

THE BREAK ROOM

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A Play in Three Acts

by

Donna Gordon

Poems by Janet Bingham

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### Cast of Characters

Helen Seymour

Lotty Johnson

Meg Ryan

Doctor Alice Huang

George Howell

Edward Jackson

Doctor Joe Bernard

Doctor Al Jacobs

Jeanette Bernard

A poet and idealist

A friend and ally,  
Mexican

The office flirt

Department head,  
Oriental

Hospital security

CEO of food services,

African American

Plastic Surgeon

A Philanderer

Joe Bernard's wife

### Scene

The basement breakroom of a mid-city hospital, located next to the morgue.

### Time, Also Prologue

Remember those days right after World War II? Those were happy times, full of hope for the future: better homes, kitchen appliances and cars. As in any war, the walking wounded came back to remember the nightmare of Europe and the Pacific. Those sorrows contrasted with the improvements in America. Countries who lost and won went through transformations, and this was a process of necessary renewal.

The time period is in the 1950's.

ACT I  
Scene 1

AT RISE: The break room is dreary with low ceilings and windowless walls. The morgue next door is often full and there is an accepted gallows humor among the characters. DOCTOR BERNARD is sitting at the coffee table, and HELEN is making her mail run. LOTTY is working hard to keep everybody happy. The coffee room is functional only, with the prerequisite posters and bulletin boards. It is an after-thought which serves as a temporary shelter for those seeking rest.

HELEN  
(mumbling to herself)

I must keep going, I have a load of mail. It is important to be on time. Oh, here's Lotty.

(LOTTY enters)

LOTTY  
How are we today?

HELEN  
I'll tell you at the end of the day.

LOTTY  
Well, then, tell me about your weekend

HELEN  
I didn't leave a man out. Or woman. I was company with Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost and a host of other writers. But why do you ask? You know I was home reading.

LOTTY  
(looking briefly at DOCTOR BERNARD)  
How about you Doctor Bernard?

(DOCTOR BERNARD is sitting in scrubs with his feet up.)

DOCTOR BERNARD (ALSO KNOWN AS JOE)  
Howdy Miss Lotty. I'm fine now that you have arrived.

LOTTY  
(ignoring his advances)  
Helen, you could have at least come to book studies with me, get out a little.

HELEN

I know the conversation would be better than around here.

JOE

What do you want, a dissertation on the female anatomy?

HELEN

You missed my point. When I was in college, we loved to share ideas. Most of all, I loved writing poetry. Here's one that expresses how I feel now:

*Reads "Crown of Thorns" at end of this script*

LOTTY

I didn't know things were this bad for you. I wish I could help.

HELEN

Look at these surroundings. People around here talk about paychecks, bills, and the cost of everything. And when that ends, it's time to play the dating game.

LOTTY

You just need a good man to take up your time. My boss George, for instance, is a man who's going places. Though he wears a baseball cap, he's really not sporty. He's an intellectual.

JOE BERNARD

How about me? I have loads of education and I'm a good conversationalist.

HELEN

Is that a long word for "hopeless flirt"? Lotty, what do you mean by sporty?

LOTTY

I mean looking for some fast fun.

JOE BERNARD

Say, I thought we weren't going to talk about sex.

HELEN

Joe, turn off your insatiable appetite, will you? *Pause* What about George? What's his story?

LOTTY

George was an officer in the war and went overseas to Europe. His fiancé left him during the war. He's looking for something, but what?

HELEN

I doubt if he's looking for anything I'm interested in. This past war has solidified my determination to try to do something for this weary world. I think about those who have no celebrations, growling stomachs instead of warm beds and the constant threat of illness.

(looking up suddenly)

Oh oh. Here comes the Commander herself.

(In comes ALICE, a woman of Chinese descent. Accompanying her is her devotee MEG. MEG is always looking for DOCTOR JACOB. Though he's married, he's been fooling around with MEG. ALICE and MEG are opposites: MEG is a free spirit and ALICE brings tension and stress wherever she goes.)

ALICE

Now, what are you two up to? I would think you would have something better to do than shoot the breeze.

MEG

(looking up and down the halls)

Where are all the guys? I wish I could find someone new to date. These guy around here are just coffee hounds with a taste for easy prey. Where are the real men? Did we lose them in the war?

JOE BERNARD

Here's one that definitely wasn't lost. My knee injury stopped my war effort. What's a guy supposed to do?

HELEN

How many guys does it take, Meg?

LOTTY

Why don't you come to some church potlucks? You could meet a nice man like Edward Jackson. He's worked hard to get where he is.

MEG

Community potlucks? Give me a break. I go where the talk is fast and the dancing is even faster. And I don't want to add anything to my...

(shaking her body)

hips by eating all that food.

JOE BERNARD

Don't add a thing to those honey.

ALICE

Speaking of men, I tell my hubby all the time that I could do better than this. The dirtiest thing about this room isn't the men's jokes, but these walls because the janitor doesn't clean them.

HELEN

You aren't thinking of moving on, are you Alice?

ALICE

No. They couldn't do without me. I'm the only one who can take command at this hospital. Since they just opened a new wing, I'll also be helping with patient relocations. And, hopefully, they'll be doing some remodeling.

LOTTY

You're getting our hopes up Alice.

(ALICE hastily removes some mail HELEN has placed in one of the mail slots and places it in another slot, not really knowing if it is the right slot. Such blatant abuse of HELEN is common and MEG enjoys the comic relief from her tragic love life.)

ALICE

(looking at the mail)

What is this? You've misplaced my mail again Helen.

(MEG explodes in laughter.)

HELEN

I'm so sorry, sorry. She picks up the mail, inspects it, and then returns it to the right slot.

ALICE

I'm going to get a cup of coffee before they bring a corpse into the hallway.

MEG

Yeah, drink it to the dregs for the dead.

LOTTY

Just because a person is dead, is no reason to think that he or she is the dregs.

MEG

It's just a figure...

(shakes her hips again)

of speech.

(ALICE laughs as she drinks her coffee and adds a few shots from a flask.)

HELEN

Alice, I know what you mean about this place. I didn't mean to work here; I wanted to be in writing, but I didn't know where to start.

ALICE  
(bullying again)

If you don't want this job, my daughter would be glad to take your place.

LOTTY

You don't mean that, do you Alice? Your daughter wouldn't want to push a mail cart for even one day.

ALICE

Are you implying that my daughter is a freeloader? I raised her right and my husband backed me up in everything.

LOTTY

I was just saying that your daughter would think such a job is beneath her.

JOE BERNARD

All these jobs are beneath you gorgeous gals.

ALICE

Joe, I don't need your input. Anyway...what's everybody doing for Valentine's Day?

HELEN

I'm hoping I can make a difference in someone's life.

ALICE

I hope that difference concerns your work.

MEG

Oh Alice, get off it. I'm spend my weekends with loved ones. I'll be having the best escape from this hospital that I can think of.

JOE

But isn't it still work seeing them at different times?

LOTTY

You two are so far from my ideas. My church has lots of activities.

ALICE

Well girls. We're going to have a really hot office party and everyone is invited, even you, Joe.

(JOE nods his head in approval and gets up to leave,  
anxious to get away from ALICE.)

ALICE

Not so fast my man. I don't know what I'm going to do with you. You are costing the hospital an arm and a leg (pardon the pun). Yet you refuse to settle the suit.

JOE

Is this the time or the place to discuss this?

ALICE

(sarcastic)

Can we find a time and place that will fit your busy schedule?

JOE

Make it clear when I'm supposed to be there. You may be a nurse, but I'm not going to let you take my pants.

(He chuckles over his poor joke. Then he leaves quickly.  
MEG and ALICE are still talking.)

HELEN

(whispering to LOTTY)

Was that perfume wafting from our commander in chief?

LOTTY

No, that was whiskey, 80 proof. We need to take our breaks with Alice, huh?

ALICE

(looking in the direction of HELEN and LOTTY)

Don't be whispering around here. I don't know why I keep you, other than because we can't find anyone else to push that cart.

HELEN

Will you believe that it's because I couldn't find another job?

ALICE

Don't get smart with me. Other workers are waiting in the wings...and they're not corpses.  
(The gallows humor is alive and well.)

HELEN

Let's not go there again.

ALICE

Alright, everybody get back to work. The less people in the morgue, the better for us, right Meg?

(MEG doesn't quite catch the humor. HELEN, MEG and LOTTY scurry away like underground moles, heads down, off to their cubby holes.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 2

AT RISE:

Here come the men. GEORGE is an attractive man who loves sports. He's intelligent but often hides it. He's a Detective. EDWARD JACKSON is a self-made man, running the cafeteria and food services to the patients. HELEN is delivering mail, and LOTTY is having another coffee break.

HELEN

This cart gets heavier every day.

GEORGE

Why not let me help.

(He moves an imaginary gold club.)

I can usually deliver a hole in one.

(HELEN moves her cart faster.)

EDWARD

(quietly so HELEN can't hear)

Whatsa' matter Georgie Boy. Don't you know that the mail clerk waits for no man? She's about as likely to be caught as a squirrel on a telephone wire.

(LOTTY walks by EDWARD and glances are exchanged.)

EDWARD

Hello, lovely lady. You are the most beautiful sight I have seen all day.

LOTTY

Coming from you that is a compliment I can enjoy.

EDWARD

I hear you invite people to potlucks. Can I come?

LOTTY

I'll just do that sometime.

EDWARD

Do what?

LOTTY

Invite you, silly, what did you think I meant.

EDWARD

I like to hear you talk, that's all.

LOTTY

I would be honored to have you.

HELEN

Speaking of honor, a lost concept, how about keeping us safe from  
(She accuses George with her eyes.)

him?

GEORGE

Hey, that isn't fair play, or do I mean foreplay. Pardon the pun. I'm just thinking of golf. I'm giving this place the once over to make sure the doors are locked from street traffic. I don't want people wandering in...

(He looks at the morgue.)

for them, I don't worry.

HELEN

We could respect the bodies.

(She picks up a large bundle of mail.)

EDWARD

We got use to those bodies over there? I mean, not those right next to us...I mean the ones on the battlefield.

(looking at HELEN)

Here, let me help you with that.

(Just at that moment, the ATTENDANT wheels in a gurney with a dead body.)

ATTENDANT

Sorry, no room at the inn. Don't worry, there's no smell.

HELEN

(mortified)

Do you have to? That's what I mean by the lack of respect.

(She tries to hand some mail to EDWARD,  
but drops much of it.)

GEORGE

Is that insane? Not even the dead can find a room.

HELEN

(avoiding the corpse but dropping more mail)

Oh, here Edward, help me.

(She spills a bigger pile.)

EDWARD

Don't worry, we'll get it picked up *Pause* Don't they understand that some of us just got back from the field...dead bodies everywhere? We've seen enough.

HELEN

I wish I could dump all of it for good.

GEORGE

Even the bodies?

(No one laughs. HELEN pushes the mail cart with all her might as ALICE enters.)

ALICE

(in a loud, commanding voice)

At present, I have two questions for you. First, how did that mail get dumped? Second, what is that gurney doing in here?

GEORGE

I love the way you give those two facts equal importance. Do you realize that we are faced with a person's mortality here?

EDWARD

Say, George, did you find out "who done it?" Or should I say "who is done for?"

ALICE

Can we resume a professional attitude here?

(She gets some coffee, secretly spiking it with her flask.)

EDWARD

The mail is just an accident and I did it. You can imagine how bad it is for us ex-soldiers to be constantly reminded of dead bodies. Can't we move the canteen?

GEORGE

Edward means he interfered with the mail; he did not cause the body to be on the gurney.

ALICE

How you two could mix up mail and bodies, I'll never know.

(looking at HELEN)

Don't be sneaking around here, girl.

HELEN

(mustering a sweet voice)

Here's your mail, Alice.

(She places the mail in a slot and leaves.)

ALICE

So, what's wrong with that girl? Tell me, doesn't she even know how to hand mail out? Would everyone please return to their offices.

(She walks toward the exits, but is unsteady. She braces herself on the wall. She leaves.)

LOTTY

I feel for you fella's. I don't mind tending the sick, but living with dead bodies is beyond my expertise. As Helen would say, "Must we endure such sights and sounds?"

GEORGE

As Security, I guess I need to be prepared for anything. But most of the morbid sights are in my own break room. After the war, people seemed to get used to unpleasant sights and sounds. It's become part of our DNA.

LOTTY

You never get used to it...hardened to it, is a better word. Maybe the new wing will include a new canteen.

EDWARD

I would like to meet in a nicer room...with you.

GEORGE

Make your moves, Edward. I mean...let's lobby for a new space, and some other things. What do we have to lose?

EDWARD

Those were the only moves I meant...What do we have to lose? Only our jobs, and I've come up the hard way.

GEORGE

I'll investigate anyone who threatens you.

EDWARD

Lotty, what do you think?

LOTTY

I'm fortunate to be George's right hand sleuth. He often consults me.

EDWARD

Sounds as if we all agree. What about Doc Bernard?

LOTTY

He's facing a malpractice suit. He was hung over in the operating room and botched a facial.

EDWARD

I hear he has wife problems too. I bet Doctor Jacob's wife is sick of him. It seems that most of the sickness occurs outside of the hospital.

GEORGE

Meg conducts an eternal search for him. Is he all that valuable?

LOTTY

Let's hope their patients don't get in the middle of his love affairs. Then Helen would have another malpractice suit. As Helen often says, "Does God's light shine in this bunker?"

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 3

AT RISE: Lovers' Day (Valentine's Day) has arrived, even here. LOTTY is decorating. While HELEN watches, while she is delivering mail. On a table coffee is served, candies are available, and a cake made by DR. JACOB'S wife is noticeable.

LOTTY  
Could Valentine's Day come to this cave?

HELEN  
It already has, in spite of the rampant cynicism.

LOTTY  
A bit of cheer: I found a dress that will wake up the dead...Oh, I didn't mean that. It's got a sequin top, and a chiffon skirt.  
(She pretends to be whispering.)  
Maybe Edward will notice it.

HELEN  
I hope so, for your sake. You're too nice for this place. You need to be rescued.

LOTTY  
It's not that bad. Working with George has been fun. He comes on strong but he's very intelligent. He and Edward were both in the war.

HELEN  
I know the GI's have come back changed, but their gallows humor does nothing but serve as a grim reminder of their past. There are ladies present; we're not in a canteen.

LOTTY  
It doesn't pay to be too stuck up around guys.  
(looking at a Valentine decoration.)  
I remember party decorations from my girlhood. We lived in the country but Mom and Dad always made sure we had something store-bought. I preferred the wooden horse Dad carved for me. I still hang it on my Christmas tree.

HELEN  
My parents were politically aware. We talked about world peace a lot. My dad was an engineer and he had big plans for industry. Instead he was used in the war effort. What a waste.

LOTTY

On most days we would eat either whole foods picked from the garden or raised in the barn. On Christmas, a turkey would be plucked, and we'd have sweet potatoes, corn on the cob, and one of Great Grandma's salads, cut so finely you could hardly see the lettuce.

HELEN

That's what the holidays are still about, getting presents and eating. I'm glad we had that in the suburbs too.

LOTTY

I like to remember every sweet moment. I have to admit these...

(She picks up some worn out paper hearts..)

decorations are a far cry from my childhood. I am glad we now have the Jewish star and Kwansa jewelry to use. I found them in storage.

HELEN

Some little things have been learned from an incomprehensible war: other cultures are to be respected, as well as other religions. We have a long way to go.

LOTTY

No matter how lean those war years were, we didn't forget the holidays and treats from the kitchen.

HELEN

We lived in such luxury before the war. All we wanted was more. Isn't that what causes war?

LOTTY

Far be it from me to have any of those answers. I know I think all people need to be respected as human beings.

HELEN

And war is a force that defeats that respect. Look around at this shabby hospital and this basement in order to realize we have a ways to go to recover from such disrespect. I wonder if our new appliances and cars will do the trick?

LOTTY

Again, I don't have the answers.

HELEN

You're a nice person Lotty. And I enjoy sharing holiday memories with you.

(GEORGE, ALICE and MEG enter.)

GEORGE

Well, well, the gang's all here.

(MEG begins looking up and down the hall for the illusive DOCTOR JACOBS. ALICE deliberately takes some mail out of one cubby hole and places it in the wrong cubby hole.)

GEORGE CONT'D

Not all the gang, I see. Meg, when are you ever going to give up on that man?

MEG

I can't believe you said that...I can't.

ALICE

Lay off policeman. I'm in charge here.

LOTTY

Can we forget our differences just long enough to enjoy our coffee?

GEORGE

Just that long, and no more, I bet.

(He grabs a cup and sits over on the side where he reads the newspaper.)

MEG

What are you going to wear to the Valentine party?

HELEN

I hadn't thought much about it. I guess beauty is within, anyway.

MEG

It better be. Because you need some serious work on the outside.

(She and ALICE share the joke. MEG begins to sway seductively to the music and hums a tune. ALICE brazenly walks over and mixes up the mail right in front of HELEN.)

ALICE

I wish I didn't have to do your job for you, Helen. What should we do with you?

HELEN

I would hope for fairness.

(near tears)

I wanted a job as a writer but it was always “who you know”. I’m not bitter, though. Look what these GI’s have to be bitter about. They have trouble even talking about their experiences. They joke to cover up their pain.

ALICE

I’m aware of that. The memories of the nursing I did in the war also come back to me.

HELEN

It makes me think that much of the war’s damage lingers on. They try to penetrate this trance with the cheap pleasures of life.

ALICE

You sure are eloquent for someone who hasn’t seen any real suffering. I’ve seen children picking leftovers from garbage pails and their mothers stealing it from them. I’ve seen toddlers living under wharves so they could beg the incoming ships. Don’t complain, you have a good living and health.

HELEN

I try not to.

MEG

I’ll probably enjoy some of those cheap pleasures this year. Who’s with me?  
 (She drapes a piece of ribbon over her dress and sways  
 She’s in her own world.)

(ALICE walks over to the coffee bar, takes a cup and quickly  
 sneaks some liquor in. She teases HELEN again, hoping to  
 entertain MEG.)

ALICE

Helen, what are you wearing to our party? Those shoes won’t give you much of a slide when you dance.

HELEN

To be perfectly honest with you, those plans bore me. Every holiday we are told to think about the true meaning of faith and love. Then everyone goes about their usual indulgences. We’re missing life’s most important force, “love”. Remember Eugene O’Neil’s plays about poverty?

(MEG and HELEN shake their heads “no”}

HELEN CONT’D

He shows how poor farmers are so ignorant and narrow-minded that they lack the skills to make any good decisions. As a result, a baby is murdered. Depression runs rampant in poor neighborhoods: is it the cause of poverty or the result?

MEG

I wouldn't want to know the answer to such strange questions.

LOTTY

I'll interpret for you, Meg. The answers to our inner city problems aren't simply "give them a meal" or "send junk to AM Vets ". These are good ideas but not permanent solutions.

HELEN

What reduces the human spirit, is what I want to know. Such a light shone in the life of the blind and dumb author Helen Keller, a light that is so easily extinguished in the life of a child born in the slums.

ALICE

In China, we've had gangs of teens running wild and killing their teachers to earn respect from city leaders. I don't need to listen to you. *Beat* Anyway, enough of these ramblings, we have to balance our accounts.

(She barks out her orders.)

Back to work, everyone, I'll hand out your surveys for you to look over.

HELEN

(whispering to MEG)

I'm a little embarrassed about talking so much.

LOTTY

Don't be. I don't think either of them noticed much. Did you see Meg on the hunt for Doctor Jacob?

HELEN

Couldn't help but notice.

LOTTY

(being witty)

I wonder if he'll have anytime to dance with that number. Will they be a number, or what number will she be on his list?

HELEN

Can love survive in such a place as this? Thank God my imagination gives me regular escapes from this cave.

LOTTY

Maybe Meg has a chance. I hear Doc Jacob's wife is furious with him and asking for a divorce.

HELEN

I didn't think things were that bad. "The course of true love never runs smooth" is a quote I love.

LOTTY

I'm pretty sure that doesn't apply here.

(EDWARD JACKSON  
enters the break room.)

LOTTY CONT'D

George, what does a Detective do for his holiday fun?

GEORGE

I put on a raincoat and hat, disguise myself, and crash all the cool parties. Actually, I relax, enjoy good music and the company of good friends, present company...

(He looks at HELEN)

not excluded.

LOTTY

I'm excited about all these parties. My singles group will be meeting, and the dance committee here at the hospital has been busy. I hope they do it right.

GEORGE

We'll wake up some of those corpses.

LOTTY

You know? Some people celebrate their relatives' passing. They dance on the graves.

HELEN

I prefer a quiet evening of Tchaikovsky and a little Shakespeare. They're like a stream of fresh water in a desert.

GEORGE

That sounds okay to me, except for being alone. Tchaikovsky was a very passionate composer and Shakespeare loved life; he acted in many of his plays.

LOTTY

I'm not sure about all those big names. I like good, clean fun where nobody has grudges or complaints, for a change.

HELEN

Yeah, I can go for the spiritual or the classical.

GEORGE

Whatever it takes, whatever it takes.

ALICE

(Reviving from her last drink.)

We need to quit this chatter and get busy on these reports. I just received the forms. Mr. Jackson, work with Lotty on this because she knows the score. Meg, that leaves you with George.

(looking at GEORGE)

She's the best secretary in the building.

(They get busy, but GEORGE sneaks a peak at HELEN arranging mail, as often as he can. DOCTOR BERNARD enters.)

DOCTOR BERNARD

What a cozy scene this is. Looks like a good year ahead.

ALICE

Don't disturb the peace, the bodies next door might hear you. Doctor Bernard, you're late to this gathering. Here's your end of year survey wanted by Administration.

(She hands him some papers.)

JOE BERNARD

Isn't it enough that I'm entangled in this malpractice suit? I don't want any other paper work.

ALICE

I'm not in the mood for your defiance. Please take a seat and fill those out like a good boy.

JOE BERNARD

I will, as long as I can sit by Helen.

GEORGE

(coming out of his newspaper)

Do you honestly think your request will be granted? He snickers.

LOTTY

(speaks quietly)

I like being by your side, Edward.

EDWARD JACKSON

You're much more woman than I thought you were.

LOTTY

I'm ambitious, if you know what I mean. But I can't match your climb up the ladder of success.

(MEG gets up and glances down the hall again.)

GEORGE

Who are you looking for?

MEG

I was trying to find my man also.

ALICE

Meg, do you have to be so brazen? You were the first one to finish the report. I knew you would be. I'm so glad you can keep departmental secrets. But you don't keep your own secrets.

(LOTTY looks at HELEN and winks.)

ALICE CONT'D

Now you'll have time to enjoy yourself. As the saying goes, "Don't waste time waiting for a love who's never around."

(Everyone looks up from the work to see MEG'S reaction.)

MEG

I don't care what you all think. My affair is my business.

ALICE

We'll be busy with dance plans anyway. Lotty you did a great job on the decorations. Though it will be a while before we'll remodel, we're working with what we've got.

MEG

You're so right. I'm working with what I've got. I bought the most daring dress I could get away with.

JOE BERNARD

I imagine you won't be able to get away at all. You'll be the bright spot in a boring office party.

ALICE

Now get the sad looks off of your faces and look ahead comrades.

GEORGE

Since when did we become the red brigade?

HELEN

Are you implying that I'm not patriotic? Not on your life, not on your life.  
(She moves over to the coffee table and secretly gets out her flask, and spikes her coffee.)

GEORGE

Thank you Alice. I'll look whatever way I want in the future.

HELEN

Probably in the direction of legs and skirts.

GEORGE

Am I as bad as all that?

HELEN

You're just trying to conform.

GEORGE

Am I that boring?

HELEN

Your wit defies logic.

ALICE

Your chatter defies time limits. Please get back to this mail, as another is on the way.

HELEN

I'm doing the best I can. I'm rolling about forty pounds here.

ALICE

I've rolled patients-I've rolled machines - I'm always on time - so don't get smart with me, college girl.

HELEN

But you don't do it all day.

ALICE

Are you implying that I'm a slacker? I was on the European front, my dear. If you slacked off there you got shot.

GEORGE

Not a good idea for the break room. There's enough cold bodies around here.

MEG

Alice, you can't win with those two. I've got to get back to a burn patient.  
(She exits and ALICE follows making sure to give  
GEORGE a dirty look.)

(JACKSON and LOTTY are lingering over their reports.)

GEORGE

I hate to leave such fascinating company but must get back to security. Lotty, you don't have to come. Enjoy an hour or two.

(GEORGE leaves and JOE BERNARD goes over  
to HELEN to speak privately.)

JOE BERNARD

I overheard Alice riding you like that. Looks as if you're getting your daily dose of Alice. She's always trying to line up work for those kids of hers. I bet you got a whiff of what she's drinking, right?

HELEN

I try to do the best I can. I try not to believe that she's that bad.

JOE BERNARD

Don't try too hard, it won't do any good. She's a cold one. If she would just show a little feeling once in a while, we would all be better off. But maybe that's just her way.

HELEN

Sounds as if you've given up on her. Don't be prejudiced. If there's one thing this war has taught us, it's to respect all cultures. I try to practice an attitude of acceptance toward all.

JOE BERNARD

Do you accept the fact that's she's cluttering her trash cans with whiskey bottles?

HELEN

If she entertains, that would be good for her morale.

JOE

The only one she entertains is herself. Hospital decorum calls for a more professional attitude.

HELEN

Professional? She practically has us all in matching uniforms. I agree with her that these sly comments and back biting are making this cave unbearable.

JOE

Do you think these people care about what you, a clerk, thinks is proper?

HELEN

I would hope we would have respect for one another. We've all been through wartime, but do we have to be so bitter?

JOE

We didn't win this war to become slaves to our superiors, either.

HELEN

You're just imagining that. The administration is pretty fair with everyone. And I like to give them the benefit of a doubt. They deal with life and death. If you're dissatisfied, then you need to look at your own life.

JOE

Are people telling tales about me? I like my work here and I will defend it.

HELEN

Just think about helping others, which is the greatest joy. Then you would forget your own issues.

JOE

(angry)

Who says a doctor isn't helping? I am so sick of everybody commenting about my screw-up in the operating room. I don't need your preachy little motto's to add to my guilt. I warned you about Alice, that's all. She's got it in for you.

HELEN

I suggest you watch out for your own skin, including facial, that is, on your patients or your conquests. It seems there isn't any area of this hospital that's off limits to you.

JOE

Do you realize who you're talking to? You're the bottom of the food chain so what gives you the right? Oh well, I'll just sit back and watch your ideals go down the drain with the coffee.  
(He laughs and leaves very quickly.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 2

AT RISE:

The break room is deserted at the end of the day. Two people remain, HELEN and DOCTOR BERNARD. DOCTOR BERNARD has been festive and sits with an empty bottle of wine before him. HELEN is getting ready to leave for home. She is pushing her cart to the place where it is stored. The lighting is low.

JOE BERNARD

So here's "Miss Precious", the poet of the lonely and forgotten. I'm lonely and forgotten, so why not help me.

(HELEN gets her coat and walks toward the door, but JOE is close by and gets up to place his hand on her arm.)

HELEN

I'm sorry you feel that way, but I don't have any more answers for you.

JOE

Though you couldn't possibly understand what bothers me, you have some of the answers for me.

(He places his arm around her shoulder.)

HELEN

(She takes his arm off of her shoulder.)

Joe, what's wrong with you?

JOE

(sarcastic and bitter)

Oh nothing. I've made this hospital millions of dollars. Why do you think you can tell me how to lead my life? If you could lead you own, you wouldn't be pushing that mail cart.

HELEN

(setting aside hospital decorum)

But you're putting the hospital in the red with your drinking and philandering.

JOE

(faking humility)

It's true, I have cost the hospital with this malpractice suit and they're blaming me. My wife has gotten belligerent and wants a divorce. You could be the one bright spot in this morgue.

HELEN

(moving a few feet from JOE)

I thought you liked your job. That's what you said.

JOE

(putting his arm around HELEN again)

I sure like some parts of it, I really do. I just wish I had fifteen minutes without someone riding me. It was okay when my job was all about facial perfection, but now it has to be about money.

HELEN

(trying to get away from him)

Don't you have any respect for women? You've helped many of them improve their self-esteem

JOE

(pulling her close)

What's respect? What is left after this war we've been through? Anyone who survived is shell-shocked.

HELEN

(pulling away as much as she can)

You weren't even in the war, I hear.

JOE

I have the right to a little sympathy, don't I? I want you to know that sticking a knife in a Nazi's juggler would be second nature to me.

HELEN

(pushing him away with all her might)

Joe, stop talking that way, you're scaring me.

JOE

How did I get on that topic? The exec's around here get raises when the hospital takes in more patients, gets better rates or experiences growth. I'm not dumb. Everyone assumes I am. It's not true. I may have had a lapse of judgment, but I don't now. You are one interesting piece of work. And what about the downtrodden? What about me? Can you help?

HELEN

That depends on what you mean by help.

JOE

You're always preaching kindness and love. I don't get any of that. My wife and I have been putting up with each other for years. My needs are a bygone thought...

HELEN

(still trying to pull away)

You're getting personal and I'm sure you'll regret these comments later. You are not being professional.

JOE

I'm not a professional at this moment. Aren't you glad? But to you I'm still Doctor Bernard and surely you are impressed with that? I do what I want around here.

HELEN

(her voice shrill and loud)

What do you mean by "do what you want?"

JOE

(in a low and throaty voice)

I'm not a bad guy, I'm just a man. You look so beautiful leaning over that mail cart. Your dress flows...your hair brushes your mouth...and I know you like to be noticed.

(He strokes her cheek.)

The others don't...

HELEN

(screaming while she pushes JOE away)

Joe, this isn't proper. You don't understand me at all. Now let me go, you are being an animal. You're drunk...

JOE

(rubbing his hands on HELEN'S body)

You are so young...and fresh...and smart...

HELEN

(screaming)

Let me go Joe, everyone will find out.

JOE

(forcing her head around to kiss her)

I don't care. What do I have to lose? Why should you care? It's Valentines.and I'm spreading the cheer around.

HELEN

(screaming)

Leave me alone...for good.

AL

(getting angry now)

Don't play Miss Innocence with me. Mail clerks get around. You are a good match for me.

(He kisses her and holds her close.)

Don't make me mad or things will be difficult for you.

HELEN

(taking advantage of his being off guard)

Let me go, let me go.

(She raises her knee and strikes JOE violently in the groin. She leaves her coat on the ground as she runs out of the door screaming "Help me, help me". JOE is doubled over in pain.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 1

AT RISE: It's morning in the break room. The coffee is hot and ready and baked goodies line the table. There's also a cake. GEORGE and EDWARD are sitting and having an intense conversation.

JACKSON

I hear Alice is trying to get Doctor Bernard fired.

GEORGE

Sure, she's working on it. She never did like him, and the hospital likes him even less. But it's difficult to fire a doctor, even with a lawyer.

EDWARD

Are you investigating him?

GEORGE

Yes. Turns out there's a great deal of money in plastic surgery.

EDWARD

I figured. But what about Helen? How is she?

GEORGE

She gave Lotty a call in a panic and Lotty called me to go over and comfort her.

EDWARD

She shouldn't have been alone. Night time is the worst time for someone who has been traumatized.

GEORGE

She was a nervous wreck. She imagined someone was looking in her window. She won't be back for at least a week.

(He pounds the table)

I am so mad, I want to hunt down Joe and kill him. These doctors have such almighty egos. I'd like to smash his...

EDWARD

But that's prejudiced. All of us guys imagine ourselves to be Tom Cruise or someone...

GEORGE

It may be prejudiced, but Joe is a bully and a sex deviate.

EDWARD

I'm not saying he shouldn't be prosecuted. Do you want to destroy the guy? That's what the Germans did to the Jews. Exterminate. And the Soviets did the same with the Poles. I talked to a Polish woman who was repeatedly raped when she lived at her family farm, which was taken over by the Russians. She and her sisters were held as sex slaves. They escaped and walked across Poland to find the Americans.

GEORGE

Crimes against humanity – yet we exchanged cigarettes with our Soviet comrades. These crimes against woman are the least recognized.

EDWARD

What's worse, the Germans wanted to destroy a culture, and so did the Soviets. Who gives them the right to do that? It's all about hate's triumph over understanding. I've experienced plenty of that. It may not seem that important, but don't hate all doctors.

GEORGE

I have to admit that being around women all the time, sometimes when we don't even want it, the male comes out in us. That's no excuse. Most people can control that, but some are into sex so much that they become predators. I know a lot about predators. Mostly, about Germans who worked good men to death mining for ore. They were piled along the railroad tracks they used for transport. This took mankind back to the days of Pharaoh who worked the Jews to death.

EDWARD

Worse of all, we flew through clouds of smoke to liberate, yet some Nazi's were hired for government positions. Where's the fairness? Where's the justice

GEORGE

Add insult to injury when America hired Nazi scientist for their atomic program.

EDWARD

The reality is that as the war went on men became more and more savage. Wars are fought for ideals, but how far do we fall from those ideals in our actual practices? The wars started to defend the sovereign rights of European countries. That's a political reason, another ideal to be washed down the trenches with the blood of fallen heroes.

GEORGE

So much injustice, waste, hatred and violation of human rights. What more do we need to become cynical and bitter?

EDWARD

Sometimes I get depressed and I feel like there's no reason to go on.

GEORGE

That's understandable. It will pass as time goes on. We can try to replace bitterness with love. That's the only way. I chose police work in order to defend the innocent.

EDWARD

The war haunts me like a bad dream. At times it doesn't seem like it happened, and then cruel reality returns.

GEORGE

I have night sweats and can't sleep. I see the skeletal bodies of men whose only crime was being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Isn't that caused by an unjust fate?

(LOTTY has heard part of the conversation and enters quietly.)

LOTTY

I don't believe in an unjust fate. I believe this universe is run by a power that organizes everything. God lets us have a run by ourselves sometimes. The war was to defend the innocent but it became a butchery. As Helen would say, to quote Shakespeare, "Oh what tangled webs we weave". I so miss her. That was a savage act against her.

EDWARD

I do believe in a God, but I'm also influenced by what happened to me. I was drafted, after all. To add another insult to injury, I had to sleep in inferior barracks and have my meals separate from the European Americans. Even when I achieved rank, I couldn't go to the Officer's Club.

LOTTY

I know that such prejudice can affect you only if you let it. I'm talking about attitude. I hope Helen's hopeful attitude hasn't been destroyed.

GEORGE

At least she hasn't been in combat. One incident isn't much but I'm afraid it resulted from the men's attitude toward women in this hospital. But Helen's spirit was so bright I know she'll still shine. Joe will get what he deserves.

LOTTY

Justice will be served.

GEORGE

I'm looking for some relief from all of this.

(DOCTOR BERNARD suddenly appears with a woman on his arm.)

GEORGE CONT'D

(Heading toward BERNARD as if to bust him in the mouth.)  
 What are you doing here? You're a travesty to justice.

EDWARD  
 (Rushes toward GEORGE, holding his arm back)  
 I know how we all feel, but this won't work.

DOCTOR BERNARD  
 This is my little "wifey" Jeanette. We wanted to wish you a Happy Valentine's Day, that's all.

JEANETTE  
 Can we just quit this scene?

DOCTOR BERNARD  
 Yes, in a minute, in a minute.

GEORGE  
 You're ordered to stay away from here. If you don't, I'll see you in court.

DOCTOR BERNARD  
 I had no idea the troops would be on *her* side.

EDWARD  
 There's no sides to it. It's you and only you who needs to get out. Think twice before you threaten *the troops*.

GEORGE  
 All right, all right. We don't need any explanations. Get out before I get security to help me.

DOCTOR BERNARD  
 Don't worry. I'll be back. The hospital can't afford to fire me.

JEANETTE  
 A person can't even visit here. Joey, you're too good for this.

(EDWARD threatens him again, and DOCTOR BERNARD and JEANETTE make a hasty exit.)

GEORGE  
 We won't tell Helen about this at all – okay? Agreed?

(EDWARD and LOTTY shake their heads "no".)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 2

AT RISE: Coffee is brewing and percolates the air. ALICE has taken the gang out of for an impromptu lunch. GEORGE, HELEN, EDWARD and LOTTY enter the break room, back from the feast. ALICE and MEG are lagging behind.

GEORGE

Great lunch huh?

EDWARD

I'd much rather eat out away from this.  
(He gestures toward the morgue.)

GEORGE

I guess this doesn't bother the doctors. Though we can't judge that by our own personal physician, Doc. Bernard. Nothing bothers him.

(EDWARD and LOTTY sit down at a table, together and speak in low tones. GEORGE and HELEN are getting coffee.)

EDWARD

Lotty, I hope you can be the girl of my dreams.

LOTTY

The trouble is, some of those dreams can be nightmares. I prefer reality.

EDWARD

Oh, you mean the war dreams?

LOTTY

Yeah, I guess that's what I mean.

EDWARD

I am able to forget, especially if I keep reaching out to other people. After seeing you assist so ably with all of the end of the year surveys, and, on top of that, do the decorations, I am in awe.

LOTTY

Edward, I respect you too, and all you've accomplished since coming back from the battlefield.

EDWARD

We come back to appreciate women like you. I only wish I would have known you during war time. We could have written to each other.

LOTTY

We meet when we're supposed to, and we have met during good times when we both have a job. This makes our friendship better.

EDWARD

My feelings go way beyond that. I've met my match in you. You too have advanced the hard way: you came from the country yet you were able to handle city life.

LOTTY

God directed my steps. That's the only way I could have done this, or would have met you.

EDWARD

(He puts his arm around LOTTY)

I'm here for all the in between times. I'm here for you in the break room and outside. I can protect you from straying wolves like Doctor Bernard.

LOTTY

(looking lovingly at EDWARD)

I definitely have extra time for you. I've been saving up my vacations too. I'm not afraid of Doctor Bernard, but I don't want to be near him.

EDWARD

(very close to LOTTY)

I'll arrange my vacation to match yours. As far as Doctor Bernard is concerned, I'll bust his lip if he comes near you.

GEORGE

(walking over to EDWARD and LOTTY)

You too are having a party all your own. Seems that this latest incident has brought us closer together, if anything good came out of it.

HELEN

I want to thank you George, for coming to my home after the incident. This was above and beyond the call of duty. And thank your security man for rescuing me that day.

GEORGE

That's what we are here for. I didn't consider my visit a duty at all. I admire your dedication and spiritual attitude. It is a crime that anyone would have violated your trust.

HELEN

I can see you are an idealist also, in your own way. If I'm not very responsive today, blame it on nerves.

GEORGE

Doctor Bernard won't be back in this room at all, if I have anything to do with it.

HELEN

Your loyalty impresses me. And I know I can trust you.

GEORGE

I learned how to be loyal in the service. I guess there's a bright side to everything. You have taught me that.

HELEN

Can we forget the bitterness? I don't want to be bitter

GEORGE

I know its antedote . It's love.

HELEN

Love washes over a multitude of sins. We sure need that now.  
(looking toward the door)  
Wait, what is this?

(ALICE and MEG stumble into the room. It is clear that both of them have had one too many. MEG drags ALICE into the room and the others run to assist her.)

HELEN

(looking closely at ALICE)  
Here's your dose of reality, Lotty. How bad is she?

GEORGE

I'll get some cold water.  
(He brings a glass.)

HELEN

I'll straighten her hair and clothes. Suppose one of the other doctors comes in –

MEG

(mumbling)

I can't find Doctor Jacobs anywhere. No sooner do I find someone to date that he turns out to be a loser. What did I expect? I moved too soon on that one. I didn't know he was married and then it was too late...he's not going to leave her, he's not going to leave her...yet she's draining him of everything – money, self-respect-time – I hate that woman, she's the cause of all my problems.

(She gets up and moves toward the goody table.)

Where's that cake she brought?

(She looks around wildly and before anyone can stop her, she picks up a cake and throws it into the trash can.)

EDWARD

What have you done? That's crazy.

GEORGE

Yeah, but I'm not going to arrest her. She has a reason.

(There is dead silence in the room, and suddenly they hear a loud thud. ALICE has fallen off her chair onto the floor.)

GEORGE

Now we do have a problem. If anyone else sees this, she could be fired. We'd have to get used to someone else bossing us around.

EDWARD

What are we going to do? This is a mess. We can't leave her there.

LOTTY

I could try to get her to the restroom to douse her with cold water.

GEORGE

That won't work. We could drop her. Also, we would be seen. That wouldn't go well for me.

HELEN

What are we going to do?

GEORGE

Let's calm down and think this through. The object is to get her out of sight until we can sober her up. Then Lotty can bring cold water.

LOTTY

I pray that works.

EDWARD

How are we going to get her out of here?

GEORGE

I've got an idea.

(He goes into the hall and brings back a gurney.)

Just put her on this for now. We'll wheel her into the hall and no one will know the difference.

EDWARD

I'll help you lift her.

(GEORGE and EDWARD lift a body that is snoring loudly.)

GEORGE

Cover her up good. We'll tuck her in.

(He covers her with a sheet.)

(They wheel the gurney into the hall and scatter like flies. HELEN and LOTTY proceed to fill a container with water.)

LOTTY

Hurry, we'll pat her down with this, then try to walk her. We'll have to hide in the restroom.

HELEN

It seems the times have been stressful for all.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 3

AT RISE: ALICE and her sidekick MEG enter the break room already inhabited by EDWARD, GEORGE and LOTTY. ALICE is completely sober and anxious that others know that. ALICE is ready to give a talk about the Upcoming gala. As always, other topics come up. HELEN is absent as she is not professional staff.

ALICE  
Where did I put my pencil?

MEG  
(giggling)  
Here's your pencil, behind your ear.

ALICE  
I knew exactly where it was. I wanted to see if you are on your toes, Meg. As you might not know, I am extremely impressed with Helen's performance lately. Not only has she defended me from Joe's abuse, she also valiantly defended herself against the abuse of her own body. Joe, of course, has been placed on leave. And I am working on getting him fired.

(MEG scans the hallways for Doctor Jacob.)

ALICE  
I thought we had agreed that such behavior would cease, Meg.

MEG  
Old habits die hard. As a matter of fact, I have accepted the inevitability of a failed romance.

ALICE  
I'm so glad. Yes, old habits die hard. I'm a changed person now, completely sober.

LOTTY  
Meg, I'm proud of you.

GEORGE  
Here, here, congratulations.

EDWARD

Likewise. Are you now available Meg?

ALICE

(insulted for MEG)

I'm hoping the atmosphere of this room and others can be changed. I have changed my attitude completely and I will no longer be an embarrassment to this hospital. And hopefully the same will occur for Doctor Bernard, only more severely.

GEORGE

I've filed the last of the paperwork. Anything else you have to say in Helen's defense would be welcome.

MEG

When things go beyond a little kidding and flirting, it's not right.

ALICE

You're so right Meg. Could Helen have been more aware of Joe's intentions? I doubt it. But some of that's to blame on the comments that everyone has been making. From now on, I intend to be a better monitor of conversation.

MEG

Why he picked on her, I'll never know. She didn't encourage him at all.

LOTTY

There must have been a lot going on his sick mind that we knew nothing about. He's married with kids so nobody figured that he'd end up to be a sex fiend.

MEG

Was it as bad as all that? He didn't rape her.

EDWARD

That's no credit to Joe, but credit to Helen.

ALICE

Anyway, if there are any more comments on this incident, please make them now. It's important that we air this out in the open. Also, our facilities are making some improvements so the atmosphere of this place should improve.

GEORGE

We are tightening up security and implementing some new rules for all employees to follow. Safety for ourselves and our patients is of utmost importance.

MEG

I'm scared to death. How do we know that this won't happen again?

LOTTY

You, of all people, should be the last one to be afraid.

ALICE

Please, please, let's not get into personal lives here. *Beat* I am hoping this won't dampen our holiday gala. Other departments are participating. We will be renting out the Savoy ballroom and the main banquet room. Budget will include this rental as well as a live band.

(GEORGE yawns as this evolves into a lengthy meeting. LOTTY looks lovingly at EDWARD.)

ALICE CONT'D

That means that we will have to dip into reserves. The band is called "Circus Fun" and they play dance ballads. Are there any objections?

EDWARD

(reluctantly tearing himself away from LOTTY)

No madam, not a one.

(GEORGE nods sleepily as MEG moves closer to him.)

ALICE

Okay, here goes the delegating. We will pay for security, as George has the night off. We will also pay for a bartender. We need to decide on a theme.

GEORGE

How about "After the Storm". Appropriate – right?

LOTTY

Who needs to think about that?

EDWARD

Think of something light and cheery. How about "The Future is Love"?

ALICE

I'll put that suggestion down. Now, we have the job of handing out awards. Who's up for it?

EDWARD

I nominate George. He's gone above and beyond the call of duty lately.

GEORGE

Okay, okay, I guess I'll placate everyone.

ALICE

It sure didn't take much to convince you, George. Lotty, you did such a great job on the decorations. How about the dance hall?

LOTTY

I'd be happy to, as long as Edward helps.

EDWARD

You can count on me, baby.  
(They hug.)

ALICE

George, keep a watch on the bar, would you?  
(The others give each other knowing looks.)  
Meg, you can help with food as long as you do not, and I repeat, do not waste anymore of it.

MEG

(looking uncomfortable)  
You know I won't.

ALICE

Not even if Doctor Jacob's wife shows up?

MEG

I could care less. That's ancient history.

(HELEN enters quietly, pushing her mail cart. GEORGE looks admiringly at her. She slips into the chair next to GEORGE. The buzz in the room gradually dies down.)

ALICE

I'm glad you have joined us, Helen. Although you are not on the gala committee, I'm sure all of us extend an invitation. Now to continue assigning...I'm going to be the M.C. and I don't want to be the only one dressed up. Helen, would you be the door greeter—oops, I don't know why I thought of that. Oh, sorry, I mean, do you need to borrow a dress?

HELEN

I will come and dress in costume provided I can address this gathering.

(GEORGE chokes on his coffee. LOTTY fans herself furiously, and EDWARD looks surprised and confused.)

ALICE

(shocked)

Why...of course...are you ready to do this? You're not on the agenda...but you're first class in my eyes. Does the group agree to let Helen speak?

(The group nods and says "yes.")

HELEN

You already know what I think about this holiday. While everybody is kicking up their heels and having fun, the other "bodies" who wake up cold, alone, and outside are wondering who ever invented special occasions. Many of the street people don't wonder where they'll get their next meal – they drink to forget they need to eat. Orphans still wander through Europe and homeless Jews are kept in encampments.

LOTTY

You're right, Helen. We think of dresses and huge plates of food. There's something innately selfish about that. If we're selfish, we can't be truly happy.

ALICE

Am I wrong in planning this event?

HELEN

It's not my place to judge anybody. But to me happiness is a byproduct of living right. To look beyond temporary high's, to more lasting joys, seems to be the purpose of a poet like me. I hope I have encouraged you. If we do one small thing for others, it's a ripple in the pond, and waves are made up of ripples.

EDWARD

This sounds great but what are you suggesting? A dance and banquet sound pretty good to a couple of ex-soldiers. Right George?

GEORGE

Let Helen speak.

HELEN

Of course, of course. But what I say still holds true. Wasn't a selfish nationalism that cause the takeover of other countries a big factor in WWII? Not to get into debates, I was hoping that after work today you would all join me in working at a city soup kitchen in preparation for their big dinner.

GEORGE

You've convinced me. Let's not leave people hungry.

LOTTY

Sounds as if that's part of the "love equation" to solve bitterness

ALICE

(furiously writing a check)

Thank you for your fine speech Helen. Will this help?

HELEN

(kindly)

It's not about money Alice. Although I will take it for the cause of the poor. It's about giving the gift of time and effort, also. I would love you to experience those feelings.

MEG

I'm in. I have nothing better to do, and I want to support Helen, for a change.

LOTTY

How many heart candies can a person eat anyway? I've already started and it's about time I watch my waistline and think about somebody else's diet.

MEG

I'll second that.

EDWARD

This will be something we can do together.

GEORGE

(lovingly)

Just lead the way.

(They all follow HELEN toward the exit.)

HELEN

And do you mind if I read you a poem before we go?

(They all shake their heads "no".)

*She quotes the poem "Never Alone" at the end of the Script.*

ALICE

Do you think the soup kitchen could use a couple of embroidered table cloths? They came from China, and they can use them on their special tables. Just...please...no crumbly cake, old wine bottles or tear-stained poems.

HELEN

I'll watch those table cloths like a hawk.

ALICE

Amor vincit omnia.

(Everyone looks puzzled.)

ALICE CONT'D

That's "love conquers all" in Latin. I saw it...I think...on a military banner in a barracks.

HELEN

I think we may be getting close to the right meaning of the word.

LOTTY

Commitment to make this a great party. And the perseverance to last through Joe's jokes and George's double meanings means Valentine's Day to me.

HELEN

Don't forget the volunteer work at this mission. Service to our fellow man is the essence of love.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)

### **POEMS MENTIONED IN THE PLAY**

#### **THE CROWN OF STUBBLED THORNS**

I KNOW HOW TO WORK  
HARD AND PAINFULLY LONG,  
AT SENSELESS LITTLE JOBS  
THAT TAKE AWAY MY SONG.

I KNOW HOW TO KEEP  
MY REAL THOUGHTS TO MYSELF,  
HOW TO BE SOMEONE ELSE  
WHEN FACING POWER AND WEALTH.

I KNOW HOW TO SMILE.  
I WOULD FROWN IF I COULD.  
IN VAIN THEY CARVE MY SOUL  
TO MAKE IT HARD AS WOOD.

I KNOW HOW TO WEAR  
THE CROWN OF STUBBLED THORNS,  
AND SOMETIMES IN MY HAIR  
THE BEAUTY OF THE ROSE.

**NEVER ALONE**

I WANT TO THANK YOU, GOD  
FOR BEING GOOD TO ME,  
FOR OPENING MY EYES,  
AND HELPING ME TO SEE.

YOU ARE ALWAYS THERE FOR ME  
WHEN I NEED YOU TO BE.  
EVEN WHEN MY WORLD CRUMBLES,  
YOUR LOVE STRENGTHENS ME.

I WANT TO THANK YOU, LORD,  
FOR GIVING ME GOOD FRIENDS  
TO LOVE AND UNDERSTAND  
AND BE WITH UNTIL THE END.