHAEL:

Did you know I have perfect vision at night.

ANDREA:

(Laughing) No.

MICHAEL:

Yea, I was tested. I could have been an astronaut.

ANDREA:

(Laughing) But what ...

MICHAEL:

...I can't see the door.

ANDREA:

(Laughing) Maybe God is punishing you for the last time you painted it.

MICHAEL:

No, I think I have been blinded by California white wine.

ANDREA:

Has this every happened before?

MICHAEL:

Yes, last night.

ANDREA:

Don't even think about quitting. We don't have much more to do.

MICHAEL:

Quitting? Who said anything about quitting? Just because I'm sitting down ...

ANDREA:

I know that's what you're thinking.

MICHAEL:

You can read my mind?

ANDREA:

Yes I can.

MICHAEL:

Okay what am I thinking?

ANDREA:

You're thinking about quitting - admit it?

MICHAEL:

No. Wrong. I was thinking about "commitment" and "blindness" and about getting a cane, a white cane and ... strapping the paint brush on it ... because I really want to finish painting this door. *(He crawls toward the table with the wine on it.)*

ANDREA:

Where are you going?

MICHAEL:

... Help me find a cane, please.

ANDREA:

(She puts her brush down and heads toward the table.) Get back here!

MICHAEL:

(Michael gropes for the wine bottle.) I think I found a really short cork tree - but the cork is gone.

ANDREA:

Give me that bottle.

MICHAEL:

Bottle? *(With mock surprise.)* My God its liquor ... and I want some.

ANDREA:

No, you don't. *(They wrestle playfully and then fall into a kiss.)*

MICHAEL:

Guess what?

ANDREA:

(Laughing) What.

MICHAEL:

I can ... See again!

ANDREA:

Then come back and finish the house.

MICHAEL:

Do I have to?

ANDREA:

Yes.

MICHAEL:

Okay, but I have an idea.

ANDREA:

What is it?

MICHAEL:

Well, there's going to be some paint left ... Right?

ANDREA:

No, Michael.

MICHAEL:

You don't even know what my idea is yet.

ANDREA:

I can read your mind remember?

MICHAEL:

You think it's dirty?

ANDREA:

Maybe not dirty...

MICHAEL:

No wait a minute - listen. All I'm saying is nobody's done the porch.

ANDREA:

Michael, what are you crazy?

MICHAEL:

All we have to do is get naked and become human rollers - really!

ANDREA:

Put the brush in the paint can and finish the door.

MICHAEL:

... Or we could sit in the can and then get a running start and go bare ass the full length of the porch.

ANDREA:

Michael?

MICHAEL:

Why not, we can go to the shower right over there. *(Pointing to the outdoor shower.)*

ANDREA:

Yea, a shower in the moonlight might be nice.

MICHAEL:

You got him right where you want him, don't you?

ANDREA:

What do you mean?

MICHAEL:

He buys you this house... And all he can come home to is his dead Indians out there. *(Changing tones.)* You miss the chance, don't you?

ANDREA:

What do you mean?

MICHAEL:

The affection.

ANDREA:

Yes, I miss the affection.

MICHAEL:

Yea, it's nice to talk to you this way. We've been friends. We've been lovers. We've been lovers forever ... *(They kiss)* Who would be hurt by this. Come on. *(He leads her into the house.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT II, SCENE I

The set is the same except it is now late November or early December. The stage is bare. There are dried leaves on the deck. Andrea enters the stage followed by Carol. Andrea holds a set of car keys.

CAROL:

Come on give me the keys back.

ANDREA:

(Laughing) Have you had a nice "Thanksgiving?... Just sit down.

CAROL:

Come on.

ANDREA:

Please.

CAROL:

What's the big deal?

ANDREA:

Nothing.

CAROL:

Well then give me the keys.

ANDREA:

I'll give them to you in the morning.

CAROL:

I'm spending the night here?

ANDREA:
Yes, of course.

CAROL:
Michael doesn't know that.

ANDREA:
Call him.

CAROL:
You told me not to let him know you were coming up here.

ANDREA:
Just tell him you're out tonight.

CAROL:
Give me the keys.

ANDREA:
Please?

CAROL:
What's going on here?

ANDREA:
Nothing.

CAROL:
Andrea?

ANDREA:
I just need a ride to the hospital tomorrow. That's all.

CAROL:
I said I'd do that.

ANDREA:
Why do you want to drive all the way back up here tomorrow?

CAROL:
Just give me back my car keys.

ANDREA:
No.

CAROL:
Why?

ANDREA:
I don't want to go.

CAROL:
I have to go. Michael will want to know where I am.

ANDREA:
Don't you ever just go out?

CAROL:
No.

ANDREA:
Does he?

CAROL:
Yes.

ANDREA:

Well tonight you do.

CAROL:

Give me the keys...

ANDREA:

No. I want you to stay.

CAROL:

I'll give you the ride tomorrow.

ANDREA:

Don't you want to know why I'm here?

CAROL:

I know what is happening. We all have our little secrets I'll keep yours. The men don't have to know everything. It's your body. You don't have to say it if you don't want to.

ANDREA:

Will you?

CAROL:

I won't say anything.

ANDREA:

To anybody?

CAROL:

I won't. It's okay to have secrets.

ANDREA:

Please spend the night. We could sit out here and talk and... We could

just be two women together. We could talk about how men work us. The guilt. The manipulation. We have some kind of deeper animal love than they have...

CAROL:

Andrea, I can't.

ANDREA:

Please. I need someone to talk to... Just about all kinds of things. I have no one to talk to now. We've both been through that...? You have, haven't you? I really need to talk out what I'm doing. You deserve to know what happened. Do you know?

CAROL:

I have to go. It would be nice, but I can't spend the night.

ANDREA:

Okay. *(She throws Carol the keys.)* Go.

CAROL:

(She starts to leave.) I'll pick you up tomorrow at eight.

ANDREA:

Are we still friends?

CAROL:

What does that mean?

ANDREA:

Are we still friends?

CAROL:

Why do you question that?

ANDREA:

He never said anything to you?

CAROL:

Who?

ANDREA:

You don't understand do you?

CAROL:

Sure, I know what you're doing.

ANDREA:

Sure - you're a nurse. I know you looked up my name for tomorrow's operation at the hospital so you know... Ask me!

CAROL:

Andrea, I thought you both were trying to have... ?

ANDREA:

(Beat) Tomorrow will you give me a ride back to the airport too?

CAROL:

Sure. What are friends for? *(Carol exits)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT II, SCENE II

It is Memorial Day weekend, Michael's birthday, of the following year. The deck is dark. Andrea and Michael sit in the darkness at the table on the deck after dinner, laughing and whispering. The lights in the house are on and first Brendan's and then Carol's silhouette can be seen moving in the kitchen, preparing to bring out Michael's birthday cake.

ANDREA:

(Whispering to Michael as they sit alone together.) What will your wish be?

MICHAEL:

Wish?

ANDREA:

Your birthday wish...

MICHAEL:

(Beat) I wish Brendan wasn't going to ask me to recite that poem.

ANDREA:

Humor him. *(Beat)* He knows the one you gave them this year ... He located one of your students this afternoon.

MICHAEL:

Where?

ANDREA:

Some book shop in Vineyard Haven he said.

MICHAEL:

And he's going to surprise me with the request?

ANDREA:

Yes.

MICHAEL:

Sure. I don't care. *(He sneaks a dangerous kiss with Andrea as they sit together at the table.)*

ANDREA:

(Beat) I'm packed. Just tell me when.

MICHAEL:

Did you tell him anything?

ANDREA:

No.

MICHAEL:

He knows doesn't he?

ANDREA:

I don't know.

MICHAEL:

He's got to sense something is wrong?

ANDREA:

(Beat) I think so.

MICHAEL:

What?

ANDREA:

Michael. *(Beat)* I feel sorry for him.

MICHAEL:

Why?

ANDREA:

None of it was his fault. He tried so hard.

MICHAEL:

He'll survive.

ANDREA:

(Pulling away from Michael for a moment.) All winter I felt like I was slowly strangling him. He took me on a winter trip to Florida. Every day I could feel him learning that it was over.

MICHAEL:

I don't think he's given up.

ANDREA:

I don't know.

MICHAEL:

There's something going on.

ANDREA:

Did you tell Carol anything?

MICHAEL:

Hell no and she'd have to be in the same bed for her to figure it out.
(Carol enters from the kitchen.)

ANDREA:

(In a panicked whisper.) Quiet!

MICHAEL:

(Laughing) Well it's true. *(To Andrea)* You're ready? *(Andrea nods yes and grips his hand to keep him quiet.)*

CAROL:

(Joining them after she crosses the porch and starts to sit down at the table with them.) He cooked it up all by himself.

ANDREA:

What?

CAROL:

(Sitting down.) The cake.

ANDREA:

(Relaxing) Oh.

MICHAEL:

(Different in tone now that there are three of them.) I'll bet Andrea will clean up.

ANDREA:

(Different in tone now that there are three of them.) Sure, what are women for?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) Am I wrong or has he been showing off all weekend?

MICHAEL:

Yea, he's finally become the maitre d' of his own house.

ANDREA:

(In defense of her husband.) Be nice, he made you a cake Michael...

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Carol was just kidding. Weren't you?

CAROL:

(To Michael) I just meant it in a nice way... *(Brendan backs through the screen door with the birthday cake ablaze with candles. They all sing "Happy Birthday" to Michael.)*

BRENDAN:

(As the cake is put down on the table in front of Michael.) Okay Michael, make a wish.

MICHAEL:

Wait, I'm thinking.

BRENDAN:

... The Nobel Prize for literature. Here it comes.

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) Shhh. *(Trying to protect him from the criticism of the others.)*

MICHAEL:

Why not - I drink enough. *(The others laugh.)*

CAROL:

(Looking over at Michael.) Don't even hint at it ...

BRENDAN:

(Laughing with Andrea) What do you mean "shh"?

ANDREA:

Brendan, be quiet, you'll give it away.

BRENDAN:

(*To Michael*) No. It's impossible - there will be a senior class next year.
(*They all laugh.*)

CAROL:

(*To Brendan*) No, that's not grand enough. (*Beat*) We're talking about a full scale, statewide, Moby Dick book burning... (*To Michael*) Right?

MICHAEL:

No. (*He looks at Brendan.*) I "wish" (*He looks at Andrea and she suppresses a laugh and then he becomes serious again.*) that each of us is fortunate enough to be deeply in love again. (*Michael blows out the candles.*)

CAROL:

(*Slightly embarrassed by the sentiment.*) You can dress him up but you can't take him anywhere.

BRENDAN:

(*To Michael*) You mean that don't you?

ANDREA:

(*To Brendan*) No, he doesn't. Brendan stop being such a good host.

BRENDAN:

(*To Carol.*) He was just covering up the Nobel Prize stuff. (*As spontaneously as possible.*) Do a poem. What was the poem for this year's seniors?

CAROL:

(*To the others.*) It's the high point of his year: "Secret Fun for the Middle Aged: Poetry, Politics and Pre-Puberty."

BRENDAN:

(*To Michael*) Go on Michael.

ANDREA:

(*To Michael*) Go on.

MICHAEL:

(*To Brendan*) Behold the master of doggerel...

BRENDAN:

Go on. It will be fun.

CAROL:

Set it up for them honey.

MICHAEL:

(*He stands and commands full attention.*) Okay, you ready for this? (*He glances at Andrea.*) It's always about 1) youth, 2) physical exercise and 3) the hint of sex. The motive is nothing but pure amusement. All right, part one, quatrain, let's subtitle it "Foreshadowing"... (*He is having a good time over embellishing.*):

In the early spring when I was fifteen
my choices were baseball, tennis or crew.
Between Boston and Cambridge I had seen,
rhythmic oars of singles, eights, fours and twos...

Four perfect ten beat lines - But "crew" doesn't rhyme with twos." ...It's my poem and I say I don't give a sweet shit. Brendan - that's poetic license.
(*He laughs*)

BRENDAN:

(*To Michael*) Go on.

CAROL:

(*To Michael*) Go on Michael.

MICHAEL:

...Beneath the bridges of the Charles River,

I was appointed stroke. I paced the boat.
Our strokes made the running water deliver
us forward. We would stroke and stroke and stroke.

(He is amusing Andrea.) "River" and "deliver", "boat" and "stroke." Okay?
(He continues, again, cutting the line endings with a gesture of his hand.) Listen
(He cocks an ear) the fun part is my senior class is out there memorizing it for
the "A". Hey... I hear them in the back seats of cars, memorizing, chanting,
getting the rhythm right ... the springs go up and down - in iambic pentameter,
of course. *(He laughs)*

BRENDAN:

(Interrupting) What's it about?

CAROL:

Who cares? The seniors don't.

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) Go on. I'm sorry.

MICHAEL:

(Answering Brendan as he continues his comments and then the poem.)
What's it about? *(He laughs)* It's about ... *(He humorously breaks back into the
rhythm and recitation of the poem.)*

...Lifting ourselves out of the brown water
again and again. The coxswain pounds out,
on the gunnels, the rhythm of my order.
Tin cans and prophylactics float about.

BRENDAN:

"Water" "Order" "Out" "About"

MICHAEL:

(Holding his hand up to stop Brendan.) Now you've got to realize that I
have responsibilities to my class here. Every year I must finish with a hint in
the climactic couplet - No, No.,

No, No., orgasmic couplet. Why? *(He looks around.)* Two reason: 1) Its a
couplet and 2) it's high school. But we are only allowed to hint at such things ...

And then the rhythmic silence of the contest broke

And echoed beneath the bridges, stroke, stroke.

*(Michael bursts out laughing at the thought of this ribald poem in the minds
of his senior class and then looks around at the others for approval and they join
him.)* To get the "A" they have to stand up in front of the whole class, put their
hands behind them, keep a straight face and recite it. They love it. It's a kick
in the pants to the school on the last day. It's great.

BRENDAN:

(Not realizing that "like" or "not like", is not the issue.) I like it.

MICHAEL:

No, you don't.

BRENDAN:

I actually do.

MICHAEL:

(MAKING FUN OF BRENDAN:.) DOES IT MOVE YOU?

BRENDAN:

Yes.

CAROL:

(Trying to save Brendan.) No, it doesn't. Everybody hates poetry.

BRENDAN:

That's not true. It was a sonnet, right?

MICHAEL:

(Pointing at Brendan.) You got it - you can graduate from my class
anytime.

CAROL:

Brendan, he's making fun of you.

BRENDAN:

As far as content ... Clearly masculine.

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) Jesus - a student with interest? Make that an "A+".

BRENDAN:

What does it mean?

MICHAEL:

Assume the pseudo-psychological role of the late twentieth century critic, reviewer and biographer ... *(Whispering)* It means anything you want it to mean. *(He laughs)*

CAROL:

(Mocking Brendan's interest as she kids with Andrea.) He's such a good host.

MICHAEL:

(To the others.) I'm just kidding. What would Sigmund Freud do with a poem like that?

CAROL:

Honest answer?

MICHAEL:

Yes.

CAROL:

Burn it.

MICHAEL:

(He grabs a candle in one hand and a napkin, as the poem, in the other.) I like that. Freud questions the author. *(Holding up the napkin.)* Explain this or I burn it. It's all garbage Brendan. Trash. It means nothing ...

BRENDAN:

But the words were consciously organized. There is a detached quality - the "Prophylactics float about."

ANDREA:

(Laughing) Brendan stop - you're sacrificing an A+.

BRENDAN:

Or ... The entry into the stone bridge ...

CAROL:

Michael. Just cut the cake. I'm hungry.

BRENDAN:

... And the echoes once inside.

MICHAEL:

(A little stunned.) Go on. *(Looking at the others.)* The poor man is looking for "inner meaning" among the trash. *(He laughs.)*

BRENDAN:

It's my fault. I'm just not good at poetry.

ANDREA:

(Sensing danger.) Come on Michael, cut the cake.

BRENDAN:

... No I want to know. I've been out of touch with this. Help me.

CAROL:

Let's change the subject.

ANDREA:

Cut the cake.

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) ... Stroke - stroke - stroke ...

CAROL:

Brendan?

BRENDAN:

Okay, let's look at it from a different angle. Are you waiting for something to happen?

MICHAEL:

My wish? *(To everyone)* We all are, aren't we?

CAROL:

(To Brendan) Yea. I'm waiting for him to cut the cake for christsake.

BRENDAN:

(To Carol) Carol, listen - I'm just learning about a poem.

CAROL:

Brendan, he doesn't even take his own students seriously.

BRENDAN:

(To Carol) Well, they don't take him seriously, do they? I want to know about the poem. This is what I've been looking for. This is what I've lost. *(To the others.)* I want to know what he's talking about.

CAROL:

(All of a sudden insanity breaks out as Carol swings her arms at an insect flying around the table.) Bug! Bug! Bug! *(She swats violently at the air.)*

ANDREA:

(Ducking and weaving and swatting at the air.) What is it?

CAROL:

(Hysterical) Oh my God, is it on me? Spray! Spray! Where is the spray?

MICHAEL:

(Stoically mocking Carol.) Honey, I'm sure they don't use spray.

CAROL:

Is it gone?

BRENDAN:

(Brendan persists.) I want to know!

MICHAEL:

No you don't.

CAROL:

(To Brendan aggressively.) Poor Brendan, he's so cute ... Still in his little ninth grade English class - looking for "inner meaning" ... Get a lottery ticket.

MICHAEL:

(Deflecting Carol's concern.) Brendan, your fans want to know the "inner meaning."

BRENDAN:

It's a scary way of looking at things. Maybe its people unconsciously hiding things in their words but still with the deep need to speak, do you

know?

MICHAEL:

Sure - The author could have decided not to write it ...

BRENDAN:

But he can't?

MICHAEL:

Why not?

BRENDAN:

The author strokes this hollow boat. *(He laughs.)* "The prophylactics float about..." He has no need for them... He passes through the bridges, after the echo, out the other side. He is sterile through and through. *(He laughs)*

MICHAEL:

(Stunned silence for a moment.) So what?

ANDREA:

(She is stunned by the admission. She realizes that she has aborted her husband's child not Michael's as she had thought. She inhales violently and turns away.) Oh my God! *(And then gags and coughs as she contains the thought.)*

CAROL:

(Looking at Andrea and then from one to the other and then to Michael, playing on dead pan irony.) I don't think its an over reaction to the poem... As I remember it was my first reaction.

MICHAEL:

(To Carol joining in on the joke.) Yes, some people are just so hung up on free verse ...

CAROL:

Just think if it had been your novel.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Why didn't you tell me?

MICHAEL:

(Off-handedly.) Told you what?

CAROL:

(To Brendan, defensively.) The accident? It was no big deal. It brought us closer together, if anything ...

ANDREA:

(To Michael.) You should have told me.

MICHAEL:

(Now guarded) You mean I didn't?

CAROL:

(To Andrea, protectively) Sometimes he doesn't like to talk about it.

ANDREA:

(To Carol) Didn't I ask you about children? *(Beat)* I just thought I remembered asking you ...

CAROL:

(To Andrea) I told him not to worry. *(There is the edge of irony in her voice because she remembers the abortion of what she thinks is Brendan's child.)* Some of us just don't want children.

BRENDAN:

(Interrupting and pretending not to be interested.) He just can't have children. It's no big deal. Remember, Carol told us he had been brave after the accident. I'm sure he told us. *(As he exits into the house.)* I've got a present, everybody sit tight. *(The door slams behind him as he enters the house.)*

ANDREA:

(Shocked to Carol) Did you tell him about last fall?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) I didn't think you'd mind ...

ANDREA:

(To Carol) You promised.

CAROL:

(To Andrea) I thought it would help us.

ANDREA:

(To Carol) Did you tell him before I came up here?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) I thought it would help our marriage. *(Referring to Michael and herself.)*

ANDREA:

(To Carol) What did he do?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) He understood.

ANDREA:

(To Carol) You promised to me after you told him I was coming up here?

CAROL:

(Nodding toward Michael but addressing Andrea.) We didn't tell anybody. I made him swear. Come on, it's just between friends ...

ANDREA:

(To Carol) He didn't try and stop it?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) Of course not. *(Beat)* Why should he? If you don't want Brendan's baby why should you have it?

ANDREA:

(Looks at Michael begging him to explain.) Michael?

CAROL:

(To Andrea) What's the problem Andrea?

ANDREA:

Nothing.

CAROL:

(Beat) Oh, Brendan's in there. I've got presents for you too, Michael. I'll be right back. *(She exits.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) It doesn't matter...

ANDREA:

(To Michael) How could you have done that?

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) I didn't think you would ever know.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Brendan and I wanted that baby together...

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) But you don't love him. You said as much.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) But we had tried to have a baby together.

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) So what were you doing with me?

ANDREA:

(To Michael) I didn't want us to hurt him.

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) ... but you missed the affection, didn't you?

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Yes, that was what I wanted...

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) When he comes back out of the house, tell him.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) How did you find out I was up here last fall?

MICHAEL:

I saw the phone message - that you had called Carol. I asked her.

ANDREA:

I asked her not to tell you.

MICHAEL:

We trade secrets.

ANDREA:

I can't tell him.

MICHAEL:

(Comforting Andrea) Come on babe, don't be scared. You're lucky if it happens once in a life time.

ANDREA:

Before the abortion, why didn't you at least tell me?

MICHAEL:

(Beat) It was in your best interest not to have the baby.

ANDREA:

It was intentional?

MICHAEL:

When he comes back out - tell him. I can't do that for you.

ANDREA:

You'll tell Carol?

MICHAEL:

(Avoiding the question.) Don't be afraid. Most people only dream for this chance. They buy Harlequin novels and cry in the dark theaters at love stories. When it comes, if it does, you've got to take it.

ANDREA:

I never wanted to hurt him, that's all.

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Why did you come up here? Why do you keep inviting me up here?

ANDREA:

(Interrupting) Michael, you had no right to decide for me. You knew what I was going to do. You should have told me!

MICHAEL:

I was thinking for both of us. Just tell him. *(Beat)* Where is Brendan?

BRENDAN:

(From the shadows at the edge of the deck, he has been standing there, unnoticed for awhile, listening.) I'm here. *(Beat)* Tell me what?

MICHAEL:

(Beat) Do you know?

BRENDAN:

What have you all been talking about?

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) For God sake, tell him.

BRENDAN:

(Softly) What is it?

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Let me talk to Brendan. Go in and get packed. Just let me talk to Brendan for awhile... *(Michael turns and enters the house.)*

BRENDAN:

(Slowly approaching Andrea.) I can't find the present I had for him... I looked under the bed ...

ANDREA:

Brendan, I'm already gone.

BRENDAN:

I'm going to fight for you.

ANDREA:

I've already packed my things.

BRENDAN:

I saw the suitcase under the bed.

ANDREA:

It just happened. We were drinking wine out on the porch as we painted and he made fun of you.

BRENDAN:

What did he say?

ANDREA:

He said you were out there all the time with the dead Indians.

BRENDAN:

Why does he care?

ANDREA:

Cause he says you're crazy.

BRENDAN:

Crazy not to take care of you?

ANDREA:

Yes and then he pours me a big glass of wine and we laugh.

BRENDAN:

At me?

ANDREA:

Yes, cause he says you're out there on the highway and he is with me.

BRENDAN:

I guess I was half way to New York by then.

ANDREA:

I had this aching picture of you with both hands on the wheel.

BRENDAN:

Just into Connecticut ...

ANDREA:

Four hours - four and a half hours after you left here?

BRENDAN:

... That's when it hit me. I just felt it.

ANDREA:

What did you do?

BRENDAN:

I turned up the radio.

ANDREA:

Why?

BRENDAN:

I just turned up the radio and rolled down the windows.

ANDREA:

Why?

BRENDAN:

Fresh air.

ANDREA:

Fresh air?

BRENDAN:

Yea, I was singing with the radio, louder than the radio ...

ANDREA:

Why? *(He just looks at her in cold answer to her question - beat.)* Brendan, you and I don't talk.

BRENDAN:

There were times I'd make the bed and you'd strip it and make it all over again - you were just mad at me, it didn't mean you didn't love me. It was our little pattern. I'd load the dishwasher and you'd pull out all the racks and put the cups and dishes back "the right way" but that didn't mean you didn't love me...

ANDREA:

No. It's been over for years. Maybe I have been waiting. Maybe I talked you into coming up here so I could see Michael again. Maybe the mind works that way. I think he's right. That's what I've been waiting for.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) I know.

ANDREA:

He laughed at you.

BRENDAN:

Well, I am that kind.

ANDREA:

Yes and he laughs at you now.

BRENDAN:

Of course, because I have no love.

ANDREA:

He took it from you.

BRENDAN:

No, he laughs because I have no love.

ANDREA:

Can't have?

BRENDAN:

Yes.

ANDREA:

You mean, never could have ... ?

BRENDAN:

He has the excitement...

ANDREA:

And you don't.

BRENDAN:

Yes.

ANDREA:

Because you are a fool? You have nothing to give?

BRENDAN:

Am I that limited? ... *(Lashing out at her.)* Maybe all I can do is solve the daily problems for you. Sweep the walk, pay the bills, tell you why you shouldn't worry at night before you turn your back and go to sleep.

ANDREA:

(Breaks down in tears in compassion for him.) No. That's not it. You're not "limited..." *(She breaks down and turns her face away from him.)* I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to end it like this.

BRENDAN:

Well, I tried hard. In that room with the cheap paneling and my pants down around my knees and feeling so embarrassed.

ANDREA:

We both tried hard ...

BRENDAN:

...I remembered standing by the subway, standing in the crowd, and I saw a child holding his father's hand, as the train went by, and his father was holding the strap and the train was racing into the future, and I was standing there on the platform all alone. I came home to you and I was so ashamed.

ANDREA:

(She turns away.) Don't say that ...

BRENDAN:

(Breaking down) I bought you a potter's wheel so you could make things, by yourself. I bought you a house with memories so that you had some place to dream in ... In business school they taught us that you can only gamble if you are detached. Andrea, I am good at only one thing. I have learned to see myself, with all my faults, honestly. Perhaps I can have no child with you.

ANDREA:

Brendan, don't say that.

BRENDAN:

No, it's all right.

ANDREA:
Brendan, you can have a child.

BRENDAN:
...We've got this house ...

ANDREA:
...Stop ...

BRENDAN:
... And the potter's wheel for you ...

ANDREA:
You can have a child.

BRENDAN:
All I want is your attention back!

ANDREA:
... I've got to tell you ...

BRENDAN:
No. Don't talk.

ANDREA:
I have to.

BRENDAN:
I just want you to hold me ...

ANDREA:
I have to ...

BRENDAN:
...As if your life depended on it.

ANDREA:
That's what you want?

BRENDAN:
Yes. *(He hugs her.)*

ANDREA:
(Beat) There is something alive about him, Brendan.

BRENDAN:
I can't hold you unless you understand ...

ANDREA:
What?

BRENDAN:
I came here for my own reasons. I came back for this place.

ANDREA:
What about the place.

BRENDAN:
I remember painting this house, I remember painting it up on the roof.

ANDREA:
When they took the old man's furniture.

BRENDAN:
Yes. I don't really know what it is. But that's what I came back for.

ANDREA:

And this spring?

BRENDAN:

You mean the birthday?

ANDREA:

Yes.

BRENDAN:

I came back to fight for you.

ANDREA:

You knew?

BRENDAN:

I sensed it. I am right. When I went down to the bookstore in Vineyard Haven to get the poem from last year's students - I was surprised that they hated Michael.

ANDREA:

Hated him?

BRENDAN:

His kids hated him. I knew that poem before he said it. I knew what questions I would ask. And as for the Indians out there - *(Laughing)* Obviously in the end no children survived them - hell they've got some stockbroker and his wife on their land. *(Quietly)* But to me somehow, they're a library for me to look at, Andrea. Every question that I have they can answer.

ANDREA:

Brendan, I don't know what I'm going to do.

BRENDAN:

Don't leave me ... *(Andrea bolts off stage running toward the beach away from Brendan. Brendan chases after her.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT II, SCENE III

It is maybe ten to fifteen minutes later. Michael exits from the kitchen door and is followed by Carol.

MICHAEL:
Where are they?

CAROL:
Down on the beach.

MICHAEL:
Give me the keys.

CAROL:
I'll drive.

MICHAEL:
Where are "you" going?

CAROL:
I don't know.

MICHAEL:
(Holding his hand out to receive the keys.) Then think about it for a while.

CAROL:
(Laughing) Oh, Michael, you always want everything "now."

MICHAEL:
How long have they been down on the beach?

CAROL:
(Laughing) Hell, you wanted me "now" but that was ten years ago.

MICHAEL:
What are they doing down on the beach?

CAROL:
Michael?

MICHAEL:
What?

CAROL:
Why are you going in such a hurry?

MICHAEL:
(Increasingly more flippant.) I'm hungry and they didn't have anything in there except shit that either came out of the sea or came out of the ground two hours ago.

CAROL:
(Laughing) Yea, I'd believe that.

MICHAEL:
Give me the keys.

CAROL:
No. I want to go with you.

MICHAEL:
Okay, would you believe that I've got fifty dollars in my pocket and I'm goin' down to Vineyard Haven and I'm going to buy two, maybe three drinks and a walk on the beach?

CAROL:
Yes ... I would.

MICHAEL:

I'll bet you do. That's why I want the car, I want the keys, and I want out of here ...

CAROL:

They've had some little fight. We can't leave until we've said our good byes.

MICHAEL:

What the hell is she doin' down on the beach so long?

CAROL:

Maybe they are in love again after some little fight ...

MICHAEL:

Okay Carol, you want to let it all hang out - total honesty?

CAROL:

No. That never works.

MICHAEL:

You want to know what's the problem? Reckless perfect love is what it's all about. *(He starts throwing chairs against the house and trashing the porch as he speaks.)* It's not chairs or potter's wheels or houses. It's reckless perfect love. And when you find it you can't forget it. But honey, there ain't no waitin' around for it either. That is what we could never talk about.

CAROL:

We had that Michael ...

MICHAEL:

.... No. We never did. *(Carol violently slaps him across the face and retreats, shocked at her actions, to gather her composure.)*

CAROL:

Wait till they come back?

MICHAEL:

Why?

CAROL:

Because we have to ...

MICHAEL:

(Beat) Do you understand?

CAROL:

What the deal is?

MICHAEL:

Yes.

CAROL:

No, I don't understand.

MICHAEL:

You don't want to?

CAROL:

(Beat) Just don't embarrass me, please?

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT II, SCENE IV

The lights raise on the Indian graveyard. The moonlight is blue on the bluff and the ink black sea rolls on to the beach below. Andrea sits on one of the ridges completely out of breath. She looks over and down the edge of the beach to the bluff and speaks.

ANDREA:

You can come. *(Brendan enters. He is out of breath.)*

BRENDAN:

(Laughing) Didn't you see me drop to my knees on the beach. Woman - have you no mercy?

ANDREA:

(Laughs) Come on sit down. *(She beckons to him to sit beside her and he does.)*

BRENDAN:

At least friends?

ANDREA:

Sure. *(They share hands and laugh.)* Funny where this would end...

BRENDAN:

... Where it started?

ANDREA:

Yes.

BRENDAN:

You remember? You were coming up the driveway with the flashlight in your hand and I stood up on the roof. From a hundred yards we were looking in each other's eyes.

ANDREA:

Yes - I remember that.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) I remember coming out here the first time too.

ANDREA:

You do?

BRENDAN:

When we got the job, at the Leaside, that morning I came up here ahead of you. That's when I found this place. The papers on the door had blown down to the dunes. So I came walking out here ...

ANDREA:

... And Michael and I followed in our yellow slickers ...

BRENDAN:

I saw you that morning from right here.

ANDREA:

Why did you come back here?

BRENDAN:

(Beat) This is where it happened back then.

ANDREA:

Brendan, it's over.

BRENDAN:

Is it?

ANDREA:

Haven't you given up?

BRENDAN:

(Beat) I don't know.

ANDREA:

Go. Walk back along the beach.

BRENDAN:

Why.

ANDREA:

I don't want to go back right now.

BRENDAN:

Can I stay?

ANDREA:

No. I don't want to go back with you.

BRENDAN:

Is there hope?

ANDREA:

No - I'm gone.

BRENDAN:

I tried hard.

ANDREA:

Yes you did. *(Brendan exits out of the light and Andrea sits quietly, calming into herself as she gathers in the space around her.)*

(The Lights Go Out.)

ACT II, SCENE V

BRENDAN:

(Brendan enters onto the porch from upstage left exhausted. It is about ten minutes later. Michael has been waiting. Brendan looks up at Michael.) She's coming up the path, Michael.

MICHAEL:

(Looking at Brendan carefully.) And you're coming back from the beach? That's a switch - you coming from the beach and her down your path ...

BRENDAN:

Listen to me for a moment. *(He barely can contain himself.)* Sometimes we were lovers, sometimes we were just friends, sometimes she may have hated me. That's not perfect but that's what we had. We had history together. We could have fallen in love again...

MICHAEL:

(Looks at Brendan for a moment.) I'm sorry but I've got to pack some stuff in the car. *(He exits.)*

BRENDAN:

(Screaming after Michael.) Michael, Goddamn it, listen to me. *(Michael stops in his tracks and turns to look at Brendan.)*

MICHAEL:

You had her for all time and you lost her. Maybe close enough wasn't good enough.

BRENDAN:

(Screaming again at Michael.) Listen to me!

MICHAEL:

No, Brendan, it's over. *(Turns with the bags in his hand and exits.)*

CAROL:

(Enters after Michael exits.) Where's Andrea?

BRENDAN:

(Brendan sits down, heart broken, in a chair alone on the stage with Carol) I chased her down to the beach and then I stopped.

CAROL:

Brendan...?

BRENDAN:

...I followed her along the beach and watched her climb the dunes and rest in the field I'd cut. She put her head in her hands.

CAROL:

What do you mean you "stopped?"

BRENDAN:

I stopped and watched her go.

CAROL:

But you followed her up into the dunes?

BRENDAN:

I've been chasing her for years and it's done no good... So I let her go.

CAROL:

Oh no, Brendan, that was a mistake.

BRENDAN:

The further she tried to get away, the harder I chased her. I bought her a potter's wheel. I bought her this house. I jacked off into plastic cups and she was running faster and faster away and I was chasing her harder and harder. The harder I tried the worse it made things. I can't chase her anymore. It does

no good. *(Michael enters.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea who has been standing at the edge of the stage and listening to Brendan.) Let's go. *(He holds up the keys.)*

ANDREA:

(To Michael) Okay. I'll get my bags.

MICHAEL:

Good. *(He picks up some more bags.)* I'll take these to the car and be back for the rest.

ANDREA:

(She crosses and starts to go into the house.) Okay. *(Both Michael and Andrea exit, one to the car and the other to get her bags inside.)*

CAROL:

(Turning and whispering to Brendan.) Then you stopped loving her?

BRENDAN:

(Beat) No.

CAROL:

(Beat) There are some things you chose to know...

BRENDAN:

...And others you don't?

CAROL:

Yes and some that you cannot...

BRENDAN:

Then you talk to her!

CAROL:

If you still love her then try to stop her. (*Andrea's pulling some luggage as she enters through the screen door.*)

BRENDAN:

(*Brandon stops for a moment and then confronts Carol face to face.*) Why?

CAROL:

"Why?" (*She stops, looks at Brendan and then exits back into the house without looking directly at Andrea.*)

BRENDAN:

(*Brendan gets up and helps Andrea through the door.*) Do you want this place?

ANDREA:

It's yours.

BRENDAN:

(*Sort of joking.*) It's too big.

ANDREA:

Are you going back to New York tomorrow?

BRENDAN:

Yes. If I can get on a boat I will.

ANDY:

(*Still wrestling with her luggage as she stacks it on the edge of the stage.*) I'll get my things next week.

BRENDAN:

I need a day or two ahead of you in New York - to get things organized, you know. ...All I want is the books and things like that.

ANDREA:

I don't want the place in New York ... Brendan, where are you going to go.

BRENDAN:

It'll be okay. I never really liked the Eastside. (*Making fun of himself.*) Sort of stuffy.

ANDREA:

(*Gently pleading with him.*) Just stay in our place in New York.

BRENDAN:

(*Brendan stops her in her tracks and holds her steady for a moment.*) Andrea, it'll be okay.

ANDREA:

(*Beat*) Brendan, why did you cut the grass out there? (*She indicates the Indian graveyard.*)

BRENDAN:

You had never been there before?

ANDREA:

No.

MICHAEL:

(*Michael enters again.*) Come on let's go.

ANDREA:

... Even back then you'd go and sit out there. I'd see you.

BRENDAN:

I imagine them living all around here. A whole civilization forgotten...

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Come on. Let's go. You'll see each other again.

ANDREA:

(To Michael) No, we won't.

MICHAEL:

We'll see them again. We've been friends for years.

ANDREA:

(Exploding at Michael.) No. Some things are final.

BRENDAN:

(Joking) Michael, Andrea's right. Next year. Don't plan to be celebrating your birthday up here.

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) Why did you stop following me on the beach?

BRENDAN:

(Joking) Some things are final.

ANDREA:

(Beat) Yes. *(She picks up her luggage, gives it to Michael and then exits back into the house.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) I'd forgotten that she had such a temper.

BRENDAN:

Once you get her away from me I'm sure you won't be troubled by it again.

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan, as he picks up some more of the bags.) Are you being funny, Brendan? *(Calling to Andrea who is inside of the house.)* Andrea, let's go.

BRENDAN:

What's the rush, you've got a whole life time to race into your adolescence.

ANDREA:

(Enters through the kitchen door and addresses Brendan.) It was peaceful out there. That's all I'm saying ... sitting out there with you ...

BRENDAN:

See if you can remember some little bit of it cause that's not where you're goin' now ...

ANDREA:

(Turning to face Brendan.) What do you mean? What do you mean by that?

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea) I mean you are a "coward." You're in love with what the advertisers sell, but there is much more than that.

MICHAEL:

(Exploding at Andrea.) Come on! We've got what they all want. We've got the highway and the car with the windows down with springtime all around us. They can't even remember that. Come on. You've got to run, run, run with it ...

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea) Is that what you want?

ANDREA:

(To Brendan) "Coward?" (She is very angry at Brendan and will get her revenge.) Michael, while you were in there packing I ran out of here ...

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea) Andrea?

ANDREA:

(To Michael) And I ran down to the beach and Brendan followed me.

BRENDAN:

(To Andrea) What is the point of this?

ANDREA:

He's always been stronger than I am. But I kept running down the beach

...

BRENDAN:

Punishment?

ANDREA:

When I couldn't hear him breathing behind me I stopped.

BRENDAN:

What is this - punishment?

ANDREA:

... And I waited and he wasn't there ...

BRENDAN:

Punishment for giving up ... ?

ANDREA:

I looked at a figure down on the beach ... And I couldn't tell if it had

finally given up the pursuit ... if it was walking away at last.

BRENDAN:

... or punishment for loving you too much?

MICHAEL:

(To Brendan) You gave up?

BRENDAN:

(To Michael) It was futile. *(He turns his back on the others.)*

ANDREA:

(Referring to sitting with Brendan on the dune.) It was nice sitting together. We were both exhausted. The tension was gone ... *(Carol reenters from the screen door with bags in her hands and simply watches.)*

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Forget him. - with his buyin' this house, and his God damn suspenders, and his analyzing poetry.

ANDREA:

...I didn't really want to come back to the house just yet. So I sat on the bank at the edge of the field for awhile - the field was cut and there were little mounds under my feet. There must have been whole families beneath my feet. Who was he to them? They had never met. They had never spoken. They would not know what to make of this silly thing in suspenders and docksiders with keys in one pocket and American money in the next ... but he cut the grass for them. Why would he do a thing like that?

MICHAEL:

(To Andrea) Are you coming?

ANDREA:

(Beat) Tomorrow at eight a.m. Pick me up right here.

MICHAEL:

(Surprised) You're not coming now?

ANDREA:

No.

MICHAEL:

(Beat) All right, I'll see ya. *(Michael turns on his heel and starts to exit, car keys in one hand, bags in his other hand.)*

CAROL:

(Chasing after Michael.) Wait.

MICHAEL:

No hurry... *(Indirectly addressing Andrea.)* We got a bottle of bourbon in the house? *(He stretches and looks around.)* Can you feel it ... ? *(Laughing and addressing Carol.)* The summer's just begun.

CAROL:

Sure we do.

MICHAEL:

(Flips her the keys.) Want the keys, honey? Don't lose 'um. *(He looks over at Andrea.)* We can have a few drinks and then I think I'll drive down to Vineyard Haven and look around. *(Looking back at Carol.)* You won't mind, will you? *(She indicates she wouldn't mind.)*

CAROL:

(She is strangely calm and relaxed with him.) No. I've got some reading to do.

MICHAEL:

Okay *(He looks at Andrea as Carol exits before him.)* See you tomorrow ... *(He exits. The stage is quite for a moment as Brendan and Andrea sense each other.)*

BRENDAN:

(Still with his back to the others, and now her - beat.) Are you there?

ANDREA:

(Beat) Yes.

BRENDAN:

(Referring to Carol and Michael jokingly but still with his back to the others.) Have they gone?

ANDREA:

(Surprised that Brendan doesn't understand.) Yes. He has left her, Brendan.

BRENDAN:

(Gently joking) Left her where? *(He turns toward her and faces her for the first time.)*

ANDREA:

Left her ...

BRENDAN:

(Beat. Bitterly joking.) Not here I hope. I get a feeling the weekend's over. *(He laughs.)*

ANDREA:

(Softly laughing) Yea, probably here too. *(There is the roar of the car as it exits down the road.)* Can you tell that he has left her?

BRENDAN:

...I can sense it.

ANDREA:

What does it feel like? *(Brendan goes over and sits at the potter's wheel.)*

BRENDAN:

(Brendan does not answer.) Before you go would you teach me how to do this? *(He starts to spin a pot.)*

ANDREA:

Why?

BRENDAN:

I've always wanted to know how to make one.

ANDREA:

... Because of the chips you found out there?

BRENDAN:

I always imagined the girl who made the pots out on the beach by the ocean, centuries ago, and she dropped one - and then a man came to her and helped her up and he walked her down the beach ...

ANDREA:

(Beat) Brendan, I have secrets ...

BRENDAN:

(Brushing the thought away.) It doesn't matter. You are forgiven. *(He continues to work at the potter's wheel.)*

ANDREA:

... I've done horrible things.

BRENDAN:

(Off-handedly as he works at the wheel.) Life is sometimes very, very hard, Andrea. It takes us away. It uses us up. Just bones and dust ... and busted pottery.

ANDREA:

(Beat) What do you want?

BRENDAN:

Will you go with him tomorrow?

ANDREA:

(Beat) He won't come back...

BRENDAN:

Are you sure?

ANDREA:

Yes.

BRENDAN:

(Beat) You've got to decide.

ANDREA:

Brendan, what are you asking me?

BRENDAN:

I want to know ...

ANDREA:

Why?

BRENDAN:

(Very strong and soft.) This time I have to know.

ANDREA:

(Tears slowly fill her eyes as she tells the story.) ... A long time ago, after Michael and I had painted the house imperfectly, I fell in love with a boy who I sat on a roof with a paint brush in his hand. *(She stands and circles behind*

NAKED HOUSE PAINTING SOCIETY: ACT II; SCENE V

him.) He had seen them tag a man's furniture and drag it out onto the deck and cut his boat free and tow it down Island to be sold. (She puts her hands gently on his shoulders.) He was that man's last friend at two dollars an hour - and he didn't even get paid ... but strangely, long after Michael and I had left, and the man had stopped crying and had walked down to the road, even after the sun went down, I saw Brendan out on the roof all alone (Beat. And then she whispers softly.) and he kept painting ... (Brendan looks up at Andrea and, quiet and very strong, he sits at the wheel. As the lights slowly dim "Have I Told You Lately" by Van Morrison plays and the lights dim and bleed out of their faces leaving darkness on the stage with the first words of the song.)

(The Lights Go Out.)